



WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Erev Shabbos Parashas Vayechi 5783

Dear Parents,

We are taught that the conditions of extreme poverty on the one hand, and extreme wealth on the other are both very difficult trials. A typical person's reaction can expectedly be – *Hashem*, test me with wealth. I should only have such difficulties!

“everyone ... likes to associate with those who are prosperous...”

There is a *Medrash* in this week's *Parsha* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 97:1) that teaches us it is not so simple. *Yoseph* received special *Brachos* for abundance from *Yaakov Avinu*. The brothers commented that *Yaakov's* singling out *Yoseph* for additional *Brachos* is undoubtedly because everyone, *Yaakov* included, likes to associate with those who are prosperous, and especially royalty, as *Yoseph* had become.

To this, *Yaakov* responded with a *Pasuk* in *Tehillim* (34:10) *כי אין מחסור ליראיו* The *holy ones* fear *Hashem*, for there is no lacking to his pious ones. The *Ksav Sofer* explains *Yaakov's* response as follows: *Those who lack nothing and nevertheless fear Hashem, are considered truly pious.* The *Ksav Sofer* elaborates that in a sense, it is not as praiseworthy for a poor person to be focused on serving *Hashem* and limiting the pleasures of the world, because he does not have so much to draw him away from *Hashem*. However, one who is endowed with much wealth and position and nevertheless follows the path of *Hashem* and lives a life of relative simplicity and even abstinence along with *mitzvah* observance, is worthy of much greater praise.

The *Ksav Sofer* elaborates further on the *Midrash* and explains that *Yaakov's* reason for giving the extra *Bracha* to *Yoseph* was that *Yoseph* was already tested with greatness and riches, as the Egyptian viceroy, and he remained as great a *Tzaddik* as ever. The brothers on the other hand, never went through such a trial, so therefore *Yaakov* was unsure that they could withstand the lure of the bounty **“... *Yoseph* was already tested ... and he remained as great a *Tzaddik* as ever.”** that *Yaakov's Brachos* would bring forth for them. Therefore – he gave that extra blessing to *Yoseph* and not to the brothers.

If *Yaakov Avinu* was not confident that his great and holy sons could withstand the temptation of wealth, what does that say about us and our children? How can we raise our children in a way that wealth and lots of things & `stuff' won't draw them away from serving *Hashem* properly? Compared to previous generations, we are blessed with so much that we are all subject to this *Nisayon*. The poorest amongst us has access to conveniences and comforts that were unheard of a few generations ago.

Parents would do well to ask themselves several questions. Am I a good role model in downplaying the centrality of luxury items, material goods and creature comforts and focused more on Torah and *Mitzvos*? Do I hold back from indulging my child's every wish and every “but everyone else has it!” because even though I can afford it and it's easier to just say yes, it's not good *Chinuch*? Do I speak about what a kindness *Hashem* has done for our family that we have the ability to acquire what we need and therefore we are eager to share our bounty with others?

““Let Hashem's blessings draw us closer to Him and our family closer together.”

If you can answer these questions positively you will more likely be successful in raising children who have self-control, less jealousy, can handle disappointment and have developed grit and a positive attitude about balancing the draw of the material world with the obligation to serve *Hashem* with sincerity, purity and passion.

Let *Hashem's* blessings draw us closer to Him and our family closer together.

Best wishes for a wonderful, *gebentched Shabbos*,

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Principal