

עמלים



בתורה

KINDER TORAH®

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table — Parshas Bechukosai

In Memory of Adar Chaim Elazar Ben Rivka z"l



Make the News

"Did you hear the news?"

"Good or bad?"

"It happened in the country of Lo Tishmau. There were terrible tragedies, one after the other: drought, famine, disease, war, pestilence, and epidemics. Large cities lay in ruins, despair and hysteria are everywhere."

"Oy vey. That's terrible. Did you know that there is another country where just the opposite is happening?"

"Where is that?"

"The country of Amelim. The people there are very wealthy. The land produces bumper crops and they live a life of plenty. They have a mighty army that strikes fear in the heart of all enemies. The people live serenely in peace."

"That's great."

"Where would you rather live, in Amelim or in Lo Tishmau?"

"That's an easy question to answer. Of course, I would rather live in Amelim. Wouldn't you?"

"Of course. Guess what? You can live in Amelim."

"How?"

"Just read this week's parsha, along with Rashi's commentary, and follow the instructions."

Kinderlach . . .

Do you recognize the word "amelim"? It means toiling. The parsha promises the Jewish people a life of blessing and plenty. Rashi explains that the blessing will come when we are *amelim* (toiling) in Torah (Vayikra 26:3). The words "lo tishmau" also appear in the parsha. They mean you will not listen. If we do not listen to Hashem by not toiling in Torah, then our life will become as miserable as the country of Lo Tishmau. You can choose where to live. Just read on for details.

Always

"If you will travel in My decrees and observe My commandments" (Vayikra 26:3). The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains each word in this verse to give us precise instructions how to toil in Torah. The Torah refers to toiling as a *chok* (decree which we follow automatically, although its reason is hidden from us). We are commanded to learn things that we know and have learned previously. Why should we learn them again? Because Hashem wants us to learn all of the time, until learning become a *chok* to us. The word "decrees" is written in plural form to teach us that we must learn Torah day and night. Another reason for the plural form is to illustrate two motivations for learning: to know and to teach. How can we travel in Hashem's decrees? We must learn Torah even when we are traveling. Additionally, our feet should always take us to the *Beis HaMedrash* (Torah study hall). The word travel is also written in the plural form to teach that we should search for many explanations of the Torah. Additionally, all of our ways (our eating, sleeping, working, etc.) should all be to further our Torah study.

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem has set high standards for us. He wants us to be constantly learning or preparing to learn. Wonderful! We have the best of both worlds! We get to learn and enjoy the sweetness of Torah all of the time. And we also get all of the blessings of wealth and peace. What could be better?

Bli Neder

"Pinchas, we must stop learning now."

"But Abba, I want to learn more."

"I do too, but I must go to a Bar Mitzvah. Mr. Rosen told me that he would meet me at the bus stop at 8:00 to travel to the Bar Mitzvah

together."

"Okay Abba. Please wish a mazel tov from me."

Pinchas' father hurries to the bus stop. The 8:00 bus arrives, and Mr. Rosen is not there. The 8:15 and 8:30 buses also pass. Finally, he gets on the 8:45 bus without Mr. Rosen. When he arrives at the Bar Mitzvah, he calls Mr. Rosen.

"Oh, I'm so sorry Mendy. Something came up and I forgot to call you."

This week's parsha speaks about *nedarim* (vows) (Vayikra 27). *Nedarim* are a very serious matter. The Gemora (Nedarim 22a) teaches that making a vow is like building a forbidden altar. Fulfilling the vow is like offering a sacrifice on that altar. The Pele Yoatz informs us that terrible punishments will come to one who makes a *neder*. What is considered a *neder*? If we look in the text of the *Hatoras Nedarim* (Annulment of Vows) that we say each Erev Rosh Hashanah, we find that promises and even informally spoken commitments need annulment. Even unspoken commitments (doing something three times) are included in our annulment statement.

Kinderlach . . .

Your words are important. People depend upon you to fulfill what you say. Pinchas father was left waiting at the bus stop for 45 minutes, instead of learning with his son, because Mr. Rosen did not keep his word. Hashem also hears every word that you say and takes note of all of your actions. Therefore, the Pele Yoatz has some good advice for us. Develop the habit of saying "bli neder" (without a vow) whenever you say that you will do something. That way you have not made a commitment. You should still try your hardest to fulfill what you say. After all people are depending on you. However, saying "bli neder" will make you realize the seriousness of your words, and avoid the punishment for those who make *nedarim*.



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