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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

## TOGETHER WE CAN!

### PARSHAS MIKETZ

Once, there was a flock of doves that flew in search of food. After flying for a long time, they found some rice scattered beneath a tree. All the doves landed and began to eat. Suddenly a net fell over them. They were all trapped. The doves desperately fluttered their wings trying to get out, but to no avail. The leader of the doves had an idea. He advised all the doves to fly up together. He said that there was strength in unity. Each dove picked up a portion of the net and together they flew off carrying the net with them. The hunter looked up in astonishment but could not catch them. The doves were saved.

A man was on his deathbed. He wanted to teach his sons a very important lesson before he died. He called his sons together and gave each of them a stick. He asked them to break the stick in half which they did easily. Then he gave each of them a bundle of sticks that was tied together. He asked his sons to break the sticks, but they could not. He told his sons, if they go their independent ways, as symbolized by the solitary twig, then they won't be as strong. However, if they are unified, as symbolized by the bundle of sticks, then they would be strong. There was strength in unity.

There was a world-wide famine. Yaakov sent his sons to Egypt, the only country that had plentiful food. The Egyptian government had so much that they even sold it to others. Yosef, who was now second in command to Pharaoh, accused his brothers of being spies. Yosef's brothers did not recognize him. They said that they were not spies and they had only come to buy food for their family. They said, "We are all one man's sons...". The **Ramban** explains what they told Yosef. They said that we are all brothers. Our father did not want us to separate from each other. Therefore, he sent us all, together to buy food rather than sending just one of us with some servants.

**Rav Alter Henach Leibowitz** zt"l questions Yaakov's actions. Each brother was so strong that he could have

"We are all one man's sons..."  
(Bereishis 42:11)

brought back all the needed food by himself. It wasn't necessary for Yaakov to send all ten brothers. Furthermore, it was a bad idea to send all the brothers. Had only brother gone to Egypt, the remaining brothers would have been able to remain with Yaakov, learning Torah from him.

They would have continued to grow spiritually. Why did Yaakov sacrifice all that Torah learning? **Rav Leibowitz** zt"l says we see from here the importance of *achdus*, of unity. Yaakov felt that the unity of the brothers would be strengthened if they would all go on this mission together. Yaakov felt that this unity was more important (at this time) than the growth in spirituality and the Torah learning that would have been gained by the brothers who remained behind.

**Klal Yisroel has strength in unity. Regardless of what part of the world we come from, regardless of our different customs, and regardless of how observant we are, we are all *am echad*, one nation! We have strength in unity!**

**Our combined prayers, our combined mitzvos, our feelings of love and peace for each other, make us so strong.**

**May our love for each other continue to increase and wipe away any feelings of baseless hatred. Through this, may we bring our long-awaited *geula shlaima*, final redemption, when all our challenges will be resolved.**

**We will be happy and stress-free, and Hashem's glory will be perceived by everyone.**

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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