

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Vayigash

Tsur Mishelo

A bba, the past few Shabbosim have been so special. You have explained the words of the *zemiras* to us, we have sung them, and felt the connection of *shomayim va'aretz* (heaven and earth). "Shall we continue tonight, kinderlach with 'Tsur Mishelo'?"

"Please, Abba!"

"Okay, kinderlach. The beginning of this *zemer* resembles the *Bircas Ha'Mazone*, as we thank Hashem for the food that we have eaten and the land (Eretz Yisrael) that we have inherited. We then ask Him to mercifully rebuild Yerushalayim, the Beis HaMikdash, and send moshiach. Let us begin with the first word – 'tsur'. What does it mean?"

"Rock."

"Correct, Esti. Why do we refer to Hashem as the Rock?"

"Because He is the foundation that holds up everything. Just like a properly constructed building rests on bedrock, so too the entire world rests on Hashem's strong shoulders (so to speak). We are fortunate enough to have eaten from His bounty, therefore we faithfully bless Him. We have eaten our fill, and left over (some food) as He wishes."

"Why does Hashem want us to leave food over, Abba?"

"The gemora (Sanhedrin 92a), the Shulchan Auruch (Orach Chaim 180, and Mishna Breurah) relate that

a person will not see blessing in what he does unless he leaves over some food from his meal. One reason is that food is ready if poor people come. Another reason given is that the blessings of Bircas Ha'mazone can rest on the food left on the table. Finally, we demonstrate Hashem's generosity by showing that we cannot finish all that He has given us. We then bless Him as He has commanded us, 'And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem, your G-d' (Devarim 8:10)."

H ashem is so good and generous."

"That is how the *zemer* continues, kinderlach. 'He feeds His world, our Shepherd, our Father.' He guides us like a faithful shepherd, and has mercy on us like a father. 'We have eaten His bread and drunk His wine. Therefore (we are obligated to) praise His Name (for His kindness), pay tribute to Him saying, "There is none as holy as Hashem!"' The Medrash Tehillim (89:3) tells a parable about a king who had a tremendous treasury filled with all good things. He asked himself, 'Who will enjoy them? I will acquire servants, feed them, and then ask them to praise me.' So too, Hashem filled His world with a bounty of good, created man, gave him reign over everything, and then commanded him to bless the Holy One Who provided everything."

"We want to bless and praise Hashem,

Abba. How do we do it?"

T hat is the subject of the next stanza, kinderlach. 'With song and the voice of thanks we bless our G-d.' For what? 'For the land so desirable and good (Eretz Yisrael) that He gave our forefathers as an inheritance.' Who desired our land? Many people: ancient kings, our forefathers, Moshe Rabbeinu, and Hashem Himself (when He chose Yerushalayim as the place to build His Temple and bestow His *Shechina* [Divine Presence]). We acknowledge that He has satisfied us with food and sustenance. His kindness is mighty and Hashem is truth!"

"Why do we end with that statement that Hashem is truth, Abba?"

"Because He kept His promise to the Avos to give us Eretz Yisrael, kinderlach. And so, we now request that He keep His ultimate promise, and bring the moshiach. 'Be merciful in Your kindness upon Your nation, our Rock, upon Tzion, the resting place of your *Shechina*, the shrine and home of our splendor.' We ask Him to have mercy on us and on Yerushalayim. May the son of Dovid, Your servant, come and redeem us. The breath of our life is dependent upon the moshiach of Hashem. (Please send him)."

הודו לה' כי טוב!

"We want him to come Abba!"

"Of course, kinderlach. This is what we pray for every day. When he does arrive, wonderful things will happen. The Mikdash (Temple) will be rebuilt and the city of Tzion will become filled with our brothers whom Hashem will gather from the four corners of the earth. There we will sing a new Shir (song) which has never been sung before. It will be a song rejoicing the happiness of the gathering of the exiles from all over the world. 'May the Merciful One, the Sanctified One be blessed and exalted over a full cup of wine, as is worthy to bless Him!'"

"Amen, Abba! What a beautiful way to bless Hashem!"

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem kept His promise to our forefathers and gave them the Holy Land. He treats us royally by giving us delicious food and drink today and every day. He will exalt us among all the nations in the future, by sending moshiach, returning us to Eretz Yisrael, and building the Beis HaMikdash, as He promised. For all this, we thank and praise Him by singing this beautiful zemer, Tsur Mishelo. May His ultimate promise be fulfilled right away!

Gratitude

T he air was charged with anticipation. The emotional reunion between Yaakov and his long-lost son Yosef was about to take place (Bereshis 46:29). One can imagine the feelings of Yaakov Avinu for his favorite son. He loved him so much that he refused to be consoled for the entire time that Yosef was gone. Yaakov Avinu was a *novi* (prophet). One can only experience *nevuah* (prophecy) from Hashem when he is happy. Yaakov Avinu did not receive one *nevuah* (prophecy) during the entire time of Yosef's absence due to his extreme sadness. We can only begin to picture how happy he must have been to see Yosef.

W hat actually happened? Yosef fell onto Yaakov's neck and wept. Rashi explains that Yaakov, however, did not weep. Instead, he recited *Kriyas Shema*, the prayer by which we accept *Oi Malchus Shomayim* (the Yoke of Heaven) upon ourselves. At the height of his ecstasy, his first thought was about Hashem.

T he Maharal in his sefer *Gur Aryeh* relates that when Yaakov saw his son Yosef, love and fear of Hashem came into his heart. How wonderful and complete are Hashem's middos; see how He rewards His faithful ones! This is the trait of the pious ones, when something good happens to them, they cleave to Hashem for the kindness and the truth He has done for them.

Kinderlach . . .

What was Yaakov Avinu's first thought when something good happened to him? To thank and praise Hashem. This hacoras hatov (gratitude) is a wonderful middah (character trait) that we can learn from. What do we do when good things happen to us? Do we say, "Boruch Hashem?" "Hodu Lashem Ki Tov"? We should. We know that all good things come from Hashem. So, why not thank Him directly? The next time we get a good grade on a test, let's say, "Boruch Hashem!" When our Sabba and Safta come to visit us from far away, let's say "Hodu Lashem Ki Tov!" We're so happy that Hashem has been good to us!

Parasha Questions:

- Who is a person more obligated to honor, his father or his grandfather? (46:1 and Rashi)
- Is there a difference between the possessions one acquires in Eretz Yisrael and those acquired outside of the Holy Land? (46:6 and Rashi)
- Why does the verse use the singular form, "nefesh" when referring to the 70 souls who went down to Mitzrayim? (Rashi 46:26)

Kinder Torah © Copyright 2009 ❖ All rights reserved to the author Simcha Groffman ❖ P.O.B. 5338, Jlm, 91052, Israel ❖ Tel: (02) 585-2216

Kinder Torah is distributed each week Ashkelon, Bayit Vegan, Beit Shemesh, Beit Yisrael, Beitar, Cleveland, Efrat, Geula, Haifa, Har Nof, Hillside, Ilford, Johannesburg, Kiryat Sefer, Kosel HaMaaravi, Maale Amos, Machane Yehuda, Manchester, Mattersdorf, Milwauakee, Minchas Yitzchak, Moshav Mattisyahu, Monsey, Neve Yaakov, North Miami Beach, Peduel, Psagot, Ramot, Rommema, Sanhedria HaMurchevet, Telz Stone, Toronto, Unsdorf, Yishuv Eli, Zichron Yaakov and other cities.

Subscribe for yourself or sponsor your shul. Just 120\$ per year. All contributions are deductible from Maaser Kesafim. #586#