



Kinder Torah

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table



Today

"What's that up ahead?"
 "It looks like a fork in the road."
 "You're right. Which road do we take? Left or right?"
 "I'll look at the map. Have you noticed that we have encountered many forks in the road on this trip?"
 "Yes, we have a lot of choices and a lot of decisions to make."

"Behold, I have placed before you today life and good, death and evil." (Devarim 30:15). "Today?" Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l is puzzled. Why does the Torah use the word "today"? The Torah does not need to give a date to this choice between good and evil. Perhaps the reason is because a person is faced with this decision every day. There are many forks in the road. Even if he chose the wrong path yesterday and the day before, he need not despair. He can choose the right path today. The opposite is also true. His correct choices until now do not guarantee that he will choose correctly in the future. Every day is a new decision.

Kinderlach . . .

The neighbor grabbed your ball away from you. Should you ask him nicely to return it? Last week when he grabbed the ball you asked him nicely and he did not listen to you. Maybe this time you should raise your voice. The Ramban zt"l says, "Develop the habit of speaking all your words softly to all people at all times." Ask him nicely. B'ezer Hashem this time he will listen.

Together As One

"Eli, why are you limping?"
 "I have a sore on my little toe. Every step hurts so much. I can't even walk straight. My whole leg hurts because I am walking crooked. I am off balance and my back hurts too. All these pains are giving me a headache."
 "Oy vey, that's terrible! Who would have ever thought that from one little toe, your whole body can hurt. The toe seems so small and insignificant . .

until it begins to hurt."

"That's the way it is Dovid. All of the parts of our body are interconnected. If the smallest limb or organ is not working properly, the whole body is affected."

"Eli, believe it or not, you have given me a whole new insight on this week's parsha."

"Please share it with me, Dovid."

"The verse states, 'For you to pass into the *bris* (covenant) of Hashem.' (Devarim 29:11). The word 'you' is in the singular form, yet the rest of the parsha is written in the plural form. The Keli Yakar zt"l explains that the singular from of 'you' is an indication that this *bris* was different from the others. This was a *bris* of unity among the Jewish people. At that point in time, each and every Jew became responsible for his fellow man. The deeds of each one of us affected the entire nation. Our sages describe this as, 'All Jews are responsible for one another' (Gemora Shavuous 39a). The Keli Yakar zt"l describes the Jewish nation as one body. When one limb is injured, the whole body feels it. Similarly, when one Jew sins, it affects all of us."

Kinderlach . . .

"All Jews are responsible for one another." What does this mean? If my friend is having a hard time, I should help him. If my friend needs to borrow something, I should lend it to him. If he needs help studying, I should learn with him. These are the types of things that promote unity among the Jewish people. Kinderlach, national unity is one of the main goals of Rosh Hashanah. Do your part. Take the responsibility to help others.

Choose Life

"And choose life in order that you and your offspring will live." (Devarim 30:19). "Why does the Torah need to write this?" asks Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l. The previous verse (30:15) already stated that doing good brings life, and evil brings death. However, there is a deeper

point here. The way that we choose to fulfill the mitzvos can bring life. Do we perform mitzvos begrudgingly, out of a feeling of obligation? Are our mitzvos a "lifeless" routine? If so, they will not have a positive influence on our offspring and students. They will sense that the fulfilling the mitzvos of the Torah is a big burden, and find excuses to throw off the yoke.

Contrast this with one who does mitzvos with great *simcha* (happiness). He learns Torah with tremendous joy. He puts "life" into his mitzvos because they are his life's pleasure. All other fleeting delights pale in comparison. This person will merit true life - great happiness in this world, and eternity in the world to come. And his children will see it, feel it, and follow in his footsteps.

Kinderlach . . .

Just one more week until Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the month of Tishrei. Tishrei has more mitzvos than any other month! Shofar, sukkah, lulav, simchas yom tov are just a few. The Ramban zt"l counts thirteen mitzvos d'oraysa (from the Torah) in the month of Tishrei. What a wonderful opportunity to be happy! Each mitzvah brings us happiness. Thirteen mitzvos are enough to make us ecstatic. Be happy, kinderlach. Enjoy life.

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

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