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מטות-מסעי

Wrappers On the Ground

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Abraham Sion ben Naava

Wrappers On the Ground

Monday morning, at recess

“Hi Chezky,” said Avrohom Yitzchok Stern, as he approached his friend. “What’s wrong? You look upset.”

“I’m just really hungry,” said Chezky. “I didn’t have time to eat breakfast this morning and I lost the snack I was going to eat now.”

“Hungry?” said Avrohom Yitzchok with a huge grin. “You’ve come to just the right person! I’ll be right back!”

Chezky looked momentarily confused as Avrohom Yitzchok dashed back into the cheder and quickly returned with his bulging knapsack.

“Here!” exclaimed Avrohom Yitzchok, opening his bag wide. “These are from my father’s bakery - take as many as you like!”

“Wow!” said Chezky, amazed at the selection of yummy chocolate chip cookies, custard cream puffs, and cinnamon twists. “Is this left over from another Horki Dinner?”

“No,” laughed Avrohom Yitzchok. “But it’s still delicious. Please, take. Eat something. You’re starving!”

Hungrily, Chezky picked out a frosted donut, and a few cookies before making a brocha and starting to eat.

Meanwhile a few other boys had walked over, curiously eying the hoard of treats and Avraham Yitzchok graciously offered some to them as well.

As the boys chatted and enjoyed their snacks, they did not notice Rabbi Caplan approaching them from behind.

“Having fun, boys?” Rabbi Caplan asked gruffly.

The boys jumped at the stern tone coming from their normally-friendly Rabbi.

“What’s wrong, Rabbi? Did we do something wrong?” asked Chezky.

“Well,” Rabbi Caplan replied, still sounding upset. “I’m having trouble understanding. How could you boys sit here, eating and talking and not realize that you are dropping your wrappers all over the ground?”

The boys looked down uncomfortably at the large pile of wrappers that had accumulated at their feet as they ate.

“Do you think that the schoolyard is just magically cleaned up every day? What do you think Julio the janitor is going to say to himself when he comes out later to clean up? It’s a big chillul Hashem! A ben Torah should never throw trash on the floor!”

“We’re sorry Rebbi,” the boys said sheepishly, as they quickly bent down to pick up the wrappers and stuff them into their pockets.

Later that afternoon

As the final bell rang, Chezky headed out of the cheder building with a smile. Boruch Hashem, thanks to Avrohom Yitzchok’s generosity, he was able to learn well the rest of the day without his stomach rumbling.

As he walked out of the schoolyard, he saw two of the boys who had shared the Stern’s Bakery snacks with him earlier heading home while munching on some candies. Chezky ran a few feet to catch up with them so they could walk home together.

As Chezky came closer, though, he noticed that the boys’ candy wrappers were dropping on the ground as they walked.

“What’s wrong with you?!!” Chezky exclaimed angrily, surprising the two boys. “Can’t you see that you’re making a chillul Hashem? Is it so hard to put the wrapper in a garbage can?! Didn’t you hear a word that Rebbi said earlier?!”

As Chezky continued to yell at his classmates, his face turned red and he was almost shaking with anger. How could someone ignore what Rebbi had said just a few hours earlier? What was wrong with them?



Just then, Rabbi Caplan approached. “Is everything okay, Yechezkel?” he asked.

“No!” shouted Chezky, unable to control himself. “Look at those boys how they are leaving a mess, just after Rabbi told us not to drop wrappers on the floor!”

“Yechezkel Shraga,” said Rabbi Caplan softly. “You need to calm down. A Yid should never get angry like this.”

Chezky paused, looking up at his Rabbi with surprise. Wasn’t Rabbi on his side? “But didn’t Rabbi get angry at us today? And when we were learning the parsha you said that Moshe Rabbeinu got angry at the Bnei Yisroel for letting some of the people from Midyan live after the war. So I’m just being like Rabbi and Moshe Rabeinu. You should be proud of me!”

“That’s a great question, Yechezkel Shraga,” Rabbi Caplan said with a smile. “Here, let’s go get you a drink of water and I’ll explain it to you.”

After sipping some water, Chezky felt calmer.

“Yechezkel Shraga,” said Rabbi Caplan. “Sometimes parents and rebbeim need to show disappointment to their children and talmidim. But that’s not real anger. When Moshe Rabbeinu “got angry” it means he put on a display of anger so that the Bnei Yisroel would understand that they had done something wrong. But he didn’t become angry – he showed anger!

“Real anger is very dangerous because it makes you lose control. An angry person always forgets about Hashem – that’s why the Gemara says that an angry person is like someone who does Avodah Zarah.

“And also,” continued Rabbi Caplan with a smile, “most of the time, especially when you are dealing with your friends, a friendly word and a kind reminder will do a lot more. If you want to help your friends, do it with self control.”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

Anger is one of the worst Middos. Hashem created anger to be used by our parents or teachers when it is important. But we must stay away from it as much as possible.



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