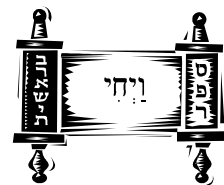


ישמך
אלקים
כאפרים
וכמנשה

KINDER TORAH®

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



Every Drop Counts

At the end of his life, Yaakov blessed his sons and grandsons. He blessed Yosef's sons by saying the following, "... may they multiply like fish within the land" (Bereshis 48:16). The Medrash Rabba (97:3) explains this blessing with a parable. Although these fish grew up in the water, when one drop of rain falls, they rush to drink it as if they had never tasted water in their lives. So too it is with the Jewish people. We grow up immersed in the "sea" of Torah, which is compared to water. Still, when we hear a *chiddush* (original Torah thought), we drink it in with great thirst as if we had never heard a word of Torah in our lives.

Kinderlach . . .

This is what we should we are striving for in our Torah learning. It is not so hard to understand. Try offering ice cream to someone who has never tasted it. He may want to try it. He may not. He does not really know what he will be eating. Someone who knows how delicious ice cream is will always want to eat it. Someone who has not tasted the sweetness of Torah learning may not be so anxious to hear a *chiddush*. On the other hand, someone who knows the pleasure of Torah learning will always want to learn more.

Unity Brings Moshiach

"Yaakov called to his sons and said, 'Gather together and I will tell you what will happen at the End of Days (the time just before the coming of Moshiach)'" (Bereshis 49:1). The Medrash Rabba (98:2) offers many explanations of what Yaakov Avinu said to his sons. The Rabbanan said that he commanded them concerning quarreling. He said, "You shall gather together into one group . . . make the

Children of Israel into one unified band, then prepare yourselves for the final redemption." The first step is for the Jewish people to rid themselves of strife and dissent. Then we must gather ourselves into one unified group. This will signal the event that we have been waiting and praying for the past 2000 years, the coming of Moshiach.

Kinderlach . . .

Who can count how many of our prayers are for the coming of Moshiach? In the *Shemoneh Esrei* there are blessings asking for *geulah* (redemption), *kibbutz golius* (ingathering of exiles), the restoration of Hashem's rule, the rebuilding of Yerushalaim, the restoration of the kingdom of Dovid HaMelech, and the return of the *avodah* (service) of the *Beis HaMikdash*. We see how important the *geulah* is by how many prayers are devoted to it. Therefore, it is important for us to do our part to speed its arrival. Unity is our project. Let us begin with our own family. Avoid unnecessary confrontation. When arguments do occur, listen patiently to the other person's point of view. When he is finished, you may say what you feel, but say it nicely. Always be the first to apologize. Treat family members with respect. Go out of your way to do nice things for them. Our family is doing its best to bring the *geulah*.

White With Milk

Is it important to smile? Let's see what the Torah says about it. Part of Yaakov Avinu's blessing to his son Yehuda was, "His eyes are red with wine, and his teeth are white with milk." (Bereshis 49:12). The gemora in Kesuvos (111b) writes that it is better to whiten your teeth to your friend (smile to him) than to pour milk for him. The Mishna in Pirkei

Avos (1:15) also tells us the importance of smiling, "Shammai says . . . receive everyone with a beautiful facial expression." Also in Mishna 3:16, "Rebbe Yishmael says . . . receive everyone with happiness."

Kinderlach . . .

It is so important, to greet people with a smile. When we come home from school, let's have a big smile on our face. When Abba comes home at night, let's have a wonderful welcome for him. We can practice greeting people with a smile at our Shabbos table this week. Tell our brother Yitzy to go out of the room for a minute. When he returns, let's all give him a big smile and say, "Shalom Yitzy! How are you?" That will put a big smile on Yitzy's face. Then each member of the family (even Imma and Abba) can take their turn going out of the room and getting their greeting when they return. We get so many mitzvos when we smile *kinderlach*. We make people happy, we do chessed for them, we make shalom between people, and we make a real Kiddush Hashem. Let's all keep smiling, and keep those mitzvos coming.

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