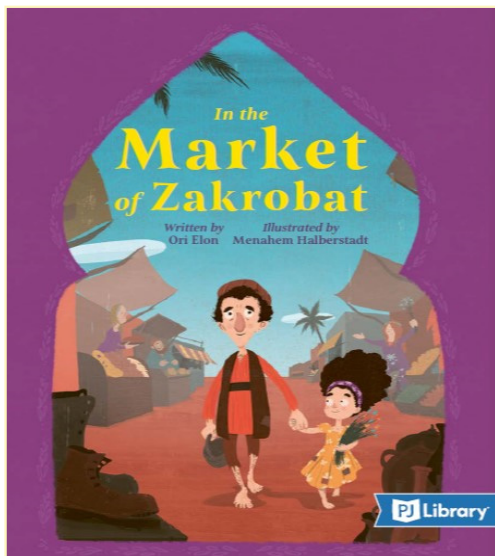


In the Market of Zakrobat

written by
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{ What things in your life make you feel rich? }



Who Is Rich?

There is a famous saying in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Ancestors): “Who is rich? Those who are happy with their lot.” In this story, rich Baltosar keeps finding ways to be unhappy with his lot in life – and cannot understand why poor Yosef is satisfied. Baltosar doesn’t see that Yosef, despite being “a penniless cobbler,” has other kinds of riches: his daughter Zohar, his friends, an open and curious mind, and the weekly tradition of honoring Shabbat with a special meal. His ability to create a festive celebration out of almost nothing shows us that despite surface appearances, Yosef is the one who is truly rich. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/marketofzakrobat.

A Special Guest

This story, based on a tale from the Talmud (the core collection of rabbinic writings), illustrates the blessings of Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. Yosef calls Shabbat a “royal visitor” who “is very dear to me.” Even though Yosef and Zohar are poor, they always show the Jewish value of hospitality (hachnasat orchim) to their guests, and Shabbat is the most special guest of all! That is how Yosef earned the nickname Yosef Moker Shabbos, Yiddish for “Yosef who cherishes Shabbat.” When Baltosar’s large diamond appears in the fish Yosef bought for Shabbat dinner, the story hints that we may be pleasantly surprised by all the blessings that Shabbat brings.

What Goes Down Must Come Up!

The imagery of In the Market of Zakrobat includes piles of gold coins, a giant diamond, a purple hat, an orange fish – all against the colorful backdrop of a town by the Euphrates River in ancient Babylonia. The most vivid symbolism is in Baltosar’s dream, in which he sees his treasure chests grow “little feet,” “giggle,” and then “whoosh along the slide, through an open window, and straight into the hut of Yosef Moker Shabbos.” The motion of the treasure sliding downward is echoed later when the diamond, nestled inside the purple hat, floats down, down, down to the bottom of the river. Both dream and reality symbolize how all of Baltosar’s riches actually weigh him down. But when the fish later lands in Yosef’s house, it becomes part of Yosef’s uplifting celebration! The story ends on an “up note,” as Yosef uses his new wealth to spread the joy of Shabbat further and higher than ever.

HANDS ON!

A Table Fit for a Queen

Yosef and Zohar make a special meal to welcome Shabbat every Friday evening. Here’s an easy project to help create a festive table fit for a queen.

Supplies:

- Roll of butcher paper or white easel paper
- Scissors
- Markers / crayons / colored pencils
- Stickers
- Scotch tape or masking tape

Pull the roll of paper out to cover the length of your dining table. You may need to cut two or more lengths to fully cover your table. Use tape to anchor the paper, then create a “tablecloth” for Shabbat dinner. You can draw items that relate to Shabbat (challah, a wine cup, candles, the food your parents are cooking), characters or objects from In the Market of Zakrobat, members of your family, your friends, things from nature, patterns, polka dots, Hebrew letters – whatever makes the paper look fancy and festive! Add stickers for an extra fun flourish.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHOSE house would you rather go to for dinner -- Baltosar’s or Yosef’s?

WHAT things make Yosef happy? Are happy and rich the same thing?

WHY do you think Baltosar dreamed about his treasure sliding into Yosef’s hut?