

Modern Connotations of the Commandment “*Lifnei Iver*”

The commandment “*Lifnei iver*” has many connotations in modern everyday life. These include situations in which one person deliberately takes advantage of another’s weakness in order to gain personal benefit.

Prohibition Against Deliberately Giving Another Person Bad Advice

Those who are knowledgeable are responsible for providing accurate information for those who are ignorant or unaware. The principle of *lifnei iver* prohibits one from giving bad advice to another person. For example, a stock broker must not encourage a client to buy stocks at high risk in order to ensure himself of a large profit, since this would entail giving bad advice to someone who is less knowledgeable with malicious intent.

Failure to Take Handicapped People into Consideration

Many buildings have been built without ramps and railings making it difficult or impossible for handicapped people to enter the building and move around inside. In this way, individuals who do not take the needs of handicapped people into consideration are guilty of violating the commandment “*Lifnei iver*” since they are literally placing an obstacle in front of a handicapped person.

Deliberately Tempting People Who are Morally Weak or Unaware

Tempting a person to engage in an activity they would not want to be part of is also a violation of “*lifnei iver*”. For example, offering an observant person non-Kosher food, or encouraging a person to invest money in something they would not want to invest in, are violations of the commandment.

Society’s Obligation to Uphold the Commandment

Society must do everything it can to help people who are weak and vulnerable. Remaining silent and not protesting against discrimination, violence, and other evils in the world is, an aspect of “*Lifnei Iver*”. It is every person’s responsibility to take steps to ensure that helpless people are not taken advantage of or subjugated.

