



KINDER TORAH.™

7"01

PARASHAS HAAZINU

TESHUVA MI'AHAVA

"Boruch Hashem for Shabbos, Abba."

"Absolutely, Chaim. Shabbos is Hashem's precious gift to our nation. I feel a special gratitude to Hashem on this particular Shabbos."

"Why is that, Abba?"

"We are now between Yom Kippur and Succos. We are so busy preparing for the upcoming *chag*. This day of rest is so wonderful. It gives us a chance to rest physically from all of the work. More importantly, we have the opportunity to stop and think; to contemplate what we have accomplished in the past, and what we hope to achieve in the future."

"That is always good advice, Abba. Did you have something particular in mind?"

"Yes, Chaim. We have spent the past forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur fervently doing *teshuva*. We knew that these were days of judgment, and we fervently tried to correct our mistakes. We were motivated by the fear of a harsh judgment. This is called *teshuva mi'yira* (from fear). Ahead of us is Succos. We will leave our comfortable homes for seven days and sit in the shade of the Succah. There, sheltered under Hashem's wings (so to speak), we will delight in His Presence. This is also *teshuva – teshuva mi'ahava* (from love). It is fundamentally different from *teshuva mi'yira*. It is motivated by an intense love of Hashem, and a desire to be close to Him. Who would ever think of disobeying someone whom he loves so much?"

What is the source of this great love for Hashem, Abba?"

"GratITUDE is a *yesod* (foundation) of Ahavas Hashem. We remember the wonderful things that Hashem has done and continues to do for our nation in general and us in particular. This awakens in us a tremendous feeling of *hakoras hatov* (gratitude). With this feeling in our hearts, it becomes easy to love the One to whom we are so grateful."

"Abba, the parasha speaks about this very point."

"Yes, Chaim. It is so appropriate that we read parashas Haazinu on the Shabbos before Succos. Moshe Rabbeinu's beautiful song includes verses of praise of Hashem's kindness to His chosen nation – Klal Yisrael. 'Hashem's portion is His people . . . He discovered them in a desert land . . . He preserved them like the pupil of His eye . . . He carried them like an eagle carries its young . . . Hashem alone guided them . . . He fed them with the choicest delicacies . . .' (adapted from Devarim 32:9-14). Hashem's has been kind to us from our very inception as a nation. And He continues giving us the best to this very day. Therefore, we go with great love and sit in His Succah. We return to Him with deep everlasting grati-

tude and love."

Kinderlach . . .

The Succah is a place to come very close to Hashem. His Shechina (Divine Presence) is there. We have the opportunity to spend time with Him and enjoy His company for seven days. However, we need preparation. Now is the time to contemplate Who He is, and what He has done for us. Begin with parashas Haazinu. Think about all of the chassodim (acts of kindness) that He did for our forefathers. Then think about your own life, and how Hashem has helped you and continues to assist you every moment of every day. You will become so filled with gratitude and love, that you will want to spend every moment with Hashem and fulfill His mitzvos with all of your koach. Then go sit in the Succah, and perform the mitzvos of the chag with all of your heart. Hashem loves you and you love Him. This is the ultimate teshuva – teshuva mi'ahava.



DEEP MEANING

"Okay, let's go over this again, Chaim. Who was the sister of Lotan?"

"Ummm . . . Adda?"

"No, she was the mother of Elifaz"

"Ummm . . . Bosmas?"

"No, she was the mother of Reuel. Do you want to try again, or do you want me to tell you the answer?"

"Please tell me, Abba."

"Timna was the sister of Lotan."

"Now I remember. Abba, may I ask you a question?"

"Of course, Chaim."

"I hope it is not out of line."

"Don't worry, Chaim."

"Why do I have to know who the sister of Lotan was? I know that it is written in the Torah, but do I need to know everything that is written in the Torah? Aren't some things more important than others?"

"Chaim, Rashi address that very question in this week's parasha."

"Really? Where?"

"The verse states, 'For it (the Torah) is not an empty thing for you. For it is your life' (Devarim 32:47). Empty? Who would ever possibly think that the Torah is empty, *chas veshalom* (Heaven forbid)."

"No one, Abba."

"Exactly, Chaim. Therefore, the verse must be teaching us something. Rashi explains it by using the very same verse that we are learning. Timna was from a royal family. Her brother, Lotan was one of the princes of Seir. She could have married one of the princes of her own nation. Yet, she chose instead to be a concubine to Eisav, the descendant of Avraham. This demonstrates the greatness of Avraham Avinu. Timna would rather be a concubine in Avraham's house than a princess in her own nation."

"Wow, Abba."

"Yes, Chaim. Rashi here in Parashas Haazinu explains that nothing in the Torah is empty of meaning. If you search, you will be rewarded. Our sages found deep meaning to the words, 'And Timna was the sister of Lotan.'"

"Abba, you have given me a whole new perspective on my learning. All of the Torah that I learn is very meaningful. If I don't see the meaning right away, I just have to search a little harder."

"Chaim, with an attitude like that, you are on your way to becoming a *talmid chochom*."

Kinderlach . . .

What is the excitement of receiving a gift? Unwrapping it. Sometimes there are several layers of wrapping paper. As you remove each one, your excitement grows. Sometimes the deep meaning of a verse or a Mishna or a Gemora is "hidden". We have to get to work "unwrapping" it. Layer by layer. Until we get to the gift. A real treat. Enjoy those sweet words of Torah, kinderlach. They are the best.

Parasha Questions:

- What causes Klal Yisrael to rebel? (32:15)
- How can one of the enemy pursue 1000 Jews? (32:30 and Rashi)
- What gives us long life? (32:47)
- Why did Moshe did outside of Eretz Yisrael? (32:51 and Rashi)

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