



Kinder Torah

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table - Parshas Ki Seitze

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Esther Breina Bas Avraham Moshe O"H
Mrs. Bernice Nathan • On her first Yahrzeit
By her daughter, Aviva Yocheved Krems



Compassion

“You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing” (Devarim 25:4). Threshing is the process that separates wheat from its husks. This is accomplished by stepping on the wheat. The husks split off and are left behind. Oxen are used to step on the wheat. One is not allowed to muzzle the ox, thereby preventing it from eating the wheat while it is threshing. The ox becomes hungry while working. To prevent him from eating would be a cruelty. The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 596) explains the reason behind this mitzvah. We must teach ourselves to be compassionate. When we accustom ourselves to always seeking the kind and benevolent path even towards animals, how much more so we will learn to be compassionate towards human beings.

Kinderlach . . .

A person can work on a good middah (character trait) in many ways. Kindness to animals is related to kindness in human beings. The Torah teaches us that we have a greater obligation to our fellow man than to animals. That does not mean that we can be cruel to animals. We must look at it the other way. We must be kind even to animals. How much more so must we be kind to human beings.

Lost and Found

Whew, we just made the bus. It's a good thing, too. We would have to wait half an hour for the next one. We really are fortunate, getting right off the first bus and now catching this second bus. How much money do I owe you? Three shekels. Okay, I have it right here in my wallet. Where is my wallet? It's not in my pocket. Let me check through all of my pockets. Oy vey. I don't have it. It must have dropped out of my pocket as we were hurrying off the first bus. Quickly, let's write down the number of the bus. We can call the bus company's lost and found. We can try. There was a lot of

money in that wallet. I hope the finder will be kind enough to give it to the lost and found.

The next day the two friends meet again . . .

Look at this!
Is that your wallet?
Yes it is.

Where did you find it?
At the bus company's lost and found. The driver apparently found it on my seat and handed it in.

How about the money?
It was all still in the wallet.

Chasdei Hashem (Hashem's kindness). It makes me feel like crying. See what a Holy Nation the Jewish people is. The Torah commands us to return lost objects. We do it. No questions asked. The finder could have kept all of the money and no one would have known. Aren't you happy that he turned it in?

I certainly am. I truly appreciate what the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 538) wrote about the mitzvah of returning lost objects. Forgetting things is very common. This mitzvah enables a person's lost or forgotten objects to be watched safely by his fellow Jew. It is as if they were still in the owner's possession. The owner feels great relief and happiness from this. As Dovid HaMelech writes in Tehillim (19:9) "The statutes of Hashem are straight, they make the heart happy."

Kinderlach . . .

Do you remember the last time that you lost something? Do you remember the bad feeling that you had? You might never see your lost object again. When it was returned to you, do you remember how happy and grateful you felt? Just imagine the tremendous happiness that you are giving someone when you return his lost object. Don't miss the opportunity to make someone happy.

Safety

“You shall make a fence around your roof” (Devarim 22:8). The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 546) explains that Hashem is supervising our lives and He decrees everything that happens to us. Still, a person

must guard himself from dangerous situations. Hashem decreed that fire will burn, and water will extinguish the fire. A falling rock will smash a person, and a person who falls from a high roof will die. He blew our souls into our bodies and gave us wisdom to guard ourselves. He then placed us among the elements, subjected us to the laws of nature, and commanded us to guard ourselves from dangerous situations. The exceptions are those chosen tsaddikim like Avraham Avinu, who was able to allow himself to be thrown into a fiery furnace and live. The rest of us however must guard ourselves from danger.

Kinderlach . . .

Fences were erected to protect people from falling. They are not meant for climbing. The jungle gym in the park is for climbing. A thrown rock can hurt someone very badly. A wound inflicted with a metal object is serious enough to allow chilul Shabbos to treat it. A car, traveling at even the slowest speed, is so big and heavy that it will hurt someone very badly. A person can drown in the shallowest water. Firecrackers are so dangerous that they are illegal in many places. Hashem wants you to take care of yourself. He gave you a wonderful body and put a beautiful neshama (soul) into it. He wants you to do mitzvos with that body and soul. How can you do mitzvos properly if you are hurt? We know that Hashem protects all of us. He gives extra protection to His special tsaddikim. We still must protect ourselves. We fulfill His wishes by properly caring for the body that He gave us.

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