



KINDER TORAH[©]

*For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Vayeshev*



Success Story

When we follow the path of Yosef's life, we see that he was placed in many difficult if not impossible situations. He managed to turn every one of them around and become fabulously successful. In Bereshis 39:1 we learn that Potiphar purchased Yosef as a slave from the Yishmaelim. A slave in those days had absolutely no rights, no opportunities, and no chance of changing his station in life. Potiphar saw that Yosef was blessed with great success because Hashem was with him. He quickly handed over control of his whole household to Yosef. Yosef was later thrown into prison. There were no appeals courts in those days. A prisoner had nothing to look forward to except suffering in the dungeon the rest of his life. Even in the lowly prison, the warden saw that Hashem was with Yosef and he put him in charge of all of the prisoners. Yosef eventually managed to do the impossible and become second in command of all of Mitzraim. Never in history did a slave become the viceroy of Mitzraim. Yosef accomplished the unattainable. Why was Yosef so successful? In fact, he was not the first. All of our forefathers were extremely wealthy. Yaakov Avinu managed to become wealthy while working for Lavan, not an easy accomplishment. Hashem was with Yosef. When Hashem is with someone, there is no obstacle too difficult to overcome.

Kinderlach . . .

Do you see how great it is to have Hashem with us? How do we accomplish this? The answer is in Pirkei Avos 2:4. He (Rabban Gamliel the son of Rebbe Yehuda Hanassi) said, "Fulfill Hashem's mitzvos as you fulfill your own desires, then Hashem will fulfill your desires as if they were His own. Do not allow your wishes to contradict Hashem's and He will not allow others wishes to contradict yours." When we do what He wants, He will do what we want. What does He want us to do? Fulfill His Torah and mitzvos. When we do that, then there is nothing that we cannot accomplish.

Recognize The Miracle

There is a famous dispute in the Gemora (Shabbos 21b) between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel concerning

how many Chanukah candles to light each night. Beis Hillel light as we do, one candle the first night, adding one each successive night until reaching eight on the final night. Beis Shammai light eight the first night, diminishing one each night until left with one the last night. Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l explains the reason behind the dispute. The two sides have different opinions about whether a person's performance of the mitzvos of Chanukah is superficial or more deeply rooted. When one looks at the holiday superficially, he is most excited in the beginning. Then as the eight days of Chanukah continue, his excitement diminishes as he becomes accustomed to the holiday. That is the view of Beis Shammai. Beis Hillel, on the other hand, relates to a deeper performance of the mitzvos. One who serves Hashem with all of his heart and soul is constantly striving to get closer to Him. Each day of the holiday, he probes for a new insight, a deeper understanding, and a better appreciation of the miracles. This person finds his happiness increasing daily as he grows in his *Avodas Hashem* (service to Hashem). He begins with one candle the first day, and adds one each day, symbolizing his increasing happiness with each passing day of Chanukah.

Kinderlach . . .

We light the Chanukah menorah according to the view of Beis Hillel, increasing the number of candles each day. This shows that our happiness increases each day. How can we increase our happiness? By following Rav Dessler's interpretation of Beis Hillel. Learn something new about Chanukah each day. Share it with Abba and Imma at candle lighting time. Each day you will have a new insight and a new appreciation of the miracles of Chanukah. What could be happier than that?

Small In Number

The Medrash (84:1) begins the parsha by quoting a verse from Isaiah (57:13). "When you cry out, your gathering together shall save you." This refers to the unity of the sons of Yaakov, which saved them from the hand of Eisav. "But the wind will carry them all off; nothingness will take them." This is Eisav and his troops. The Beis HaLevi explains the

Medrash as follows. The normal preparation for war involves gathering as many soldiers as possible. More soldiers can attack, secure, and defend more positions, defeating more of the enemy and eventually winning the war. Gathering the entire army into one place is actually counterproductive. Their strength lies in their numbers and their separation, securing as many different positions as possible. However, when the Jewish people go to battle, the strategy is exactly the opposite. Our power lies in neither numbers nor separation, rather in unity. We fortify our position by gathering into the Beis HaKenesses, and praying with unified hearts to our Father in Heaven. When we all make the same request, on behalf of the community, we gain strength. However sheer numbers without unity hold no advantage for us at all. Eisav came to battle with 400 men. What hope could Yaakov Avinu and his twelve sons have against them? Yet, their unity saved them from the hand of Eisav.

Kinderlach . . .

This is one of the messages of Chanukah. The "Al HaNissim" prayer states, "(You delivered) the many into the hands of the few." Chanukah is a time when we are home together with the family every day. This is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our family unity. Sing songs, eat Imma's delicious latkes, and share stories about the miracles of Chanukah. In the merit of this, may we see more miracles in our day. As we say in the second blessing over the candles, "Who performed miracles for our fathers in those days; in our times."

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