

KINDER TORAH[©]



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Toldos



Daas Torah

After twenty years of marriage, Rivkah falls pregnant. The pregnancy, however, is very strange. When she passes a house of idol worship the baby begins to kick. When she passes the Beis HaMedrash of Shem and Ever, the baby also kicks. Rivkah is puzzled and worried. She is concerned about a miscarriage (Chizkuni). What can she do? To whom can she turn to for help and advice? "... And she went to seek out Hashem" (Bereshis 25:22). The Medrash (Bereshis Rabba 63:6) explains that she went to the Beis HaMedrash of Shem and Ever. Why did she need to go to the Beis HaMedrash to seek out Hashem? The whole world is filled with His Glory. Mishnas DiRebbe Eliezer's commentary on the Medrash explains that when we seek out a *Talmid Chochom*, we are seeking out Hashem. When Rivkah needed advice, she went straight to the source. She went to hear the *Daas Torah* (Torah Knowledge) of Shem and Ever, the *Talmidei Chochomim* of that generation. The Medrash concludes that meeting with a *Talmid Chochom* is like meeting with the *Shechina*.

Kinderlach . . .

Are you ever confused about which beracha to make on a food? What to do after you have made a mistake in davening? Whom do you ask for advice about the best way to solve an argument between two friends? Or whether to lend out your brand new toy? How do you decide between going to a Tehillim group on Shabbos or learning with your brother? These are all good questions. Whom do you turn to for the answers? *Daas Torah*. The Torah is filled with the wisdom and knowledge to answer all of our questions. Our Gedolim and Talmidei Chochomim who are steeped in Torah knowledge and wisdom will explain to us the Torah's answers to our questions. Meeting with them is like meeting the Shechina. There is no better advisor.

Seeker

Our forefathers were spiritual giants. Their deeds and qualities are beyond our comprehension. The Torah could have used many different

adjectives to describe Yaakov Avinu and his greatness. Which of his qualities did the Torah choose to relate to us when describing him? "Yaakov was a simple man, *yoshev ohalim*" (Bereshis 25:27). Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l explains that Targum Yonasan Ben Uzziel equates the expression *yoshev ohalim* to the expression *mevakesh Hashem* (one who seeks Hashem). Therefore, the Torah chooses to describe Yaakov Avinu as a seeker of Hashem. His only goal in life was to fulfill Hashem's wishes. One who pursues this goal has a great future ahead of him. He will merit pursuing greatness in Torah, *yiras shomayim* (fear of heaven), and perfection in character traits. Why? Because he wants them more than anything else in the world.

Kinderlach . . .

How do people who want something very much behave? Did you ever see a little child in the store asking his mother for a candy? "Imma please buy me a candy." "Not now, Yossie, it is too close to meal time." "But I want it Imma." "I'm sorry Yossie." Yossie begins to raise his voice, "Imma Imma." "No, Yossie." Yossie begins to scream. Still, Imma does not give in. Finally Yossie throws himself on the floor and begins kicking and screaming. "You certainly are a persistent little boy, Yossie." With that, they leave the store. Yossie really wanted the candy very much. He tried five different tactics to get it. Kinderlach, we must be at least as resourceful and persistent as Yossie when we do mitzvos. When you want to get close to Hashem as much as you want other things, then you have taken the first step toward attaining the greatness of Yaakov Avinu.

Not a Burden

Eisav sold his rights as the firstborn son to Yaakov for a plate of beans. What was his reason for selling it? "Look, I am going to die, so what use to me is a birthright?" (Bereshis 25:32). What did the birthright involve? Rashi explains that the firstborn sons were the ones who would perform the sacrificial services until the time when the tribe of Levi took over. This service was very holy

and elevated, carrying with it many mitzvos and much reward. Those who performed the service reached a level of closeness to Hashem unattainable by any other means. How did Eisav value this most prized spiritual possession? "I am going to die." There are so many *halochos* involved with the *korbonos* (sacrifices), many of them carrying the death penalty. I cannot possibly keep them all, so I am going to die. "What use to me is a birthright?" What do I want it for? It's more trouble than it's worth. This sums up Eisav's attitude toward the birthright and all other things of spiritual value. They are too much of a burden, so why bother? What is our attitude toward Hashem's Torah and mitzvos? "The Holy One Blessed Be He wished to reward the Jewish people. Therefore He heaped upon them Torah and mitzvos" (Makkos 3:16). Mitzvos are our reward. They are our greatest treasure in life.

Kinderlach . . .

If a King asked you to do a job for him, would you do it? Certainly. You would not dream of saying that you are too tired or pressed for time. If he said that you had the privilege of bringing him, his breakfast every day, you would jump at the opportunity. After all, you are performing an important task for a very important person. How much more so for the King of Kings, Hashem. His mitzvos could never possibly be a burden to us. On the contrary. It is our greatest privilege to serve Him.

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