



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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Guided Journeys

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Parshas Matos Masei

Guided Journeys

March 1923, Baltimore, Maryland

It was an early spring morning. Hopefully it would be warmer later in the day, but the sun had only just risen and there was still a chill in the air. A boy emerged out of a run-down house. He was too poor to afford a coat and he shivered as he left the house. Usually he would be heading to public school now, and later to learn at the afternoon Talmud Torah, but today he was unsure. His family didn't have much money. His parents worked hard and Boruch Hashem there was food on the table every day, but it wasn't much.

His stomach rumbling, the boy made a decision. His neighbor Irving had mentioned to him the day before that The Baltimore Sun was hiring and was desperately looking for boys to work in their printing room. He would go to the newspaper's office building and get the job. He would still learn a bit in the evenings, but now he would be able to help his parents support the family. It seemed like the right thing to do.

Unable to afford the nickel for the trolley, the boy quickly walked the twenty blocks towards his destination. A few blocks away, he could already see the towering building and the huge "Help Wanted" sign plastered on its side. This was it. He balled his fists in determination and marched towards the building's entrance, ready to get his first job.

However, just as he was approaching the building, a worker wearing an apron emerged, carrying a tall ladder. The boy watched in horror as the man climbed up and took down the "Help Wanted" sign.

"Excuse me, mister?" the boy said. "Why are you taking down that sign? Are you no longer hiring?"

"Nope!" the man said, coming down the ladder with the sign. "A boy walked in just three minutes ago and filled the last open position. Our printing room is at full capacity!"

Dejected, the boy walked all the way back to his neighborhood and returned to school.

July 1926

Once again, the boy decided it was time to start thinking about parnassah. He was almost 18 and surely now he should start planning his future. Being rather good at drawing, what better job than to work as a professional illustrator?

But as he sat before the head of the Baltimore School of Art, his hopes were dashed yet again. "I'm sorry," the dean was saying, "but you're Jewish, and we only accept students who speak perfect English."

"But I lived in America my whole life! I speak perfect English!" the boy protested.

But the anti-Semitic dean was already holding the door open for him to walk sadly out of the office.



February 1930, New York

By now the boy had grown into a fine young man, learning in Yeshiva in New York, when he found out about an opening for a Tanach teacher at his old Talmud Torah in Baltimore. Surely this must be the right thing to do! He knew Tanach very well and his old menahel surely remembered that. What better parnassah than to teach Tanach to children?

He quickly boarded a train to interview for the position. But the train got delayed on the way and by the time he arrived in Baltimore, someone else had gotten the job. What was going on?

June 1995, Congregation Bais Yisroel, Brooklyn, NY

Rav Avigdor Miller was giving his weekly Thursday night shiur. Everyone in attendance listened as he talked about how he missed getting the job at the newspaper by only a few minutes, how he was rejected from art school for no good reason, and how he lost the opportunity to teach Tanach in Baltimore because of a delayed train.

“In this week’s Parsha,” he said, “the Torah goes over **every single** place the Am Yisroel stopped in the Midbar. Why? When you tell your friends about your Chol Hamo’ed trip, do you tell them about every gas station you stop at? But the Torah is teaching us something here.

“Looking back at my life, it is so simple to see that this was the Yad Hashem guiding me through life. If I had gotten the newspaper job or gone to art school, I never would have gone to Yeshiva. If I got the job teaching Tanach in Baltimore, I would have lost the opportunity to go learn in Slabodka under the great tzadik Rav Isaac Sher zichrono livrocha, and I would not be the man I am today. All of this was Hakadosh Boruch Hu carefully guiding me through every step in my life.

“By mentioning all of the stops in the midbar, the Torah is teaching us that every single thing that happens in our lives is Hakadosh Boruch Hu taking us down a very specific path. Everything that happens to us is important and we are mechuyav to think about it and remember it forever!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Based on the biography of Rav Miller. Some details have been changed.



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