



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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שבועות

Winning the Lottery

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Winning the Lottery

Shimmy Greenbaum and his classmates were buzzing with excitement as they lined up in the hallway to set out with their rebbi on another one of his monthly field trips. No other rebbi in the school took the class on more than one or two trips a year, but Rabbi Cohen went out of his way to do it every month – usually on Rosh Chodesh. And even though they also went on regular trips like the other classes, Rabbi Cohen’s Rosh Chodesh trips were real “field” trips – they would go to an actual field!

Now, I know what you’re thinking. You think they took their baseball gloves and bats and went out to the baseball field for a softball game. Well, that’s what Shimmy thought too before he came to Rabbi Cohen’s class. And that’s why he was disappointed when he found out that the monthly trips were to actual fields – you know, like with grass and flowers and dirt and trees! Yeah! Plain old fields!

But it only took a few minutes into the first trip for Shimmy to change his mind about which field trips are better. As they boarded the buses to head out to their first trip, Rabbi Cohen told them that this was something that he had learned from his rebbi, Rav Avigdor Miller zt”l. He used to go on similar “trips” with his talmidim — and his talmidim were adults!

Rabbi Cohen would use each of these trips to show the class something amazing about Hashem’s world. Once they went to an apple orchard, and after a lot of fun climbing the trees and picking apples the whole class sat down together under the tree to eat delicious apples. While they were sitting under the apple tree and chewing their apples, Rabbi Cohen was explaining it all to them – all about the apple peel and the pulp and the juice and

the seeds. He showed the boys that an apple wasn't one miracle – it was hundreds of miracles. And when they got to the core of the apple and saw the apple seeds Rabbi Cohen described for them the amazing process of how a tiny seed grows into a big strong tree with beautiful fruit. And then they each got their own packet of seeds so they could plant and grow their own apple trees! Rabbi Cohen made each trip into an exciting adventure and they came back each time appreciating and loving Hashem even more.

“Boys, are you ready?” Rabbi Cohen asked as they stood quietly in the hallway. The boys all nodded excitedly. “Okay then, let's go!” he said and they set out towards the park a few blocks away.



Rav Miller Zt"l Leading a Field Trip



As they walked, Rabbi Cohen started talking to the boys. “This is one of my favorite trips of the year,” he was saying. “It’s right before Shavuos and the wild clover is blossoming. It’s the best time to see the bees hard at work collecting nectar to make honey.” Noticing some worried faces he added, “Don’t worry - honey bees won’t hurt us as long as we don’t go near their hives”.

The group continued walking cheerfully past a line of stores. Shimmy recognized the supermarket where his family usually did their Shabbos shopping, when his friends Gavriel and Yitzchak exclaimed “Shimmy! Look at that crazy man sitting in the cardboard box with all those cats!”

Shimmy looked and immediately recognized the homeless man who lived in the area. Shimmy had never liked seeing the homeless man – it made him all nervous – but his father had explained to him that he should use it as an opportunity to feel grateful that he had a wonderful safe house to live in. Shimmy whispered under his breath, “Thank You Hashem for giving me a house to live in,” and thought about maybe telling his good friend Dovid about how to turn seeing a homeless person into real avodas Hashem.

But before he could say anything to Dovid, he and the rest of his class were startled by a loud screeching of tires as a few news vans with big antennas on the roofs pulled up, and cameramen and reporters jumped out.

The boys stopped in amazement as a reporter in a sharp blue suit shoved a microphone in the homeless man’s face and shouted at him, “How does it feel?!” “What are you going to do with the winnings?!” “What are your plans for the rest of your life?!”

The man sat up in his box and rubbed his eyes. “Wha???” he stammered. “Who’er you and whatch’all talkin’ about?”

“Haven’t you heard?! Your numbers won the grand prize in the state lottery!”

The man blinked. “Huh?” he said.

“You’ve won! You’ve won the lottery! You won ten million dollars!” the reporter shouted at him. “How does that make you feel?”

The man stared at them for a second and then fell to the ground in a faint.

Within what seemed like seconds, an ambulance had arrived, and the paramedics revived the homeless man and helped him into an ambulance.

Rabbi Cohen finally succeeded in getting his class to start walking again, when they heard the man ask what had just happened to him.



