

Compassion towards animals - Jewish texts

Babli, Gitin 62 page A

בבלי גיטין ס"ב עמוד א

'Thus said Rab Judah in the name of Rab; It is forbidden to a man to taste anything until he has given food to his beast, as it says [first]. And I will give grass in thy field for thy cattle, and then, Thou shalt eat and be full.'

Exodus 23:5

'If you see that the donkey of someone who hates you has collapsed under its load, do not walk by. Instead, stop and help'

Psalms 36:7

'man and beast you shall save, O LORD'

Ecclesiastes 3:19

'[...]and the superiority of man over beast is nought, for all is vanity'

Proverbs 12:10

'The righteous person looks out for the welfare of his livestock'

Bereshit 1:26

'And God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

'They came to him through a certain incident.' What is it? — A calf was being taken to the slaughter, when it broke away, hid his head under Rabbi's skirts, and lowed [in terror]. 'Go', said he, 'for this wast thou created.' Thereupon they said [in Heaven], 'Since he has no pity, let us bring suffering upon him.'

'And departed likewise.' How so? — One day Rabbi's maidservant was sweeping the house; [seeing] some young weasels lying there, she made to sweep them away. 'Let them be,' said he to her; 'It is written, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' Said they [in Heaven], 'Since he is compassionate, let us be compassionate to him.'
