



KINDER TORAH

ת"ט

PARASHAS MISHPATIM

ONLY THE TRUTH

The Mesillas Yesharim refers to *sheker* (lying) as a widespread and evil sickness. Some people are professional liars. They go around deliberately spreading false stories to boost their egos and feel important. They belong to a group of people called *shakranim* (liars) who cannot receive the *Shechina* (Divine Presence). Other people do not make up false stories. However, when they tell about events, exaggerations and lies are mixed in with the truth. Therefore, it is impossible to believe what they say. Even if they tell the truth, they will not be believed. Still others do not lie habitually; however, they will occasionally mix non-truths into a story to make it funny or interesting. They have no bad intentions and do not realize that they are doing wrong.

Against all of these, the Torah warns, "Distance yourself from a false word" (Shemos 23:7). The Torah does not write, "guard yourself" as it does with many other sins. Rather it says, "distance yourself". We must flee far, far away from falsehood. It stands in direct opposition to Hashem. "The signature of The Holy One Blessed Be He is truth" (Gemora Shabbos 55a). This is how Hashem chose to identify Himself. Therefore *sheker*, it's opposite, is an abomination.

Kinderlach . . .
Sometimes it is so tempting to lie. "If I spruce up the story with a few exaggerated details it will be much more interesting and funny." Correct, but it will be a lie. "If I lie about breaking the glass, I will not be punished." Correct, but you will suffer far worse consequences. "If I lie and say that I came on time today, I will receive a prize." Is it worth it? Do you really deserve that prize? *Kinderlach*, the Mesillas Yesharim tells us how terrible lies really are. Stay far, far away from them.

WHAT YOU EAT

Quarrelling is a terrible thing. If matters are not settled peacefully, they can lead to violence. If one man injures another, he must pay for many things, including medical bills. The details are dealt with in this week's parasha (Shemos 21:19). The Avi Ezer uses this subject as a springboard for a fascinating insight. He differentiates between external injuries and internal illnesses. One of the causes of internal diseases is overeating. A verse in Mishle (21:23) also speaks about this, "One who guards his mouth and tongue, guards his soul from troubles." The Eben Ezra ex-

plains that guarding the mouth refers to food, and the tongue refers to speech.

The Pele Yoatz relates that we must eat for the sake of our souls. Excess eating only strengthens the Yetzer Hora. It also is a waste of food, time, and a health hazard. To eat properly, one must eat only when hungry. Do not eat until full, rather slightly less. Your selection of foods should not be based solely upon taste, rather choose foods that will strengthen your body. The Raavad relates that one who stops eating while the food still tastes good receives a *kapora* (atone-ment) for his sins.

Kinderlach . . .
Good eating habits are so important. They are the basis of good health. It is much more difficult to serve Hashem if you are sick. Eating itself is a way to serve Hashem. Now is the time to develop good eating habits. Eat what is good for you, and eat the right amounts. Eat for the good of your body and soul.



BE SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

"You shall not cause pain to any widow or orphan" (Shemos 22:21). Rashi adds that we are not allowed to cause pain to anyone. However, the Torah gives the most common examples, because they are weak, and as a result, they are often hurt. Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l quotes the Mechilta, which cites a case that illustrates this point. Rebbe Yishmael and Rebbe Shimon were being taken away to be executed. Rebbe Shimon said to Rebbe Yishmael, "I have searched my heart, and I do not know why I am being killed." Rebbe Yishmael asked him, "Did you ever make someone who came to you for a din Torah or a *shayla* (halachic question) wait while you finished your drink, tied your shoe, or put on your tallis? The Torah states, 'if you will cause him any pain' (Shemos 22:22) – not only major suffering, but even a

small amount of discomfort." Rebbe Shimon answered, "You have given me comfort, Rebbe."

"The depth of judgment is very frightening!" says Rav Yerucham. If causing such a small amount of discomfort can bring such a severe punishment, how much more so will bringing about major suffering lead to retribution. This shows us how much a person has to be careful with all of his words and actions, all of the time, to never cause anyone any discomfort, pain, or suffering.

This point is vividly illustrated in an earlier mitzvah in the parasha. "If a man shall steal an ox, a sheep, or a goat, and slaughter or sell it, he shall pay five cattle in place of the ox, and four sheep in place of the sheep" (Shemos 21:37). Why is there a difference in payment? If the payment is four, let them both pay four. If it is five, they should pay five. What is the reason for the discrepancy? Rashi explains that Hashem was concerned about the thief's honor. An ox walks on its own legs. When the thief stole it, he did not have to humiliate himself by carrying it on his shoulders. Therefore, he pays the full penalty – five times the value of the ox. The sheep, however, is different. The thief carried the sheep on his shoulders when he stole it, thereby embarrassing himself. Therefore, it is sufficient for him to pay only four times the value of the sheep. See how much the Torah is concerned about the honor of others! We are coming to punish a thief, who stole a sheep and killed him – a despicable crime. Yet, we still must be concerned for this man's honor. How much more so should we be careful not to cause any pain or suffering to our fellow man.

Kinderlach . . .
Think about other people, and what causes them pain or distress. Do they like to be spoken to softly? If so, do not raise your voice. Do they like the windows closed? Then do not open them. Do they like their privacy? Do not disturb them. Do they like a lot of attention? Do not ignore them. Are they hungry when they come home? Do not make them wait for their food. Do you daven slower than they do? Do not stand behind them when praying. Try to fulfill all of their needs – physical, emotional, and spiritual. Do not cause them any pain or discomfort. That is what sensitivity is all about.

Parasha Questions:

- What shall we do with treif meat? Why? (22:30 and Rashi)
- When you take a garment as a security, when must you return it? (22:25 and Rashi)
- When do we redeem a bechor? (Rashi 22:28)

KINDER TORAH © Copyright 2008 ❖ All rights reserved to the author Simcha Groffman ❖ P.O.B. 5338, Jlm, 91052, Israel ❖ Tel: (02) 585-2216

Kinder Torah is distributed each week in Ashkelon, Baltimore, Bat Yam, Bayit Vegan, Beit Yisrael, Beitar, Bnei Brak, Cleveland, Detroit, Elfrat, Ezras Torah, Geula, Givat Shaul, Givat Ze'ev, Gonen, Gush Shemonim, Haifa, Har Nof, Ilford, Istanbul, Izmir, Johannesburg, Klar HaRif, Kiryat Sefer, Kosel Maaravi, Los Angeles, Maale Amos, Maalot Dafna, Machane Yehuda, Manchester, Mittersdorf, Mattisyahu, Miami Beach, Modin, Monsey, Neve Yaakov, North Miami Beach, Paramus, Peduel, Philadelphia, Psagot, Ramat Shlomo, Ramot, Rechovot, Rommema, San Simone, Sanhedria HaMurchevet, Telz Stone, Toronto, Undorf, Yishuv Eli, Zichron Yaakov and other cities. Subscribe for yourself or sponsor your shul. Just 120¢ per year. All contributions are deductible from Maaser Kesafim. #487#