

LIFE BETWEEN THE CRACKS

by Torah.org

I was about 15 years old when I lost a *Siddur* (prayer book) on a backpacking trip near the summit of New Hampshire's Mt. Washington, the highest peak in the Northeastern United States. It must have fallen out of my pocket at a pit-stop along the hike. After my return to New York, I had no dreams of seeing that *Siddur* again. Besides, it didn't have much sentimental value to me, so it wasn't a great loss.

Some time later, maybe a few months, I received a manila envelope in the mail addressed to me, and inside I was shocked to find my *Siddur*. The short handwritten note inside explained that the finder was hiking along the Mt. Washington trail and found this little book between the rocks with my address in it, and they thought I would want it back. This random kindness from a complete stranger left a strong impression on my 15 year old mind, and of course I wrote back a grateful reply.

The return of another's property, even the smallest thing, can bring them so much joy.

It's a Mitzva to return lost items, as detailed in this week's Torah portion (Deut 22:1-3). From a careful reading of the verse — "*VaHaSheivos Lo*" — "and you should return it to **him**" — the Talmud (Sanhedrin 63a) extends this commandment to healing others, returning their health and ability to live.

If this Mitzva applies to physical objects and physical wellbeing, then it surely applies to restoring a spiritual loss. As much as we value the things we own and our health, our greatest value is our spiritual life. We derive so much meaning from our relationships with others, and our relationship with G-d. Just like my prayer book, so many souls have fallen between the rocks. How many have become lost in the endless pursuit of the perfect house, the perfect job, the perfect car, and the perfect restaurant? People may not be in touch with the reality, but there is so much joy to be found in a spiritual experience, and a spiritual relationship with the source of all life and meaning, our Almighty Creator. (Based on Tiferes Shimshon)

"Lo Suchal L'Hisalem" — "We can't hide and ignore (Deut 22:3)" what's being lost in our culture of indulgence and diversion. True love to our friends and family, and even complete strangers, is expressed when we introduce them to a prayer, a Mitzva, and an inspiring or novel Torah thought. Have you perhaps read something on Torah.org that you appreciated, or that left an impression on you? Print it out for someone, or share it on social media. Take that extra step to return your friend's most valued possession.