

Chosson and Kallah

"Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!"

"What a beautiful *chassanah* (wedding)."

"Yes, it is a beautiful thing. The *chosson* (groom) and *kallah* (bride) join to become one, in a holy union based on love and deep commitment to each other. We participate in their happiness by singing, dancing, and eating together with them."

"And *Elokim* (G-d) blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Bereishis 2:3). This day is *Shabbos Kodesh* (The Holy Sabbath), a day when we eat, dress, speak, walk and even pray differently than the rest of the week. The Avudraham points out that each *tefillah* (prayer) on Shabbos is unique. At night we say "*Atta kidashta*"; in the morning we say "*Yismach Moshe*" followed by "*Musaf*" (additional prayer), and in the afternoon we finish with "*Atta echad*". The prayers correspond to a *chassanah* between Hashem (the *chosson*) and the Jewish People (the *kallah*). "*Atta kidashta*" (you sanctified) is like the *kiddushin* (betrothal) which the *chosson* gives the *kallah*. "*Yismach Moshe*" (And Moshe will be happy) is the celebration of singing and dancing. *Mussaf* is the *korbonos* (sacrifices) that are eaten at a *se'udas mitzvah* (festive meal). Finally, "*Atta echad*" (You are One) is the unity that the *chosson* and *kallah* achieve through marriage.

Kinderlach . . .

Shabbos is a day when we can achieve the impossible... unity with Hashem. By observing the mitzvos of Shabbos - resting, eating, drinking, wearing Shabbos clothes, speaking only about holy subjects, learning and praying, we can come as close to Hashem as a kallah to a chosson. That can make us as happy as a chosson and kallah on their wedding day. How wonderful! Kinderlach, make this Shabbos and every Shabbos as special as a chassanah. Put extra effort into the mitzvos of the day. You will feel closeness with Hashem and happiness beyond words.

The Source of All Blessing

"Okay kinderlach, We have just

finished *Kiddush* and *Hamotzi*. Let's now hear what everyone learned about this week's parsha. Shoshana, do you want to go first?"

"I learned that Hashem created light on the first day."

"Very good Shoshana. You are learning very well in gan. How about you Esti?"

"I learned that the snake spoke *loshon hora* and tricked Chava into eating from the Tree of Knowledge, which was a very big sin."

"Esti, I see that you paid attention in your first grade class. Yes, Leah, what would you like to say?"

"I learned that Hashem said to the angels, 'Let us make man in our image.' This teaches us to be humble. Even Hashem took advice from the angels before creating man."

"Wow, Leah. That is really an important lesson from the parsha. Last but not least, how about you, Ahuva."

"Abba, I learned that Shabbos is the source of all of the blessings that we receive. The better that we guard and observe the Shabbos, the more Shabbos will protect us and bring us blessing."

Ahuva, that is wonderful, and so relevant to our Shabbos table."

Kinderlach . . .

The Prophet Isaiah (58:13-14) tells us that we should not speak about our business matters on Shabbos. Our speech should be as holy as the day. Only words of Torah and prayer should cross our lips. That is why we make a special effort to get everyone involved in discussing the weekly parsha at the Shabbos table. To guard the holiness of Shabbos and bring blessing into our lives.

Run Like a Deer

"Run, Shaya, run!"

"I can't... run anymore... I'm... out of breath."

"Just a little further, Shaya."

"My feet hurt."

"We're almost there."

"Where? Where are we going?"

"Look, up ahead."

The two boys looked up and saw their destination in front of them. It looked beautiful. So peaceful and perfect.

"Our destination is there."

"Why... are... we... running?"

"Because we have to run to get from here to there. If we walk, we won't make it."

"In the beginning, *Elokim* (G-d) created the heaven and the earth" (Bereishis 1:1). The sefer "*Mima'amakim*" offers a deep understanding of the nature of heaven and earth. The word "*shomayim*" (heaven) comes from the word "*shom*" (there). Heaven is over there. It is a world that is not here, in our physical world, rather it is at the end, after we have completed our time in this world. It is a world of perfection, where all things are brought to their completion. "*Eretz*" (earth) is from the root word "*ratz*" (to run). This world, the earth, is running. It is always going somewhere. It is lacking something, and is striving to achieve to fill that gap. We, who are here, are always running to accomplish. We feel the lack of perfection and want to fill it. Yet, the perfection can only be achieved "*shom*" - there - in "*shomayim*," the world over there.

Kinderlach . . .

In this world we run after mitzvos. "Yehuda ben Teima says, '...and run like a deer... to do the will of your Father in Heaven'" (Pirkei Avos 5:20). "Ben Azzai says, 'Run to do an easy mitzvah'" (Pirkei Avos 4:2). "And he (Avraham) ran to greet them (his guests)" (Bereishis 18:2). When Imma asks for help, RUN to help her. How about running to school to learn Torah? You can also run to shul to daven. By running, you show Hashem how much you love His mitzvos, and can't wait to fulfill them.

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