“It appears that you fainted,” one of the paramedics explained, “right after these reporters told you that you won ten million dollars.”

Upon hearing this, the old man fainted again, this time falling off the stretcher in the process.

“Okay boys,” said Rabbi Cohen. “Enough; it’s not polite to stare.”

As the class reached the park, Rabbi Cohen saw the distracted looks on the boys’ faces and realized that nobody was going to be interested in hearing about clover blossoms right now.

“Boys”, Rabbi Cohen said, “why don’t we all sit on the grass and talk about what we just saw.”

“Avrohom Yitzchok,” he said, pulling out a Stern’s bakery box from his shopping bag, “why don’t you start distributing these mini cheese danishes? And Dovid, take these box drinks and make sure everyone gets one.

As the boys began to eat their snacks, Rabbi Cohen continued, “After what we just saw, I think this is the perfect time to talk about Maamad Har Sinai.”

“Har Sinai?” asked Yerachmiel with a puzzled look on his face. “You mean because Hashem made all the sick people better when he gave the Torah?”

“Not exactly,” said Rabbi Cohen with a smile. “You remember that when Hashem gave us the Torah at Har Sinai - at first He spoke to us directly. And do you know what happened?”

“We all died!” Gavriel shouted. “It was too much kedusha for us to handle!”

“Yes,” said Rabbi Cohen, “but it was not just that. My rebbi, Rav Avigdor Miller, teaches that our neshamos left our bodies when we heard Hashem speak because of **excitement**. Hashem, the One who made the whole world out of nothing and the One who controls everything is speaking to us?! It never happened before that Hashem spoke directly to a whole nation and we were so excited that our bodies could not handle the excitement.

“Lehavdil, like this homeless man with those cats. He couldn’t believe the news that he, the man living in a cardboard box, is now a millionaire. The excitement was so much that he couldn’t handle it and fainted. And when they revived him and told him again, he fainted a second time!

“But of course, winning ten million dollars is in no way even comparable to hearing the words of Hashem. Hashem, who loves us more than anything, who chose us over every nation in the world, He Himself speaking to us. That was too much! And our neshamos left our bodies and Hashem had to do techiyas hameisim to bring us back.

“And then, when he spoke to us another time - we died again! Until we told Moshe Rabbeinu - “It’s too much! We can’t handle the excitement of hearing Hashem’s Voice. Please, Moshe, let Hashem speak with you and tell us what He says.”

“And now,” exclaimed Rabbi Cohen. “There’s another very important lesson that we need to learn here: When we told Moshe Rabbeinu that he should talk to us instead of Hashem, we were saying, WE WANT TO LISTEN TO MOSHE RABBEINU! What the Am Yisroel said at that moment was, “Moshe Emes V’soraso Emes – Whatever Moshe Rabeinu tells us is true because it’s Torah and the Torah is true!”

And you know what’s just as important?” said Rabbi Cohen. “It didn’t stop with Moshe. For the past 3,330 years, whatever

the talmidei chachomim teach us, we still sing those words, “Moshe is true and the Torah he teaches us is true” Hashem’s words continue to come through to us through the words of Moshe’s talmidim – the Talmidei Chachomim and Gedolei Yisroel.”

An hour later, after they had all learned all about Hashem’s bees and His clover plants and His nectar and about how we have to appreciate Hashem’s creations, the boys began walking back to the school. As they passed the supermarket they were able to see that the homeless man was now back on his feet and smiling a big toothless smile as a man in an expensive suit handed him a giant cardboard check for ten million dollars.

Rabbi Cohen continued, “We’re not like the goyim,” he said. “Anyone with a fancy suit who can give a good speech is respected and given front stage and center of attention. But look at us – who do we listen to? To our Torah leaders! And by listening to the Gedolei Torah, we are actually listening to the words of Hashem. Can you believe that, boys? Just like the Am Yisroel at Har Sinai, we are still, to this very day, able to receive the word of Hashem. And that, boys, is worth much much more than ten million dollars. The excitement of Moshe Emes V’Soraso Emes can’t be compared to anything else in the world!”

The boys returned to Yeshiva with big smiles on their faces. Not only had Rabbi Cohen taught them about bees and nectar and pollen, but now they were so excited to come into Shavuot with a real understanding of what Kabbolas HaTorah is all about.

Have a Wonderful Yom Tov

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