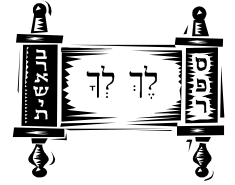




KINDER TORAH®

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Lech Lecha



Our Job

“When Avraham Avinu was 99 years old, Hashem appeared to him and said, ‘I am E-I Shad-dai’” (Bereshis 17:1). Shad-dai is one of the names of Hashem. The Malbim zt”l explains that “Shad-dai” is a contraction of the words, “Who said to the world, ‘enough’”. When Hashem created the world, He stopped before it was completed. “Enough has been created. We will leave the completion of the job to . . . man.” Man’s job is to fix up the world and finish the creation. The first of man’s deeds in this world is the bris milah. This completes the physical form of his body. Just as man begins his life by completing his own small world, he must continue working throughout his life fixing up the big world, thereby doing his part in completing the creation. In this way, the deeds of man are more pleasant than Hashem’s creation of the world, because man’s deeds finish the task.

Kinderlach . . .
We have lots of work to do. Boruch Hashem, we will never be unemployed. Hashem brought us into this world to complete the job of creation. He does not waste any time putting us to work. Right away, on the eighth day we have our bris milah. That fixes up our bodies. Now we must continue with the much more difficult task of fixing up our middos (character traits). Let us see what the parsha has to say about that.

No Greater Wealth

“You will surely know that your offspring will be aliens in a strange land (Egypt) . . . they will be oppressed for 400 years . . . and afterward they will leave with great wealth” (Bereshis 15:13-14). Thus, Hashem informed Avraham Avinu of the upcoming slavery and redemption from Egypt. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l comments that the simple reading of the verse cannot be correct.

Although the Jewish people did leave Egypt with much gold and silver, it could not possibly have been worth more than the suffering and hard labor that they endured there. No amount of money could possibly have compensated them for all of the children who were slaughtered for Paroh to bathe in their blood. Or the children who were cemented into the walls in place of bricks. Or the salary for 600,000 men for 210 years of backbreaking labor. Therefore, what is the meaning of the “great wealth” that they were to receive upon leaving Egypt? Their *middos* (character traits) were purified like gold and silver. The slavery and suffering in Egypt burned out the bad feelings that existed amongst the sons of Yaakov. There is no greater wealth than the acquisition of good *middos*.

Kinderlach . . .
Any successful businessman will tell you that you become rich by working hard. Rav Sorotzkin agrees with that. To acquire the wealth of good middos, you must work hard. As we said before, Hashem gave us a job to do in this world. Here is one of your tasks. Have patience with your brothers and sisters. Do your best to overlook little things like seating arrangements at the dinner table. Or who must go to bed first. Or who plays with a particular toy. Do things for your brother. Help him with his homework. Offer him your piece of cake. Share your new book with your sister. Smile and speak softly to everyone in the house. Now you are working at your job, which will bring you great wealth and fortune.

Perfect

“Walk before Me and be *tomim* (perfect)” (Bereshis 17:1). Hashem tells Avraham Avinu that the bris milah will make him *tomim*. Rabbeinu Bechaye zt”l explains that this is the greatest praise that the Torah can bestow upon a tzaddik. Yaakov, Yitzchak, and Noach were all called *tomim*. Dovid HaMelech

informs us that one who is *tomim* will merit eternal life. What makes a person *tomim*? Rabbeinu Bechaye zt”l explains that a *tam* has no inconsistencies. He does not say one thing and mean something else. His mouth speaks what his heart believes. He does not try to deceive himself or anyone else. That is one aspect of perfection.

Kinderlach . . .
Imma asks you to brush your teeth before bed. You don’t like brushing your teeth. You say, “I’m too tired.” If she said that you may go and play a game, would you be too tired? You have to be tam and say what you really feel. Imma makes you a nice dinner of mashed potatoes, carrots, and fish. You do not feel like eating fish. You say, “I’m not hungry.” If she offered you ice cream, would you say that you are not hungry? You have to explain to Imma that you do not feel like eating fish tonight. Imma asks you to help carry some bags of groceries. “I don’t have koach (strength),” you say. Are you really so weak? Would you have the strength to play a ball game? All of these are examples of saying what you mean. If you learn to always be honest in your speech, you will merit the Torah’s greatest praise. As we said before, we have a job to do; one which will bring us great wealth. The job that brings the greatest praise will surely bring you great wealth.

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