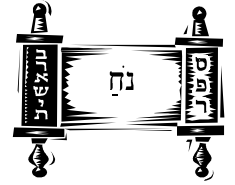




KINDER TORAH®



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Noach

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Fannie Bas Avraham z"l

Your Children

These are the offspring of Noach. Noach was a *tzaddik*, perfect in his generation” (Bereshis 6:9). Rashi comments that the main offspring of *tzaddikim* (righteous people) are their good deeds. Torah could have used a different example to illustrate the point that good deeds are very important. Why did it compare them to offspring? Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l explains that we should love our good deeds (mitzvos) as we love our children. Sometimes a person takes a mitzvah lightly or does not perform it at all because he feels that it is not so important. There are other more important mitzvos to do. Would he take the same attitude toward a son who was not so brilliant, or strong, or healthy? Quite the opposite! He would redouble his efforts to help him even more. A person takes great pains to insure that his children have the very best that he can possibly give them. He should take equal care to make sure he performs his mitzvos with his very best efforts, beautifying the mitzvos as much as possible.

Kinderlach . . .
Abba and Imma love you so much. There isn't anything they would not do for you. They feed you, clothe you, help you with your schoolwork, and care for you when you are sick. Rav Moshe is telling us that we should love our mitzvos as much as parents love their children. That may sound difficult at first, but it really is not. You can find something you like about every mitzvah. Focus on it. Putting effort into things brings love. Do you remember working hard helping Abba with the Sukkah? Didn't you feel great seeing it finished? That was because you worked on it. It is the same with all mitzvos. Work on them and you will come to love them.

Kindness Saved Them

The end of all flesh has come before Me because the earth is filled with *chamas* (robbery)” (Bereshis 6:13). Rav Elyahu Dessler zt”l explains that the flood which destroyed the entire world was the verdict handed down by Hashem for the crime of *chamas* (robbery). Why

did the world receive such a severe punishment for robbery? Theft is the result of the desire to take. People who are only interested in themselves, thereby taking what does not belong to them will destroy themselves and their entire society. What is the antidote? Giving. We find Noach and his family, who survived the flood were totally occupied with giving during the entire year that they were enclosed within the ark.

The Gemora (Sanhedrin 108b) relates a conversation between Shem, the son of Noach and Eliezer the servant of Abraham about life in the ark. “How did you manage to care for all of those animals in the ark?” asked Eliezer. “It was very difficult,” Shem replied. “We had to feed each animal at its eating time -- day and night. We had to figure out what food each animal ate. One time my father was late feeding the lion. He let out such a roar that all of the animals in the ark were terrified. My father went to him and the lion bit him, crippling him for life. None of us slept a wink the entire year. We were too busy caring for all of the animals, giving each one his individual food at the proper time.”

Kinderlach . . .
Chamas was the sin of Noah's generation. It is the same sin as chamasnu (We took things against people's will). Do you remember that from the viduy (confession) on Yom Kippur? We all felt so badly when we thought about those sins. No is our chance to make sure we don't repeat them. "Me first. I only got two candies and everyone else got three. I want more time on the swing even though there are many others waiting. I want a second piece of cake even though others did not even have one piece yet." These are all actions of taking. What would Noah do? "Please go ahead before me. Two pieces of candy are plenty for me. Please, take your turn on the swing; I've had enough time. Please make sure everyone else has received a piece of cake before you give me one." Noah was a baal chessed (master of acts of kindness). Chessed saved him from destruction. Stealing, pushing, grabbing, and taking only lead to bad things. Chessed is the cure for those bad things.

Say It Nicely

Hashem commanded Noach and his family to enter the ark. Along with them, seven of each type of *tahorah* (pure) animal and two of each type of animal which is *annenah tahorah* (not pure) (Bereshis 7:8). The Gemora (Pesachim 3a) explains that the Torah could have used the word *tamei* (impure) and thereby used eight fewer letters. We all know that the Torah does not waste one word or even one single letter. Why, therefore did the Torah use extra letters and words to describe these impure animals? To teach us the importance of speaking nicely. Rebbe Yehoshua Ben Levi says, “A person should never let a displeasing word pass his lips. Behold, the Torah added eight extra letters in order to avoid using a displeasing word.”

Kinderlach . . .
Before you speak, think about what you are about to say. Is there a nicer way to say it? Instead of saying, "You are wrong," try saying, "Perhaps there is another way to look at it. Let's examine the facts together and see if this is really so." Instead of saying, "Ow! You hurt me," try saying "I'm sure you didn't realize but you bumped into me." Instead of saying, "You're always oversleeping," try saying, "It's time to get up. Can I help you with something?" Sweet words are like sugar on the lips and soothing to the soul. Speak nicely. People will always be anxious to hear what you have to say.

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