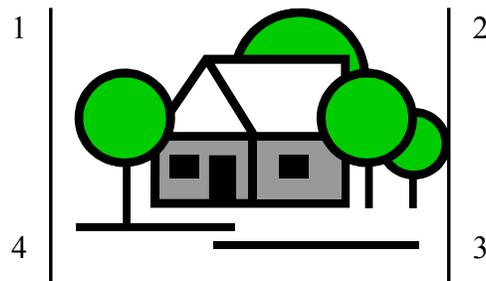


Community is built pillar by pillar, and one of those pillars, as we see this week in this week's Parashah, Parashat Shoftim, is having a judiciary system which is fair and impartial, handing down rules which are applied equally under law, yet expansive enough to make exemptions when necessary (for instance, in the 6th aliyah, where newlyweds, conscientious objectors and other young men are excused from going to war).



- Na'aseh ve Nishmah: {Laws = formal rules; Minhagim = informal norms} **Shoftim**
- Rewards and consequences of unity and cooperation vs. separation from the community: {holding the mountain over our heads} **Shavuot**
- Consensus based buy in from all of the people: {**Every** Jewish Neshamah was there}
- Intergenerational endurance: {"Na'aseh ve Nishmah"} **Parashat Re'eh**

Some sources of each of the four pillars were discussed in last year's Shavuot class, notes for which are available upon request. We will focus today on the 4th pillar, from Parashat Re'eh, that of Intergenerational endurance.

One major prerequisite for building lasting community is solving the problem of short-term insolvency, and also preventing long-term building up of, as the Etz Haim commentary on this parashah puts it, "a permanent underclass" of impoverished members of the community. The Biblical mechanism for this is a regular Remission of Debt, which is commanded Dvarim ch. 15.

Every seven years loans are forgiven

Loans, we learned earlier in Bahar, Lev. 25, must be made interest free to fellow Jews

An interesting repetition in Devarim 15:8 -openly open your hand to him

Why the redundancy? There are two sides to giving a loan

1. Short term financial help
2. long term community responsibility to
 - a. help the person make a sustainable living
 - b. create equitable structures that prevent neediness

Loan forgiveness and lending are short term solutions

Structural equity is the long term solution

Time Banking is one example of part of that long term solution

1. interest free, egalitarian equitable structure
2. interconnect various communities
3. since a person can donate time and withdraw that time later, it gives along term incentive for each person to contribute to the community and have that time valued and recognized by the community.

4. over time this strengthens individuals and communities

Thus lending is short term, while Time Banks is part of Teaching a man to fish and feeding him for a lifetime.

Community and the building of community solidly at the center of Jewish practice.

Chodesh Tov L'Elul, and Gamar Chatima Tova,
Shira Destinie Jones, Mphil, DC "Community Cooperation" Singing Tour Guide