

Kinder Torah

Parashas Vizos Habracha

Dedicated in Loving Memory of our Father - Sholom Ben Shlomo Meir - Mr. Stanley Weiner z"l. By his Daughter and Son-in-Law

Farewell Dear Succah

"I mma, kinderlach, please come to the Succah. I know that everyone is busy with preparations for Shemini Atzeres. However, let us take a few minutes to say a proper farewell to our beloved Succah."

The family gathers in the Succah, has some cake and drink, and enjoys its holy atmosphere one last time.

"The holiday has been wonderful."

"Yes it has. We have lived in this simple Succah, leaving behind the luxuries of life, getting close to Hashem in the shadow of His Holy Presence. It will be difficult to part from our dear Succah."

"Yes. Come; let us say the farewell prayer."

"May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and G-d of our fathers; just as I lived and sat in this Succah, so too may I merit next year to sit in the Succah of the skin of the Leviathan."

"Kinderlach, in the days to come, Hashem will make one large Succah from the skin of a huge fish called the Leviathan, and all of Klal Yisrael will sit in it."

"Speedily and in our days, Abba."

"Come, kinderlach. Let us say this additional prayer. We had so many mitzvos this Succos. Each mitzvah has its own special angel in Heaven. We ask Hashem to allow those Heavenly angels to accompany us out of the Succah into the house. May they protect us from all sin and misfortune. May they cause Hashem's spirit to be upon us, so that we may serve Him with truth, love, and fear — so that we may learn, observe, and teach His Holy Torah. May the mitzvos of Succah and lulav bring Hashem's mercy upon us, until we return in complete *teshuva*. Then we will merit the best of both worlds, serving Him in perfect truth, as He wishes for us and for all of Klal Yisrael."
"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

The Succah has been our home for seven days. We have eaten, slept, learned Torah, and relaxed there. Every regular activity became a mitzvah, bringing us very close to Hashem. It is so difficult to part from this Succah. However, we can take it with us. The merit of the mitzvos and the angels of the Succah can accompany us into the winter months ahead. Don't let the Succah leave you, kinderlach! Keep Hashem and his mitzvos with you in your heart all year round.

With All Your Heart

"What an exciting moment, Avi! I can hardly wait."

"What is so exciting, Chaim? Everything seems to be proceeding normally. Did I

miss something?"

"We are about to finish reading the entire Sefer Torah."

"We do that every year on Simchas Torah."

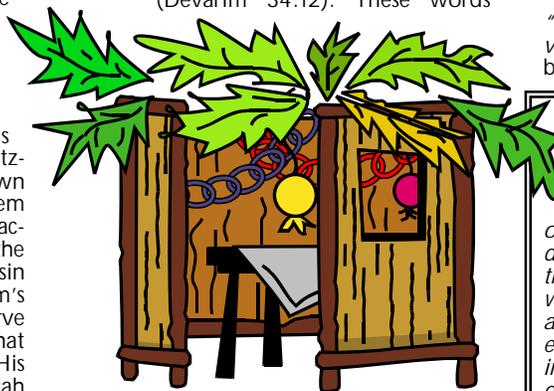
"I know, but it is still exciting."

"I wish I had your enthusiasm, Chaim. How do you do it?"

"Avi, learning through the Sefer Torah is a year-long project. Every week a parasha. Some weeks two parshios. We put in so much effort reviewing the weekly sedra, learning it, and understand it. Now we reach the climax - the *siyum* (completion) of the project."

"You're right, Chaim. I need to take the time to contemplate and appreciate the significance of this event. I also need to devote more time each week to delve into the weekly parasha."

"It is time well spent, Avi. We can even begin now. Let us think about the words we are about to read, the last words of the Torah - '*Li'einei kol Yisrael*' [Before the eyes of all of Klal Yisrael] (Devarim 34:12). These words



complete the Sefer Torah. In a short while, we will be beginning the Sefer Torah anew with the word '*Bereshis*.'"

"Is there a connection between the end and the beginning?"

"That is a very good question, Avi. The Sefer Taamei HaMinhagim (p. 69) finds an interesting connection. He points out that the Torah is called '*Reishis*' - the main thing. The word '*reishis*' is from the word '*rosh*' - head - which is the guiding part of the body. So too, the Torah guides our lives. This Torah, which is called '*Reishis*' was given before the eyes of all of Klal Yisrael. The eyes are referring to seeing. Each and every Jew - all of Klal Yisrael - sees and understands the Torah according to his abilities, his merits, and the purity of his eyes."

"That is beautiful. It certainly motivates me to look into the Torah more deeply."

"If you do that, Avi, you will find another beautiful drasha in the Sefer Taamei HaMinhagim. Look at the last letter in the Torah."

"Lamed."

"What is the first letter?"

"Beis."

"Together they spell '*lev*' - heart. Our Sages say '*Rachmana liba boye*' - the Torah requires heart. To properly learn and fulfill all of the Torah, you have to put your full heart into it. Nothing less will suffice. Once you do that, the Torah enters into your heart. That is the ultimate success. Hashem wants your heart. He wants you to learn Torah with all of your heart, so that you will want to do His Will with all of your heart. That is what the Torah is all about."

"What a heart-warming thought, Chaim."

"Wonderful, Avi. Now that your heart is warmed up to learning Torah, let's make a commitment to learn with our full energies this year. This day of Simchas Torah, when we complete and begin the Torah anew, is a day of great *Siyata Di'Shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance) for learning. A sincere commitment on this day, accompanied by great rejoicing over the Torah, will help your learning throughout the entire year."

"I'm ready. Let's go for it."

"*Li'einei kol Yisrael.*' '*Chazak, chazak, vi'nischazek!*' 'Be strong! Be strong! And be strengthened!'"

Kinderlach . . .

Today is a momentous event. We are finishing the Torah. It is followed by another significant event. Beginning the Torah anew. This is a tremendous opportunity for us, kinderlach. If we decide to learn Torah with our full hearts this year, we will merit great things. We will understand it to the best of our abilities. The Torah that we learn will enter our hearts, penetrate our souls, and implant a deep love for Hashem and desire to fulfill His Will. That is the whole Torah. Rachmana liba boye. With all of your heart.

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