



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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אַחֵרֵי מוֹת

Once A Year

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Once A Year

BRIIIIIIIINNNNGGG!!!! went the bell signaling the end of recess. All of the boys in the Horki Cheder hurried back to their classrooms. The sixth graders were especially excited to return to class, because Rebbi Horowitz had promised a big surprise for them after recess.

The boys ran inside as fast as their legs could carry them, but suddenly Srulik tripped and fell at the entrance to the building. Noticing this, Hershy stopped running and helped his classmate up.

“Srulik, are you okay?” asked Hershy.

“I don’t know,” said Srulik tearfully. “I think I’m bleeding.”

“Oy!” Hershy exclaimed, seeing Srulik’s ripped pants and the cut on his knee. “Let’s get you to the office right away!”

“But don’t you want to get to class in time for Rebbi’s surprise?” asked Srulik.

“But you’re hurt!” Hershy protested. “How can I just leave a friend who’s in pain? Come on, let’s go.”

Srulik smiled. He had never really thought of Hershy as a close friend - they sat on opposite sides of the classroom and Hershy liked to play frisbee during recess, while Srulik preferred to read. It was really nice of Hershy to be so considerate to him, especially when everyone was excited to get back to class for Rebbi Horowitz’s surprise.

In the school office, Rebbi Shteiner, who was a Hatzolah member, cleaned Srulik’s cut and bandaged it neatly. Then the two boys headed back to class together.

“Ah, there you are!” exclaimed Rebbi Horowitz as the boys walked in and took their seats. “I was waiting for you so I could announce my big surprise!”

Rebbi Horowitz unfurled a large colorful poster with the words “ואהבת לרעך כמוך” on it. The boys all looked blankly at the poster, as Rebbi Horowitz continued.

“Since we are in middle of Sefiras Haomer, we are having a *bein adam l’chaveiro* campaign. Every boy will be given a chart to put down at least one way you showed love to a fellow Yid each day. Whoever shows the most dedication to this beautiful Mitzvah will be awarded the opportunity to spend an entire day with the Rebbe Shlit”a!”

Rebbi Horowitz looked around the class, expecting the boys to be excited about the *bein adam l’chaveiro* campaign, but most of the boys were still looking at him with confused looks.

“What’s wrong?” asked Rebbi Horowitz. “I would have thought that you would have been more excited about this.”

Hershy raised his hand. “It’s just that we all know about *ואהבת לרעך כמוך* already,” he said.

“Yeah,” added Srulik. “In fact, Hershy just did this mitzvah beautifully when helped me after I fell and cut my knee at the end of recess.”

Hershy raised his hand again. “Also, loving other Yidden is a mitzvah that applies the whole year long. Why would we *davka* want to have a campaign for it now?”



“Boys, I’d like to call your attention to something in this week’s Parsha,” Rabbi Horowitz said. “When the Torah talks about Yom Kippur, it adds two seemingly extra words: ‘אֶתְּחַן בַּשָּׁנָה’. Now why does the Torah need to tell us that Yom Kippur comes once a year - it doesn’t tell us that about any other Yom Tov?”

“The answer is, there’s no such thing as ‘we know it already’. Rav Avigdor Miller would say ‘Thank you Hashem for everything’ is nothing at all. Like when someone tells you ‘come over anytime’ it usually means ‘never’. If you want to be sincere, you have to be specific. Not everybody is an expert lover of other Yidden like Hershel Krausz here. And so we need a dedicated time to work on it. Like teshuva. It’s a mitzvah all year round. In fact it’s a chiyuv. You can’t push it off. You can’t say ‘I’ll do teshuva when Yom Kippur comes’. But the Torah says ahas beshanah, because this is the time to put all our energies into it.

“We need to make set times to work on mitzvos even though we ‘know all about it already’. Now in these days of Sefirah when we mourn for the Talmidim of Rabbi Akiva we will concentrate on the teaching of Rabbi Akiva that loving other Yidden is the ‘klal gadol batorah’...”

The boys all thought about this as Rabbi Horowitz pinned the new poster on the classroom wall. Suddenly, Srulik jumped up from his seat.

“Here, Yanky,” he said, picking up Yanky’s pencil and handing it to him. “Your pencil fell on the floor.”

Then, turning to Rabbi Horowitz, he added. “Thank you, Rabbi. What you just said made me realize that there is always more we can do to work on this tremendous mitzvah of ואהבת לרעך כמוך.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

While we must always do all Mitzvos, the Torah teaches us that it’s good to set aside specific times to concentrate on individual Mitzvos.



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