

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS  
MIKEITZ

# בשבת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

## RATIONING RESENTMENT

**P**arshas Mikeitz has arrived, and with it, a terrible famine. As Yosef predicted to Pharaoh in the beginning of the *parsha*, scarcity plagued the entire region, causing everyone to travel to Egypt, where they had stocked food as per Yosef's instructions.

The brothers of Yosef, like everyone else, travelled down to Egypt, where they were met by Yosef in the guise of the ruler of Egypt, second to Pharaoh. At first, it seems like the brothers went down to *Mitzrayim* for the same reason as everyone else, in order to obtain provisions for their household. However, a deeper look shows that this is not the case.

When Yaakov instructed his children to head to Egypt, he said, "למה תתקראו?" "Why do you show yourselves?"<sup>1</sup> The Gemara<sup>2</sup> explains that Yaakov and his household had plenty to eat; they were not affected by the famine. Nevertheless, Yaakov was concerned about the neighbors. They would see that, unlike themselves, the children of Yaakov were able to stay put, and not have to disturb themselves by traveling to Egypt. This would undoubtedly cause some needless jealousy. Therefore, to avoid this, Yaakov directed his children to head to *Mitzrayim*, so as to not cause hard feelings amongst his neighbors.

What a marvelous insight into our responsibilities to our fellow man. It is easy to argue, "It's not my problem if he is jealous, that's on him! Why should I care about his bad character traits?"

Yet, we find that it is not only considerate, but it is important for us to do what we can to minimize the negative feelings of those around us.

When we receive a new toy for Chanukah, our first reaction might be to show it to our friends. This is fine, but perhaps a moment of thought is in order. Will this cause jealousy? Is there a way to show it to my friends without them feeling envious or resentful?

When we do what we can to avoid causing friction between ourselves and others, not only are we a good friend, we are doing the right thing.

**"It's not my problem if he is jealous, that's on him! Why should I care about his bad character traits?"**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Most people do have some sort of aversion to the idea of showing off. Flaunting one's wealth, intelligence or possessions is frowned upon in society, and therefore people are often loathe to boast of their prowess.

However, this does come up in a more subtle fashion. People might draw attention to themselves or their accomplishments in a roundabout way. Or, sometimes we might not even realize the things we are saying or doing might cause jealousy in others.

It is a basic human need to be recognized amongst our peers. Thus, it is not an easy task to remove even the subtle instances where we inform others of our great deeds. However, before sharing information, it might be prudent to ask ourselves, "Is this worth it?"

Is it worth the cost — that is, our friends might be put off by our boasting, might be hurt with resentment, and so on. What do we truly gain? Their acceptance? Respect? Or are we causing anger and strife amongst friends?

As always, a moment of thought may save countless hours of heartache.

1 Bereishis 42:1

2 Taanis 10b

**Get Involved! We Can Only Do What We Do  
With Your Help!**

If you would like to sponsor, or distribute in your shul, please contact us at  
info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW (4769)

**“**  
**Be sure to study the classic Mussar sefer Chovos HaLevavos every day, in order to humble the Yetzer Hora, and weaken his power.** - Directive from the heavenly Malach HaMishna to R' Yosef Karo zt"l author of Beis Yosef and Shulchan Aruch, Magid Meisharim, end of Parshas Behar

## EXTERNAL ENVY

Rabbi Mutty Finkelstein\* was a beloved *rebbe*, lecturer, and all around wonderful person. He had been teaching for over thirty years, and though he was well-liked, did not make a particularly large salary.

His wife, a nurse, brought in enough income to make ends meet. Between the two of them, they were able to afford basic expenses, and even put some extra into savings.

Every so often, they would dip into their savings for necessary needs; a wedding, a bar mitzvah, and so on. Recently, Mrs. Finkelstein had pointed out that certain aspects of their house in the heart of Brooklyn had fallen into disrepair. The kitchen needed to be updated, and the roof needed to be redone. Having full confidence in his wife, Rabbi Finkelstein gave her the go-ahead, saying that whatever she decided to do was fine with him.

Soon thereafter, construction started. Every day, Rabbi Finkelstein would come home to find another area of the house cordoned off, dismantled or improved. And thus it went for some time.

One day, Rabbi Finkelstein arrived home to find that some of the brick on the outside of the house was removed. Intrigued, he walked inside and found the contractor. "What's going on outside? Why are you taking down the brick?"

The contractor looked confused. "That's what we were told to do, we're updating the facing on your house. It'll look beautiful when we're done." Rabbi Finkelstein nodded, and didn't say anything.

Later that evening, after dinner, Rabbi and Mrs. Finkelstein were sitting together. "I was thinking," the Rabbi began, "it looks like you decided to update the outside of the house. I'm wondering — is this a good idea?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I can understand the desire, or even need, to redo the inside. *Boruch Hashem* we have a lot of family visiting, and it is not easy to prepare for so many people in our small kitchen. But why do we need to update the outside? I'm afraid that it will serve to make others jealous. Why do we need to invite that sort of attention?"

"You're making a good point, but they already started! If we ask them to undo what they've done, we'll have to spend a couple of thousand dollars just to put things back to the way they were."

Rabbi Finkelstein sighed. "I understand. I just feel... I just don't think it's a good idea."

The conversation continued for some time, weighing the pros and cons, and whether they can afford to undo the work that was already done on the outside. In the end, both Rabbi and Mrs. Finkelstein agreed that it was best to keep the outside the way it was originally.

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

**"If we ask them to undo what they've done, we'll have to spend a couple of thousand dollars just to put things back to the way they were."**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The idea of not flaunting something that we have applies to spiritual areas as well. One does not need to advertise the extent of their *yiras Shamayim*.<sup>1</sup>
- Even when one has no choice but to publicly do kindness, they should still attempt to obscure the extent of their kindness as much as possible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rav Schwab on Prayer, pg. 50

<sup>2</sup> *Sukkah* 49b, Rashi *ad. loc.* s.v. דברים שדרך