

parshas
Shoftim

Kinder Torah

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table

פרשת
שופטים

What Will Be?

"What will be?"

"I don't know."

"Peace or war? Turmoil or tranquility? Prosperity or depression? Health or sickness? The whole world is hanging in the balance. The news is so unpredictable. Anything can happen. What will be?"

"You shall be whole-hearted (Tamim) with Hashem, your G-d" (Devarim 18:13). The Malbim elucidates that three names of Hashem are used in this verse. The third name *Elokecha* refers to the trait of Hashem that describes His cleaving to His nation - Israel - and guides them with *hashgacha pratis* (personal supervision). The name *Tamim* refers to Hashem's straight heart (so to speak). If we are straight with Him, and do not look for other sources of information about the future, then He will be straight with us, and personally guide our lives in the manner that suits us perfectly.

This matter requires some thought. Who is running the world? The politicians? The financiers? The generals? The press? The terrorists? Wrong on all counts. Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, would not leave such people in charge of His creation. It doesn't make sense. Rather, He and He alone is running the world. We have no reason to listen to the opinions of these other people. We have a direct connection to the Source of All Life. He wants us to strengthen that connection. Trust Him. Everything is going according to the plan.

Kinderlach . . .

What will be? Hashem's plan is proceeding exactly on schedule. Day by day the events unfold. Our role in this master plan is to trust Him. Accept everything that He does and realize that it is good. Thank Him for everything when you say Birkas Hamazon and Modim. He will continue to do good. That is what will be.

Can It Be?

"Oh, no."

"What happened, dear?"

"The spoon that we always use for milk fell into the plate with meat."

"No problem, I'll call the Rav."

They call the Rav, who asks them all the pertinent details of the case.

"Good news, dear. Everything is kosher. The spoon was clean and cold, and so was the meat. Just wash off the spoon."

"Boruch Hashem."

"We're always so happy when the Rav's *psak* (ruling) is easy to follow. However, I remember a time when I asked a Rav a *Shayla* (question) and the answer was not so pleasant. He told me that something I had been doing for years was wrong. I had to change a whole aspect of my business, which involved a lot of time and money. It was hard for me to accept at first. I thought the Rav was mistaken."

"I remember that also, dear. But you followed what the Rav said, right away. Do you remember what you said after you made the change necessary to follow the *psak*?"

"No."

"Boruch Hashem. I had been doing the wrong thing for years. Now I am on the right path."

"According to the Torah . . . you will not deviate . . . right or left" (Devarim 17:11). Rashi explains (according to the Sifrei) that even if the Rav will tell you that right is left and left is right, you must listen to him. The Mizrahi elaborates: "It seems that the law is surely wrong. He has mistaken right for left and left for right! How can I follow his *psak*?" You must follow him. Hashem gave the Torah on Har Sinai over 3000 years ago with the stipulation that it must be followed according to the *psak* of the wise men of the generation. They have *Ru'ach Hakodesh* (The Holy Spirit) that will guard them from any mistakes or obstructions. Their mouths will speak only the truth.

Kinderlach . . .

Our Gedolim (Torah giants) are very special people. They are very learned in Torah. This gives them wisdom. But they have much more than that. No matter how wise a person is he can always make a mistake. He is only human. When it comes to Torah matters, our Gedolim do not make mistakes. They have the Divine Spirit upon them. They are above human error. Listen to them.

Days of Special Favor

"Hello everyone, I'm home."

"Hello, Abba. You face looks a little unusual, Abba. You look happy, and yet it seems that you have been crying."

"You're right, Shaindy. I am very happy. And I have also been crying."

"Why, Abba?"

"This morning we blew the Shofar in shul. I began crying. I thought of Rosh Hashanah, the upcoming judgment day, when all of our lives hang in the balance. The scales of judgment are poised with the mitzvos

on one side, and the sins on the other side. So many sins, so many mistakes. How will we survive? I could not stop crying."

"Abba, I'm so scared."

"I was too. Then I remembered something and I became very happy."

"What was that?"

"These days, until Yom Kippur, are called *yemai ratzon* (days of special favor). Hashem is very close to us during these days. He is ready and willing to forgive all of our sins. As soiled as we are, Hashem will wipe the slate clean."

"How, Abba?"

"We must do *Tshuva*. We must stop doing the sin, regret it, resolve never to do it in the future, and confess. Then Hashem will welcome us back into His presence, like a parent welcoming back a long-lost child."

"Abba, that is wonderful. But why just these days and not the rest of the year?"

"Hashem infused these days with holiness from the time of Moshe Rabbeinu. After the *chet ha'egel* (Sin of the Golden Calf) the fate of the Jewish People hung in the balance for 80 days. The last 40 days, from the first day of the month of Elul till Yom Kippur, Hashem favored klal Yisrael. He accepted their *tshuva*, and granted them atonement on Yom Kippur. Then, and for all time, these are days when Hashem comes close to us and accepts our *tshuva* directly."

"Now I see why you are so happy."

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem gives us a wonderful opportunity. Don't lose it. Take advantage of it. Pray a little better today than you did yesterday. Do one more act of chessed today, than you did yesterday. Learn a few minutes more today than yesterday. Make changes. Improve yourself. That's what Elul is all about.

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