

Kinder Torah[®]

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

Dedicated in Memory of Rav Yosef Chaim Emmanuel zt"l



Be Straight

Rivkah, after twenty years of marriage to Yitzchak, finally gives birth to twins – Yaakov and Eisav. The Torah (Bereshis 25:27) describes Yaakov as a simple man who dwells in tents. The Ksav Sofer zt"l writes that Yaakov conducted himself with simplicity toward all people, even those whom it would be easy to trick. He had no desire to deceive people because his character was one of truth. To paraphrase this in today's language, Yaakov Avinu was a "straight shooter." The Shlah HaKadosh says that we see from this how much a person has to distance himself from trickery. Of all of the good points and good character traits that Yaakov Avinu had, the Torah chooses to describe him as a straight person. Therefore, we must conclude that the Torah places paramount importance on being straight.

Kinderlach . . .

We have to be straight and true to everyone. Do not twist things just to get your way. When Imma says that it's time to do something, be straight and listen to her. Don't think of excuses why you don't have to do what she says. When you have to stand in line at the store, wait patiently until it is your turn. Don't ask people to let you go in front of them or to hold your place in line while you go to do something else. Don't look for favors or shortcuts. Be straight, like Yaakov Avinu.

In Order To Pray

"And Yitzchak entreated (prayed many times to) Hashem for his wife, because she was barren (had no children)" (Bereshis 25:21). This verse appears to be written in the wrong order. It should say that Yitzchak's wife was barren, therefore he prayed to Hashem. Rabbeinu Bechaye has a deep insight on this verse. What is the cause and what is the effect? We might think that Hashem had His reasons for making Rivkah barren, and Yitzchak prayed to change that. Rabbeinu Bechaye explains quite the opposite. Hashem wanted Yitzchak's prayers. Therefore, He made Rivkah

barren. The prayers were the reason for her childlessness, and not the other way around.

The verse uses the word *vayater* (prayed many times) to describe Yitzchak's prayer. Rav Shimshon Pincus, Shlita, in his sefer Shaarim Bi'Tefillah explains that prayer has many forms, and *itur* (repetition) is one of them. Hashem is different from mortal man. When you want something from a man, you make a request. If he refuses, you try again. Be careful, however. If you ask too much, he will lose his patience and you will never get what you want. When you do receive what you want, you stop asking. The whole point of the request was only to receive the thing. Hashem has a different set of priorities. He wants your prayers. He could give you everything that you need, no problem. However, you might ignore Him, *chas veshalom* (Heaven forbid). Therefore, He creates a need, which you must ask Him to fulfill. The more that you ask Him, the happier He is. You cannot become a nudnik with Hashem. Pray to Him again, and again, and again. That is the point of it all.

Kinderlach . . .

We all have many things to ask for. Health, wealth, safety, peace, success in Torah, a good spouse, children, the list is endless. Why do we have so many things to pray for? Because Hashem wants our tefillos (prayers). These are days when we are being called upon to pray even more. What a golden opportunity to make Hashem happy. Every time that you pray, keep this in mind. Hashem wants to hear what you have to say. He is happy that you are turning to him. Concentrate on what you are saying, and pour your heart out to him. Again, and again, and again.

Your Sweet Voice

"The voice is that of Yaakov, but the hands are those of Eisav" (Bereshis 27:22). The Medrash Rabba (65:20) relates the following event. Rebbe Abba Bar Kahana said that there never arose philosophers in the world like Bilaam Ben Beor and Avnemus Hagardi. All of the star

worshippers came together to ask them, "How can we harm this nation (Israel)?" They replied, "Go around to their shuls and *bottei medrashim* (study halls). If you hear children's voices learning Torah, then you cannot harm this nation. Their father (Yitzchak) promised them when he said, 'The voice is that of Yaakov.' When the voice of Yaakov is heard in shul, Eisav's hands are not his. If not, 'The hands are those of Eisav,' and you can harm them."

"And Rivkah loved Yaakov" (Bereshis 25:28). Why? The Medrash explains. The more that she heard Yaakov's voice learning Torah, the more she loved him.

Kinderlach . . .

We want to hear your sweet voices learning Torah. Look at what learning Torah can accomplish! It can protect the Jewish people. It also makes us beloved. Just like Yaakov's Torah learning increased Rivkah's love for him, so too our learning increases Hashem's love for us. This is a time when enemies are threatening the Jewish people. We need protection. Learn Torah! Yitzchak Avinu promises that this will protect us. It will also make us beloved. How can Hashem let any harm come to the people that He loves? May Hashem protect us all and bring Moshiach speedily in our days.

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