



KINDER TORAH®

*For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Mishpatim*



Be Careful

One of the main subjects of Parshas Mishpatim is the law of property damages. Forty verses and ten mitzvos are devoted to these laws, including damages inflicted by a person's property, his actions, and his negligence. This is such an important subject that an entire Mesechta in the Talmud (Bava Kamma) is dedicated to it. It is very important to guard your property so that it does not damage anyone. When you are watching or borrowing someone's object, you must be very careful to take good care of it. Having things is a privilege, but also a responsibility. Make sure that you fulfill your responsibilities.

Kinderlach . . .

If you leave your toys spread around the floor, someone can trip over them and fall. When you borrow someone else's toy, make sure that you return it in exactly the same condition that it was when you got it. When you are riding your bicycle, ride slowly enough that you can stop if someone crosses your path. Do we even need to mention how dangerous it is to throw rocks and stones? If you break something accidentally, make sure to clean up the pieces so that no one will get hurt. Taking care of things shows Hashem that we appreciate what He has given us. It also shows our concern for others. We surely would not want someone to get hurt due to our negligence.

Don't Believe It

"Mendy, don't ever sit next to Moishe during a test in class. He cheats by looking at other people's papers."
"Yitzzy, I'm surprised at you! That's Loshon Hora!"
"But it's true."
"That's exactly what Loshon Hora is Yitzzy. A true derogatory statement about someone. If it were false, it would be called *motzi shaim ra*. How

do you know that it is true, anyway?"
"I saw Doni telling his friend that Moishe was a cheater. Moishe was standing right there and he did not say anything to defend himself. Therefore it must be true."

"Yitzzy, I'm afraid that you have fallen into the trap of believing Loshon Hora. The Chofetz Chaim zt"l writes about this in chapter 7:b of his book, 'Chofetz Chaim.'" He says that silence of the accused person is no proof for the truth of the statement. Perhaps he knew that he would not be believed if he spoke up. Or, perhaps he is a quiet person by nature that does not like to fight. Or he may choose to be quiet in order to receive the tremendous blessing reserved for those who are insulted and do not answer back."

"I see Mendy. What's wrong with believing Loshon Hora anyway?"
"The Chofetz Chaim zt"l writes about that also. The source of the prohibition against believing loshon hora is a verse in this week's parsha. 'Do not accept a false report (Shemos 23:1).' In chapter 6:a the Chofetz Chaim zt"l explains that the punishment for believing Loshon Hora is worse than that for speaking it. If there were no listener, there would be no speaker. It is as if the listener gives the speaker the 'stamp of approval' on his Loshon Hora."

"Honestly Mendy, how can you not believe these things? Does the Chofetz Chaim zt"l give any advice?"
"He sure does, Yitzzy. In chapter 7:c, he writes that someone who has spoken Loshon Hora has violated a Torah prohibition. The Torah states, 'Do not be a talebearer' (Vayikra 19:16). If this person has sinned by speaking Loshon Hora, how can we trust him to tell the truth? We see that he is not careful about sinning by speaking Loshon Hora. Therefore we cannot assume that he is careful about the sin of not lying or exaggerating the truth."

"Wow, Mendy, you have sure opened my eyes. What should I do if someone begins speaking Loshon Hora to me?"

"The Chofetz Chaim zt"l answers that also in chapter 6:c, Yitzzy. If someone begins to tell you something about someone and you see that he is about to speak Loshon Hora, ask him before he begins, 'Is this subject relevant to me? Is there something that I can do to help the situation?' If the answer is no, then what he is about to say is forbidden for you to hear."

"Thank you so much Mendy. You really know the laws of Loshon Hora very well."

"That is because I study them every day. They are complicated and need constant review."

"I will try to do the same thing and do my part to stamp out Loshon Hora."

Kinderlach . . .

Why don't we all learn the halachos of Loshon Hora every day as Mendy does? Rav Yehuda Zev Segel zt"l had made it very easy for us. He devised a calendar, which enables us to complete the sefer "Chofetz Chaim" in four months by learning two halachos each day. In addition, he notes that every family who has begun learning the laws according to his calendar has seen blessing come into their lives in some area. Hashem wants to shower you with blessings. Now is your chance to help Him help you.

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