

# A Torah Minute com™

By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

5783/2023 Parashath Ki Thesei

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5783 פְּרַשַׁת כִּי תֵשֵׁי

## Ki Thesei: Returning All Lost Sheep

"You shall not see your brother's ox or sheep go astray, and turn a blind eye; you shall surely return them to your brother" (Debarim 22:1).

The Torah commands us to be exceedingly particular about returning a lost item to its owner. One should not say, "Why should I care, he should take better care of his possessions". Rabbenu Bahyei states that this comes to teach us that we are all one people, with one Father, and that everyone should be concerned about the well-being of his friend and his possessions.

The Ohr HaChayim tells us that this Parasha is hinting to us here that we have an obligation to return all the lost souls, who have strayed far from the paths of the Torah. We must not ignore them, but must try to bring them back to the right path and close to their Father in Heaven.

In Dibrei Mordekhai it adds that, in general, an animal will always find its way back to its owner's home. But we should not rely on that and should perform the commandment ourselves.

(See Rabbenu Bahyei on the Torah, Ki Thesei. Ohr HaChayim, ibid. Dibrei Mordekhai, ibid)



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## If One Forgot to Say 'Nishmath Kol Hai'

The prayer of Nishmath Kol Hai is a very important one. If one does not read the Shirath HaYam before it from the Siddur, there is a risk that, force of habit, one will forget to say Nishmath Kol Hai, since one does not say it during the week.

Should one forget to say it, and says Yishtabbah right after the Shirath HaYam, the way one does during the week, one should do the following. Even if one recited the Yishtabbah, answered the Qaddish after it and responded to the Barkhu, as long as one did not yet start Yozer Ohr, one says Nishmath Kol Hai right there. This is important because Nishmath Kol Hai is the place where one receives the additional Nefesh on the day of Shabbath.

Once one started Yozer Ohr, however, if one did not say Nishmath Kol Hai, one should not say it till the prayer is over, and one should say it then, without the blessing of Yishtabbah. Hakham Yosef Chayim, 'a"h, writes in Ben Ish Hai, that if one remembers during the blessings of the Shema', but before Ga'al Yisrael, one should say in one's mind, "Nishmath Kol Hai Tebarekh Eth Shimkha Eloqenu", and have in mind the receiving of the additional Nefesh. Thinking words is not an interruption but still helps somewhat.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 2nd year, Parashath Toldoth, Oth 2)



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## Teaching the Alphabet Over Studying Torah

One may feel that it is better not to spend time teaching Torah to one's children, or to the children of others, because it takes up valuable time that could be spent studying more advanced Torah. Indeed, if one would take the amount of time it takes to teach and repeat concepts to children, and use it to study oneself, one could cover much ground and delve into more complicated aspects of the Torah.

The Pele Yo'eş says that teaching one's son, or the sons of others, even the Hebrew alphabet, brings much Naḥath Ruwah (happiness of spirit) to G-d. In fact, teaching the Hebrew alphabet to children is to be preferred over he himself studying advanced subjects such as Negha'im and Ohaloth. (Obviously, this does not exempt a person from his own obligation of studying Torah at other times).

(See Pele Yo'eş, Torah)

## Man vs. Animal/Yahrzeit of the Ben Ish Hai

The 13th of Elul is the Yahrzeit of the Holy Ben Ish Hai, Rabbenu Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h. The date falls in the middle of the month of Elul, when all our thoughts must be on Teshubah (repentance). He writes in Ben Yehoyada' based on the Gemara of Sanhedrin (98b), that we are the works of G-d's hands and, as it says in the Torah (Bereshith 9:2), "the fear and dread of you shall be on every animal of the earth".

This assumes that a person follows the right path and doesn't sin. When a person sins, the holiness attached to a man leaves him, and his limbs are considered lacking. The net result is that the animals no longer have any fear of the person, because, in their eyes, he has now lowered himself to one of them.

The power of Teshubah (repentance), is very great, however. When the Jewish people repent, they once again regain the status they had previously, and once again become the works of G-d's hands.

(See Shabbath 151b. Ben Yehoyada' 98b)



### Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

#### When is the Right Time to Get Married? (Part 1)

I am of the opinion that we pass through some of the most important stages of our lives without proper guidance and preparation. Although we spend years of learning general knowledge, such as math, history, grammar, etc. we are hardly ever taught how to be good wives, mothers or daughters-in-law. Even worse, when we do get advice, it may be the wrong advice altogether.

I found it fascinating to read the advice that Hakham Yosef Hayyim, 'a"h, offers to mothers whose daughters are of marriageable age. He speaks against marriages arranged at a very young age, before the girl is fully mentally and emotionally developed.

How ironic it is, that in some sections of our society, there are single women who insist on only marrying men who are already established, so that they can be financially comfortable. By the same token, there are single men who feel the necessity to postpone developing a serious relationship until they have a house and can financially support a wife. This automatically raises the average age of when people are ready to commit themselves to marriage. *(to be continued)*