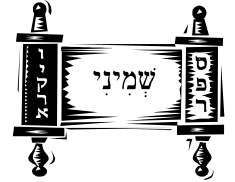




# KINDER TORAH®



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table  
Parshas Shemini (Parshas HaChodesh)

## Soul Building

"It was on the eight day . . ." (Vayikra 9:1). This was the eighth day after the seven days of *miluim* (inauguration) of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). For each of the first seven days, Moshe Rabbeinu single-handedly erected the *Mishkan*, offered the *korbonos* (sacrifices), and took down the *Mishkan*. Still the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) did not come down. Finally, on the eight day, Aharon HaKohen offered the *korbonos* and the *Shechina* came to rest upon the *Mishkan*. Then Moshe and Aharon blessed the people. "May the pleasantness of Hashem our G-d be upon us; and may the work of our hands be fixed upon us; and may He make the work of our hands permanent" (Tehillim 90:17).

The Malbim zt"l explains that Hashem (so to speak) has pleasure when His creations fulfill their intended purpose. We were created to perform His mitzvos properly. When we do that, He takes pleasure in us. He continues to explain that when a person builds a house, it may be beautiful, strong, and comfortable, but it is not a part of the person. It is outside of him. The blessing states that our handiwork should become a part of us. When a person does a mitzvah, it becomes fixed in his soul. It becomes a part of his character and is with him forever. Lastly, we are blessed that Hashem should make all of our handiwork a permanent part of us. All of our deeds should be good in His eyes; therefore, He will fix them within our souls.

**Kinderlach . . .**  
People build all sorts of things. Some have hobbies building model cars, boats or planes. Some people build buildings. Some exercise to build up their bodies. The blessing of Moshe and Aharon tells us to build up our souls by doing mitzvos properly. Soul building is important for two reasons. Number one, it lasts forever. Longer than the biggest, tallest, strongest building. More importantly, it gives Hashem pleasure. That is the greatest thing that we can do.

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## The Fiery Table

"A fire went forth from Hashem and consumed upon the *Mizbeach* (Altar) the *Olah* (Burnt Offering)" (Vayikra 9:24). The fire on the *Mizbeach* was not a normal fire but a miraculous fire from heaven. It consumed the *Korbonos* (sacrifices) which gave the Jewish people their *kapara* (atonement). Nowadays, *kinderlach*, we have no *Beis HaMikdash*, (Holy Temple) and no *Mizbeach*. However, we do have a substitute. The Shelah HaKadosh notes that our table serves in place of the *Mizbeach*. What serves in place of the fire? The words of Torah that we speak at the table. Torah is often compared to fire. One example is the light of the Menorah in the *Beis HaMikdash*, which is compared to the light of Torah. We have a mitzvah to keep the fire burning on the *Mizbeach* constantly. How do we fulfil that mitzvah in our days when we have no *Beis HaMikdash*? By speaking words of Torah at the table. They provide the "spiritual fire". Then our eating of the food is compared to the consumption of the *Korbonos*.

**Kinderlach . . .**  
When we are eating, let us all do our best to tell Abba and Imma some of the Torah that we learned today. Ask Abba and Imma to share with us what they learned today. We all try to speak Divrei Torah at the Shabbos table. Now let us try during the weekday meals also. You can start small with a one-minute drasha. Perhaps you will want to learn one of the halachos of Loshon Hora at each meal. With Hashem's help, we will constantly keep burning the miraculous fire from heaven that comes down and illuminates us with wisdom and spirituality.

## Renewal

"This month shall be for you the beginning of the months" (Shemos 12:2). The theme of this week's Maftir is Rosh Chodesh. Each month begins with the new moon. Rashi explains that Hashem showed Moshe

Rabbeinu the moon when it was new (*chadash*). When the moon renews itself, it will be Rosh Chodesh. Rav Eliyahu Kitov explains that the Jewish people correspond to the moon. The capacity for repeated renewal is unique to Israel. It is the secret of our eternity. The other nations of the world rise, fall, and do not rise again. The Jewish nation has risen and fallen but always rises again.

Rosh Chodesh is also a time of renewal on an individual level. "You gave *Roshei Chadashim* to Your nation as a time of *kapara* (atonement) for all generations" (Musaf prayer - Rosh Chodesh). A fresh start always gives a person new energy and vitality. The very name Rosh Chodesh means new. It is a time for a fresh approach, a reassessment, and a new plan. Take the spiritual energy of Rosh Chodesh and revitalize yourself and your *Avodas Hashem* (Service to Hashem).

**Kinderlach . . .**  
Do you feel like you fall into a rut sometimes? You need to break out of a habit, or change your schedule. That is one of the purposes of Rosh Chodesh. Hashem gave us this time every month to step back and take a look at things. Are we doing the best that we can? Where can we make improvements? Let's make some changes. Hashem gave us Rosh Chodesh because, like the moon, we have the opportunity to make a fresh start. *Kinderlach*, make this month your best ever.

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