

Vaeira / ואֵירָא

Back to Kindergarten

By: A. Ben-Ami

Illustrations by: Yocheved Nadell

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Sruli was running as fast as he could. Three Arabs had just robbed the bank and were running away with huge garbage bags full of money slung over their shoulders. Sruli picked up a huge rock and hurled it in their direction. Startled, one of them slipped and dropped his bag of cash, sending shekel bills all over the road. As the other two robbers stopped to help their fallen friend and collect their loot, Sruli took the opportunity to lasso the three of them with a rope.

"Let us go!" they cried angrily as Sruli tied them tightly to each other.

The sound of sirens filled the air as Israeli police and army vehicles rolled up and uniformed men began arresting the Arabs. The chief of police walked up to Sruli with a huge smile. "You stopped Achmed, Abdul, and Mustafa! We've been trying to catch them for weeks! What's your name?"

Sruli smiled. "My name is Yisroel Meir Kaplan, but my friends call me Sruli."

The large crowd that had gathered to watch all cheered and started chanting "Let's go, Yisroel Meir! Let's go, Yisroel Meir!"

"Yisroel Meir! Are you with us?" called Rebbe Brander from the front of the classroom.



For sponsorship opportunities
please call: 732.844.3670

Sruli shook himself out of his daydream. “Uh yeah, Rebbe,” he said. “I’m listening.”

Just then the bell rang for recess.

“Just a minute, Yisroel Meir,” said Rebbe Brander as all of the boys ran for the door. “I want to speak with you.”

Sruli slowly made his way to his Rebbe’s desk. “I’m sorry for spacing out,” he said apologetically.

“It’s okay, I’m not upset,” Rebbe Brander said kindly. “It happens to everyone once in a while. But I’m surprised that you were daydreaming as I was talking about the Parshas Hashavuah. I thought what I was saying about the Makkos was pretty interesting. Was your daydream even more exciting than that?”

“Well I was imagining that I was catching three bank robbers just like a boy did in this book I just read,” Sruli said sheepishly. “We’ve learned about the Makkos since Kindergarten. I know it already. It gets boring to hear it over and over again every year. Catching robbers is exciting!”

“Hmmm...” mused Rebbe Brander. “Would I be wrong if I guessed that your parents named you ‘Yisroel Meir’ after the Chofetz Chaim?”

“Actually, that’s exactly after w6hom I’m named,” smiled Sruli.

“Well then,” said Rebbe Brander. “Let me tell you a story. One time someone peeked through the keyhole of the door to the Chofetz Chaim’s room. Of course he shouldn’t have done it, but this person was so curious to see what the Tzadik was doing. And the Chofetz Chaim was sitting on his bed holding a Chumash and reading about the Makkos. But the Chofetz Chaim wasn’t just reading the pesukim. He was excitedly reading the story as if he had never heard before about what happened

to the Mitzrim and he was saying things like ‘good for them!’ and ‘they deserve it!’ as he went over the story of the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim.”

“I don’t understand,” said Sruli. “The Chofetz Chaim was a huge Talmid Chochom. He surely already knew about the Makkos!”

“Of course he did!” exclaimed Rebbe Brander. “But the Chofetz Chaim worked to bring the story to life to strengthen his Emunah. The Makkos and the other things that happened in the Torah aren’t just some stories that we hear. They are our life! So the Chofetz Chaim would learn the Parshiyos of the Makkos with a geshmak! He got into it and enjoyed it with excitement! And you can bet that he did it with so much enthusiasm that he enjoyed it even more than your daydream about catching the bank robbers!

“So Sruli, why don’t you try that yourself next time you learn about the Makkos. Don’t think of it as an old story that you heard a million times. Imagine that you yourself are in Mitzrayim actually watching the Mitzrim drinking blood, swatting away frogs, and dodging fiery hailstones!”

As Rebbe Brander started walking out of the classroom, he noticed that Sruli had gone back to his seat and put his chin on his hands like he was going to daydream again.

“Are you okay, Sruli?” asked Rebbe Brander, concerned. “Aren’t you going to go play with your friends in the schoolyard?”

“I can play cops and robbers with my friends every day, Rebbe,” Sruli answered. “But right now I want to try to do what the Chofetz Chaim did and experience the Makkos as if I was really there in Mitzrayim!”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!



To listen on the phone, Dial:

USA: 718-289-0899 | UK: 0333-015-0752 | Israel: 079-704-0089 | Canada: 438-771-0452