



KINDER TORAH

ת"טז



PARASHAS BAMIDBAR

Dedicated in Loving Memory of our sister Irene Galinsky o"n on her first Yahrzeit ♦ By Shirley Domb and Judy Chaitowitz

THE THIRSTY FISH

"Avi, are you still looking at those fish?"

"Yes, Imma. I can watch the fish tank for hours."

"Did you ever notice that the fish are always opening and closing their mouths, swallowing the water?"

"Yes I did Imma. Why is that?"

"Rav Simcha Wasserman zt"l learned an important lesson from the fish, Avi. Although they live in the water, they are still swallowing water all of the time. Don't they ever have enough? No. Hashem's holy Torah is often compared to water. Just as water flows to the lowest place, so to Torah goes to the lowest people – those who humble themselves. The Jewish people are like fish when it comes to the 'water' of Torah. Although they are immersed in Torah learning, nonetheless, they can never get enough of it. They continue learning on the bus, while waiting in line at the bank, early morning, late at night. They are always looking for another *shiu*r, another opportunity to be inspired."

"Imma, that's great! I want to be like Rav Wasserman's fish, and 'drink in' all of the Torah that I can!"

Kinderlach . . .

Shavuus is coming; our celebration of the giving of the Torah. This is your chance to show yourself and Hashem how "thirsty" you are to hear His words. "Drink in" all of the Torah that you can this Shavuus. Hashem is ready to give you a whole "ocean" of Torah. If you are thirsty enough, you can drink the whole thing.

YOUR TALMIDIM . . . YOUR CHILDREN

"What a beautiful day for a walk in the park, Abba."

"I am enjoying it very much, Chaim."

"Look at that big family Abba. They must have at least fifteen children."

"It is a beautiful sight to see a family that is so blessed. We have to thank Hashem for the merit to behold His wonders of creation."

"Abba, every day I pray to Hashem that I will have a big family."

"How big, Chaim?"

"At least ten children."

"Why such a small request, Chaim? If you are already asking the Almighty for His blessing, set your sights high. Ask for something big."

"Fifteen children?"

"Bigger."

"Twenty? That is almost an open miracle."

"Ask for thousands of children, Chaim."

Chaim is a bit surprised.

"Abba how is it possible for one person to have so many children? Are we permitted to ask Hashem for something that is completely above the laws of nature?"

"It is not above the laws of nature, Chaim. There are several people in the world today that have more than a thousand children."

"Now I am really confused, Abba. I never heard of such a thing. Who are these people and how did they have so many children?"

"They are our Rabbonim, the great teachers of Torah of our generation."

"I still do not understand, Abba. Our Rabbonim may have many *talmidim* (students), but their families are no bigger than normal."

"The answer to your question is in this week's parasha, Chaim. The Torah states, 'These are the offspring of Aaron and Moshe . . . These are the names of the



sons of Aaron: Nadav the first-born, and Avihu, Elazar, and Ithamar' (Bamidbar 3:1,2). Rashi asks the following question: the Torah declares that these are the offspring of Moshe and Aharon, yet it only mentions the sons of Aharon. Why are the sons of Aharon also called the descendants of Moshe? The Gemora (Sanhedrin 19b) answers this question. 'Anyone who teaches Torah to his friend's son is considered as if he (the teacher) fathered that son.'

"That is astounding, Abba. It is still very difficult to understand. The father's attachment to the son is unique. He is one of the partners in the creation of the child. He gives him life. How can the Rebbe duplicate that relationship?"

"That is an excellent question, Chaim. The Torah Temima delves into this subject. He explains that before a man learns Torah, he is rough and very simple. After he learns, he becomes like a new being. Therefore, the one who taught him Torah helped create this new being, just as a father helps create a child. The Maharsha,

in his commentary on the Gemora (Sanhedrin 99b) relates a similar idea. Before a man is familiar with the ways of Torah, he is no more than a sophisticated animal. We say this every morning in our prayers. 'The superiority of man over the beast is nil.' However, when he learns the ways of Torah, he changes. He becomes a human being – the pinnacle and purpose of the entire creation! Therefore, the one who taught him Torah gave him his very humanity!"

"Wow, Abba! I really understand. The Rebbe, who has thirty talmidim in the class, really has thirty sons. The Rosh Yeshiva who has two hundred talmidim in the Yeshiva really has two hundred sons. The venerable Rosh Yeshiva, who has become an *Odom Godol* (great Torah leader), has taught thousands of talmidim over the course of his life. He has thousands of sons!"

"Exactly, Chaim."

"I want to have a very, very large family, Abba. I want to be a very big Talmid Chochochom – a teacher of Torah to many talmidim. I want to teach Torah for many, many years and have a very big family of thousands and thousands of talmidim. That is my ambition in life."

"May Hashem fulfill your request Chaim!"

Kinderlach . . .

*Before a person learns Torah, he can hardly be called a person. He can walk and talk, however, he is only interested in satisfying his lowly desires for riches and honor. Once he begins to learn the ways of Hashem and His Torah, he sees a different path. He develops *rachmonus* (mercy). He becomes *tsnuah* (modest). He does acts of *chesed* (kindness) for others. He develops his mind to understand Hashem's Torah and His world. He knows how to think clearly and properly. His knowledge of the *halacha* guides his actions in all areas of life. He literally becomes 'tsuras ho'odom' – the image of a person – as Hashem intended him to be. The ones who taught this man Torah helped create this *tsuras ho'odom*. Just as his father participated in his physical creation, so too his Rebbe participates in the creation of his elevated *neshama* (soul). *Kinderlach*, learn Torah well and elevate your *neshama*. Learn it well enough to teach. Then teach others Torah. You will be like a father to them. The more talmidim that you teach, the more children you will have. Hashem should bless you all with very, very big families!*

Parasha Questions:

- From what age were the Leviim counted? (3:14)
- On which side did Machane Ephraim camp? (2:18)
- Who was the Nasi of Asher? (2:27)
- Where did the Leviim camp? (1:43)

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