

parshas
Re'eh

Kinder Torah

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Chaya Rochel (Karen) Portnoy ז"ל
For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table

פרשת
ראה

The Final Test

"When there will arise in your midst a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and he will produce a sign or a wonder . . . do not listen to him . . . for Hashem your G-d is testing you to know whether you love Hashem your G-d with all your heart and all your soul (Devarim 13:2-4)." The Chofetz Chaim zt"l explains this series of verses by asking the following question. Why did Hashem give this false prophet the power to produce a wondrous sign? Only to test the Jewish people. Similarly, Hashem makes evil people materially successful in this world in order to test us. And so it will be in the days before the coming of Moshiach. Klal Yisrael will undergo very difficult tests. Those who leave the path of Torah will become successful in all fields of endeavor. Yet this is only a test to see if the righteous have true love for Hashem and His Torah in their hearts.

The Chofetz Chaim ends with the following statement. "This is especially true in our days. We see evil people who are succeeding in destroying the entire world. With all of this we can not despair nor let our spirits fall. Hashem is testing us to see if we will keep our part of the Covenant. And if we love Him with all of our hearts."

Kinderlach . . .

The Chofetz Chaim said these words almost one hundred years ago, but they are as true today as they were then. Our enemies seem so powerful. They strike terror in the hearts of all people worldwide. How can it be? How can such evil people have such power? It is all a test. We have only one individual to fear. Hashem. If we love Him with all our hearts, then we pass the test. May we soon see the fulfillment of Rosh Hashanah prayer, "and all the wickedness will vanish like smoke".

A Pure Heart

The end of the parsha recounts the laws of the *Shalosh Regalim* (Three Pilgrimage Festivals). Nowadays our

tefillos (prayers) substitute for the service in the Beis HaMikdash. "Purify our hearts to serve you in truth" is a phrase mentioned in the prayers of these days. We serve Hashem by doing mitzvos. We can have many thoughts on our mind at the time we perform a mitzvah. We ask Hashem to make all of our thoughts and intentions only for the sake of His Holy Name. The mitzvah should be done totally for His sake.

A similar idea is expressed earlier in the parsha. "Do the good and straight (act) in the eyes of Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 12:28). Rashi relates that *tov* (good) is in eyes of Heaven, and *yashar* (straight) is in the eyes of man. The Maharal explains that *tov* refers to something that is intrinsically good, although it may not look that way to the outside world. However, Hashem sees into a person's heart and knows if the act is truly good.

Kinderlach . . .

"A poor person is coming this way, asking for tzedaka. I hope he doesn't see me. Oh well. He saw me. Here he comes." "I'm collecting for . . ." "Okay, okay. You don't have to explain. Here's your tzedaka. Bye." Is that leiv tahor (a pure heart)? Did you do that mitzvah with only the purest intentions? How should we give tzedaka to poor people? With a smile. "Thank you sir, for bringing me a big mitzvah!"

Grant Us Fear

This week marks the beginning of the month of Elul, a thirty-day period of time that culminates with Rosh Hashanah, the *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgment). Hashem gives us a beautiful present this month, the opportunity to do *tshuva* and correct our mistakes. Let us focus on one aspect of *tshuva*.

"You shall follow after Hashem and you shall fear Him" (Devarim 13:5). The previous verses explained that we must love Hashem. We now learn that we must also fear Him. In fact, this is the focus of the first addition that we make to the prayers

of Rosh Hashanah. "And so, grant that fear of Hashem our G-d be upon all of Your works, and Your awe be upon all that You have created." There was a time when people had to work hard to develop the emotion of fear. It was not part of their daily lives. Everything seemed peaceful and secure. Nowadays things are radically different. Fear is all around us. Rav Mattisyahu Solomon, Shlita, (as quoted in the book, "*City On Fire*") spoke about fear, shortly after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. Fear is a motivating force. What is the difference between a hero and a coward? Fear drives one forward and the other one back. Hashem wants us to use that emotion constructively. Direct that fear towards Him. Turn it into *Yiras Shomayim* (Fear of Heaven).

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem has done a wonderful favor for us. He has given us a big dose of fear. What are we going to do with that? Will we try to ignore it and go about our business, nervously looking over our shoulders? Will we only think about the political and military point of view? Or will we strengthen our Yiras Shomayim? Will we pray better, asking Hashem to help us? Will we learn more seriously, knowing that Torah learning protects the Jewish people? Will we make extra special efforts to do acts of chessed (kindness) for people? If we only fear Him, then we will do His will. Then He will do His part and protect us.

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