

Ki Tetzei, Matan Secharam Betzidam

- Yoel Schonfeld.

Importance of teaching Choshen Mishpat

Ki Tetzei, Matan Secharam Betzidam (Appropriate for the Yemei Teshuva)

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1. A challenge: Ask any learned Jew/Jewess which mitzvot in the Torah are unique in that they offer Matan Secharom B'tzidom — you will hear about kibbud av v'em and shiluach hakan.
2. This response is only two thirds correct. For there is a third mitzvah that is often overlooked. That mitzvah is even shelema vehin tzedek yihyeh lach — (Devarim 25:15). The Pasuk concludes with lemaan yaarichu yomecha al ha'adamah. How sad that the importance of business ethics as a vital mitzvah in the Torah is often neglected.
3. From pre-school through high school, every Jewish child is taught a vast array of Jewish subjects. Chumash, Rashi, Mishna, Talmud, Tanach and Halacha make up the basics of any yeshiva or day-school curriculum. ... Beyond doubt, the developing child should be familiar with the laws of Shabbat, Kashrut, Brachot, Shema, etc. But what about the intricacies of the laws of theft? If “Thou Shalt Not Steal” is important enough to make The Ten Commandments, shouldn't it be given a place in a child's education?
4. Babba Kamma and Babba Metzia are two favorite Tractates, but the resultant applied laws in monetary matters, derived from these very volumes, are known to very few. How many of us are sensitized to the fact that geneivat akum is prohibited by Torah law according to most Rishonim, and is certainly prohibited according to Rabbinic law? A quick glance at Choshen Mishpat (348) makes that quite clear. (See also Kitzur Shulchan Arach, 182.:1.)
5. We must begin to teach our children the importance of fiscal integrity as seen through the eyes of halacha. The part of Kitzur Shulchan Aruch that contains a brief digest of the laws codified in Choshen Mishpat should be taught in every school.
6. Simply stated: we must find the means of teaching our children (and ourselves) that treating matters of money with absolute integrity is just as R.C. (Religiously Correct) as Glatt Kosher, Cholov Yisrael, and shemura matza.
7. With rigorous attention to making Choshen Mishpat uppermost on our list of priorities, we can succeed in becoming the definitive medakdeik bemitzvot — one for all the world to admire... and perhaps even emulate.

(The full text is found on the YI Web site for rabbis and is sponsored by the Henry, Bertha and Edward Rothman Foundation: Rochester, New York ~ Cleveland, Ohio ~ Circleville, Ohio)

