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PARSHAS
VAYEISHEV 5778

בְּשִׁיטְחָא

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

Worth Every Moment

Yaakov has had a difficult life. He ran away from his family because his brother wanted to kill him. His Uncle Lavan tricked him into marrying the wrong person; he ended up working in the cold and the heat for 20 years, during which his salary was changed 100 times. On his return to Eretz Yisrael, he was told his brother had amassed an army to destroy him, had to fight the *Malach* of Eisav, and later had his daughter Dina kidnapped.

*Rashi*¹ quotes the *Midrash*² stating that at this point Yaakov Avinu wanted to live in peace, to finally settle down, and serve Hashem without distraction.³ In response, Hashem says, "Is the reward that awaits *Tzadikim* in *Olam Habah* not enough, that they also want tranquility in this world?" Immediately the story and sale of Yosef HaTzadik occurred, with Yaakov believing for 22 years that Yosef had been killed.

The *Alter* of Kelm⁴ (Simcha Zissel Ziv Broida 1824-1898) is troubled by this information. Yaakov did nothing wrong - in fact, the sole purpose in seeking serenity was for the ability to focus on *Avodas Hashem*. Why does Hashem find that attitude objectionable, to the point where the 'solution' was Yosef being stolen away for 22 years?

To answer this, Reb Broida paints a new perspective, and allows us an insight into the inner workings of this world. We can all understand that while the reward for serving Hashem is great, the reward for serving Hashem while under duress is that much greater. Connecting to Hashem despite our difficulties, our pain, and our questions creates a stronger and deeper relationship than doing the *Mitzvos* and serving Hashem when things are running smoothly.

Thus, Hashem's response is very understandable. Why would Yaakov desire to give up something so special and amazing for something so momentary and ephemeral? Therefore, Hashem sent the sale of Yosef to help Yaakov. Yaakov didn't become Yaakov Avinu despite his adversities, but because of them.

We all face difficulties, which makes our *Avodas Hashem* more challenging. However, just like a game, the harder the levels, the more you score, so too the harder it is for us to learn, to *Daven*, have good *Middos*, or any other part of serving Hashem, the greater the reward - a great deal greater than had there not been adversity.

1 *Vayeishev* 37:2 ס.ו. אלה תולדות

2 *Bereishis Rabbah* 84:3

3 *Chochmah U'Mussar* page 386-388

4 *ibid.*

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it is for us to
serve Hashem,
the greater the
reward."**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Life can be very difficult, there's no denying that. Rough days at school, problems with siblings, perhaps even greater predicaments. At times, it doesn't seem that there is any respite from the constant hurdles. Is there any way to use our daily vicissitudes in a way to deepen our relationship with Hashem?

Attacking a challenge head on is usually a failing tactic. Instead, after going through a particularly rough day, set aside some time to mentally review the day. Envisioning the ultimate reward that awaits us, and the astounding self improvement one attains can itself mitigate the trouble itself.

Constant repetition of the idea that there is value and purpose in hard work, that our relationship with Hashem grows ever stronger when we recognize everything He does is for our good, will give us the strength to work through the tough times.

Lastly, recognizing that this world is fleeting, and functions as a place to work, and that the eternal ultimate pleasure is yet to come can also strengthen a person's resolve.¹

1 *Chidushei HaLev Devarim* page 44-45

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AN EXPERIENCE WORTH HAVING

Unfortunately, every town has its share of problems and Kingsland* was no different. They had their fair share of problems such as *Machlokes*, housing expenses, the local school desperately needed more space and the *Shul* was falling to pieces. But there was one area that didn't play as large a role as one would assume. *Chinuch* with teenagers. The teaching and parenting at Kingsland was not much different than anywhere else in the area. However, Kingsland had Chezky.

Chezky was a kiruv professional, but his forté was teens. He cultivated relationships, and would often help teens deal with very intense challenges. His kind words, guidance, and attention helped teenagers navigate some very trying and difficult times.

When asked how he was so adroit at relating to adolescents, he had this to say. "I myself was what people consider a 'kid-with-issues.' I was unhappy, unhappy with my family, my teachers, and myself. My life took twists and turns, but I met someone who just listened - listened to me, my ideas, my thoughts, my dreams. That was the beginning - after a couple of years, I started enjoying living like a *Ben-Torah*; learning, *Davening* and doing *Mitzvos*. Not only that, but I knew my calling. I wanted to be the mentor that these kids so desperately need. And I knew that I could fill that void. Because of my experience, because of what I went through, I was able to relate to them on a level that no one else could. If not for my hurdles, I wouldn't be where I am today."

**Based on a true story. Names and places have been changed.*

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Despite his terrible poverty, when Rebbi Chanina ben Dosa realized that the riches he was given in this world were taken away from him in the next, he prayed that he lose his riches, and keep them for the next world.¹
- Hashem sends us tests to bring out our potential,² and to teach us things about ourselves that we never knew!³
- Hashem does not challenge someone with something that they cannot handle.⁴ Furthermore, he only challenges those who will grow from the experience.⁵
- Before a person is born, their *Neshamah* chooses their life and experiences based on what will be best for the person. Our challenges and difficulties were chosen by us!⁶

1 *Taanis* 25a

2 *Ramban Bereishis* 22:1 s.v. והאלקים נסה

3 *Chumash Mesoras HaRav Bereishis* 22:1 s.v. והאלקים נסה

4 *Bamidbar Rabbah* 21:22, *Pischei Shaarei Avodah* Paragraph 1

5 *Bereishis Rabbah* 32:3

6 *Sha'ar Bas Rabim Bereishis* 32:27