

## D'VAR TORAH KI TETZEI

By Moshe Schertz, 6<sup>th</sup>

Parsha Ki Tetzei contains many mitzvot or commandments. I am going to focus on one of them. The Torah says:

לֹא־תַּחֲרֵשׂ בְּשָׂור וּבְקָנָר יְהִי:

"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together."

The Rambam (Maimonides) notices that the verse before this one talks about the prohibition of not breeding different species of plants together and the verse after it speaks about not mixing wool and linen in cloth. Then Rambam concludes that Hashem doesn't want us to plow with the donkey and ox together so that we should not try make a new species by breeding the two of them together.

Avraham Ibn Ezra thinks that this law is to prevent a weaker animal being dragged by a stronger one. The Torah's example is the donkey being dragged by the ox.

Daat zikaanim thinks that the Torah says not to put a donkey and an ox together because the donkey would be hurt mentally, not physically. He believes that you shouldn't put a kosher animal with a non-kosher animal because the kosher animal (here, the ox) would chew his cud and the non-kosher animal (here, the donkey) would "think" that the ox is eating more than him.

Although most commentaries believe that this Mitzva is intended to prevent the suffering of the donkey, Sefer Hachinuch believes it's for the kindness towards both of the animals. He writes how it is difficult for animals of two very different temperaments to be forced to live and work together. He adds that this applies also to different types of people being forced to be together in a group. For example, an employer shouldn't insist that a tzadik, a righteous person, work in a group with a Rasha, a person whose main goals in life are selfish pleasures. Does this mean that a teacher should not put two students together who have very different personalities? I think that the teacher should help students be more tolerant of others' differences, but must be cautious about hurrying the process.