



## Winning the Jackpot

Dear Parents,

Erev Shabbos Parashas Vayishlach 5780

The subject of children and money is an important one. We find portrayed in this week's *Parsha* very different perspectives about money and possessions between *Yaakov* and *Esav*. With *Chanuka* coming up, the timing of the reading of these opposing worldviews seems to be anything but coincidental. The stark difference between the contrasting philosophies of *Esav* and *Yaakov* plays out clearly in the *Chanuka* story. In fact the misplaced emphasis on gifts for *Chanuka* exposes the irony that the majority of those who 'observe' *Chanuka* today, had they lived in those days, would have more likely identified with the materialism of the *Greeks and Hellenists* (*Esav's* descendants) rather than the idealism of *Mattisyahu* (*Yaakov's* descendants).

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What are we sharing about our values through our reaction, involvement and focus on money and all things commercial. Do we express excitement about large business deals, jumbo sized lottery payoffs, fancy cars, homes, vacations, etc.? If the *Chanuka* observance is overshadowed by gifts, gifts and more gifts, what legacy are we offering our children about self-sacrifice and dedication to a higher calling?

**...Yaakov Avinu recognized that Hashem gives each person what he or she needs to fulfill their mission in this world.**

If we focus on understanding the difference between the *Yaakov* and *Esav* approaches to money, we can gain important insights into what we should be imparting to our children. *Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l*, explains that *Yaakov's* statement of "I have everything" (33:11), that *Rashi* explains as "I have everything that I need" means I have what I need to serve *Hashem* properly. *Yaakov Avinu* recognized that *Hashem* gives each person what he or she needs to fulfill their mission in this world. Everything has a purpose.

*Esav's* mantra on the other hand "I have plenty" (33:9) interpreted by *Rashi* to mean "I have much more than I need" negates this truth that whatever *Hashem* gives to someone is for a specific purpose. One cannot have "more than enough", for whatever one has is given by *Hashem* for some specific purpose. Even the amount of money in one's bank account is not haphazard, but is there for a reason.

**...the descendants of Yaakov, who view money as a tool to serve Hashem, and not for any other purpose.**

Our children watch and observe our words and behavior very carefully to learn about the world. If we can help them understand that everything is for a purpose and money is given to a person in accordance with his or her ultimate G-dly role in this universe, we will have placed them squarely with the heroes of the *Chanuka* saga, the descendants of *Yaakov*, who view money as a tool to serve *Hashem*, and not for any other purpose. Then they will be truly wealthy.

Best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos,

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