



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT MIKETZ

Story Behind the Jug

Chazal advertise that one who is meticulous with the mitzvah of Chanukah candles will merit outstanding children that are *talmidei chachamim*. Why exactly is this rabbinic enactment linked with such a powerful *segulah*?

There is a fascinating Midrash that reveals the origins of the jug of olive oil used in the story/miracle of Chanukah. It wasn't just some random oil; it actually dated back centuries earlier, all the way to Yaakov Avinu. According to the Midrash, when Yaakov Avinu erected an altar and poured oil on top of it (back in Parshat Vayetze), G-d orchestrated that he store that oil so that, generations later, it would be kept for the *Hashmonaim* to use after all the remaining jugs would become contaminated. Thus, the miracle of Chanukah was carried out using the same oil poured by Yaakov Avinu on the *mizbe'ach*.

However, this Midrash seems to conflict with another one, which describes how Eliphaz, the son of Esav, robbed Yaakov of all his possessions soon after he escaped from home. This incident took place before Yaakov continued on his journey and erected the altar, so how did Yaakov even have oil to begin with?

Kane'ach Razon explains that, after stripping him of everything, there was one thing that Eliphaz left Yaakov with: his walking stick. A hollow staff, which Yaakov had filled with oil. Yaakov, being a "tent-dweller" and always engaged in the study of Torah, would carry this oil with him to illuminate the night as he would learn. This light is what guided him in exile, not just in the physical sense but spiritually as well.

Given this background, we can understand the true story behind the oil used for the menorah. This oil facilitated the study of Torah and, furthermore, represented the sacrifice of our patriarch in accomplishing that goal. This explains how the menorah is linked to a *segulah* of producing Torah-grounded children. True growth doesn't come from just absorbing information but from sacrifice for the study and ideals of Torah. Tapping into the depth of the menorah and its oil entails more than just going back to the *Hashmonaim*, but even further back to Yaakov Avinu, who thrived against all odds due to his unshakeable *emuna* and commitment to G-d's wisdom...

(Based on a *d'var Torah* shared by R' Yosef Insil)

Dreaming Away

Interestingly, in this Parsha as well as the previous one, the Torah relates dreams and their mysticism. Examining and comparing the dreams of Yosef and those of Pharaoh, the Lubavitcher Rebbe elaborated upon the proper outlook and aspirations of a Jew, characteristically shedding light upon the timeless relevance of the Torah. Yosef, obviously being a paradigm of how we want to "dream" in life, teaches us what it means to envision greatness, while Pharaoh embodies an example we don't want to emulate.

In Parshat Vayeshev, we read of Yosef experiencing a dream in which he and his brothers were "מאלמים אלומים בתוך השדה." They were active and working, busy gathering bundles in the field. This was unlike Pharaoh, who, in his dream, was "עומד על ה"יאר" – standing on the riverbank, just watching the rest of his dream unfold. Pharaoh was a mere spectator; he was just standing there. This, the Rebbe pointed out, is lesson number one for the Chosen People, ambassadors of G-dliness in this world. As we learn from Yosef's example, we are to always keep busy and never stand idly by.

Furthermore, Yosef elevated himself in his visions. His first dream was about bundles and stalks – which are elements of the physical world – whereas his second dream featured celestial bodies, which are in Heaven and signify spiritual realms. Thus, Yosef upgraded and moved up by his second dream. Pharaoh, on the other hand, descended in level. His first vision was about cows, and the second revolved around stalks. Symbolically, he downgraded from living beings to vegetation. And even *within* the dreams, Pharaoh took a step down, as he first saw the overgrown cows/stalks and only afterwards envisioned shriveled cows/stalks. Following Yosef, we too, are to always grow and transcend, and not decline as did Pharaoh.

It is worth noting as well that the topics of their dreams varied drastically. Whereas Yosef dreamt about prostrations and monarchy, Pharaoh was out to lunch in his dreams. We look up to Yosef, a spiritual giant who aspired for nothing other than greatness and impacting the world, and almost pity Pharaoh, who, as it seems, obsessed over such mundane activities.

Our ancestors left us big shoes to fill; may we merit to, indeed, live up to our potential.

(Based on a *d'var Torah* recounted by R' Shaul Wertheimer)

"Wisdom is not in knowing the answers, but in asking the right questions." (R' Noach Weinberg)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rahamim Ben Shifra Nina Bat Fenya Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol Chana Bat Malka
David Ben Rivka Avigayil Bat Tehillah Simcha Aharon Ben Rivka Sima Ariella Bat Hila Yitzhak Ben Naama