

# Social Welfare

Indeed, the Torah, if one looks deep enough one can find answers and guidance for any and all situations. The Torah has much to say on social issues, even ones that trouble our society today. One of which is the Governmental Welfare system. Now I am not a politician, and I do not know a lot about the inner workings of the government. The Rabbi's tell us not to get too friendly with the government.

**Perkei Avot 1: 10. Shmaayah and Avtalyon received from them. Shmaayah would say: Love work, loath mastery over others, and avoid intimacy with the government.**

So in the guidelines I am about to bring out, I do not know exactly how one would implement them in a modern day western society, but the guidelines are sound, because they come from the mouth of All Mighty God Himself.

I do not mean to speak in generalizations, for I know there are people on Welfare who really need it, but I also know there are many on Welfare who have sadly taken advantage of the system and are mooching off the government.

We must keep in mind that the commandments given in the Torah are to be implemented under a Theocratic rule of Torah within the Promised Land Itself. But this doesn't mean that other peoples and governments can't learn and glean from the commandments. After all, most of the laws in Western society have its basis in Torah.

**Deuteronomy 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.**

**20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.**

**21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.**

**22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.**

ADONAI is telling Israel to remember that this is the way they had to literally make a living and sustain themselves while in Egypt. So he is commanding the Yiddin (Jews) to remember that they were in similar shoes as the poor at one time.

I like these set of commandments because it allows without any inconvenient effort for one to contribute to the welfare system.

The Proverbs give good reason to follow these set of commands too:

**Prov. 21:13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.**

And at the same time these commands allows the poor to keep their dignity and actually work for their food.

If this wasn't obeyed by Boaz in the book of Ruth perhaps we would still be waiting on the Messiah. For it was Boaz who allowed Ruth to glean in His fields and commanded the harvesters not her harass her. Ruth was not gleaning just for herself but for her deceased husbands mother Naomi, her mother-in-law. Ruth was performing a mitzvah (good deed) by caring for her mother-in-law. He husband was dead, so she really had no obligation to her. She stayed with her out of sheer love for the family. And as fate would have it Boaz was qualified to be a kinsman redeemer and marry Ruth. As the story goes he did, and as a result Ruth and Boaz are in the lineage of Yeshua the Messiah.

Also in the Torah, when someone got in debt and could not pay, G-d provides a way for one to be able to work of a debt, with only a six year maximum service.

**Deut. 15:12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.**

**13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:**

**14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.**

**15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.**

God gives a stern warning about having a correct motive toward the poor and needy:

**Deut. 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:**

**8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.**

**9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.**

**10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto.**

**11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.**

We can clearly see that a bond servant or a hired hand would be a better translation rather than the words slave.

If one read on in the text they will discover that this indebted servitude could result in a full time position:

**Deut. 15:16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;**

**17 Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.**

**18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.**

Not everyone would be able to do this for their fellow man, only the rich among the people. Again we see that a poor person's dignity stays intact as well as the rich receives a needed service, so everyone wins.

Another way set up for everyone to contribute to the poor is the tithe of the third year:

**Deut. 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.**

**23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.**

**24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:**

**25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:**

**26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,**

**27 And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.**

**28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:**

**29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.**

We see that the poor can be provided for and they at the same time can be a productive member of society.

The Torah also tells us that the poor are not exempt from tithing too. For the Levites have no inheritance and they are sustained solely on the giving of the offerings and sacrifices of the people, yet one will read that they too have to give a tithe of the tithe. We can assume that this applies to the poor too. Yeshua praised one who did this:

**Mark 12:41-44 And Jesus (Yeshua) sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called [unto him] his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all [they] did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, [even] all her living.**

Even our Jewish traditions provide for the poor; our Rabbis have suggested that prior to prayer that one give to charity, for it puts one's soul in the right frame and opens the heart of God to be receptive to your entreaties.

Human dignity and self-respect is a very important concept in the Torah. No one likes to be hounded by creditors. They can seem like vultures at times with no heart or sympathy for any matter, but they must be that way to an extent I suppose. For because of every honest Joe, there are probably three who try to get away without paying their debt. The Torah gives us specific guidelines for this was well.

**Deut. 24:10** When you lend your fellow [Jew] any item, you shall not enter his home to take his security. **11** You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you are extending the loan shall bring the security to you outside. **12** And if he is a poor man, you shall not lie down [to sleep] with his security. **13** You shall return the security to him by sunset, so that he may lie down [to sleep] in his garment, and he will bless you, and it will be counted for you as merit before the Lord, your God.

In verse 13 is this where we get the term “Security Blanket?” ;)

This is what the Great Jewish Commentator Rashi has to say about these verses:

When you obligate your friend., a debt involving anything.

You shall not lie down [to sleep] while you have his security in your possession. —[*Sifrei* 24:144, *B.M.* 114b] If it is a garment worn at night. And if it is a garment worn by day, return it in the morning. This has already been written in *parshath Mishpatim*, where the verse says, “*until* sunset you shall return it to him” (Exod. 22:25), meaning that you shall return it to him for the entire day, and when the sun sets, you may take it [back]. — [*B.M.* 114b] and he will bless you. And if he does not bless you, it will nevertheless “be counted for you as merit.” - [*Sifrei* 24:144]

In other words do not take a necessity of life as a security for a loan.

**Deut. 24:6** No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh [a man's] life to pledge.

Rashi says: If [a creditor] comes to the court to demand security for a debt [for which no security had previously been required], he may not take as security articles used in the preparation of food. — [*B.M.* 115a].

I am even less versed in matters of finances than I am in social reform, but I know the answers to our social and financial problems lie here in the Torah.

Whatever land and whatever government that we find ourselves in let us:

**I Tim. 2:1-4 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**

[www.abrahamsdescendants.com](http://www.abrahamsdescendants.com)