



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

By: Ari Ben-Ami

Illustrations by: Yocheved Nadell

עֵקֶב

Don't Be A Brachos Robot

לע"נ מרגלית בת משומר ומרים

Mrs. Margie Ruben

Shanghai, Bensonhurst, Ramot



Don't Be A Brachos Robot

Yitzzy watched as Rabbi Caplan walked around the classroom, putting an apple on each boy's desk. "Oh, great," he thought to himself, "I hope the city is not starting with this healthy snacks program again and forcing the yeshiva to do this. I bet they're gonna start giving us that 100% whole wheat bread again at lunch. Uch! Don't kids' lives matter, too?!"

But it turned out that all it meant was that Rabbi Caplan had an interesting lesson planned. "In Parshas Eikev," Rabbi Caplan began as he scribbled some numbers on the board, "the Torah asks a very big question: **מָה ה'שָׁם אֵלֶיךָ שׂוֹאֵל מֵעַמּוֹךְ** — What does Hashem want from you in this world?"

"Now, listen to what the Torah answers," he continued. "All that Hashem wants is that you should 1) fear Him, 2) walk in His ways, 3) love Him, and 4) serve Him with all of your heart and soul.

"That's all that Hashem wants from us?!" said Rabbi Caplan. "It sounds like so much! You remember at the beginning of the year, when I told you boys that I wanted to take you on a full-day trip to Washington, D.C.? And I said that all I want from you is that everyone should get over a 95% on every Gemara quiz, and that everyone should write a book report on one of the *gedolim* of the previous generation? Also, I said that you all have to be on time every day for class, and no calling out during class at all.

"Now, Shmuly, you remember when you and Yitzzy came to my desk at recess that day? What did you say?"

Shmuly looked a little embarrassed. "I said that it's totally impossible to do those four things."

"Exactly. And Yitzzy, what did you say?"

Yitzzy smiled. "I said that maybe it's not totally impossible, but how could Rebbi say that it's 'only these four things'? That makes it sound easy when really it's not."

"Right!" said Rabbi Caplan. "And that's exactly what I was thinking when I read this passuk. Hashem only wants from us this and this and this

and this?! I don't know if it's totally impossible, but I definitely wouldn't use the word only.

“Now, I want everyone to listen now to what Rebbi Meir says about this *passuk*. He says that ‘מָה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵיךָ’ can also be read like this ‘מֵאָה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵיךָ שׂוֹאֵל מֵעֲמֶיךָ. Instead of *mah*, which means ‘what,’ you read it ‘me’ah,’ which means ‘a hundred.’ It means that what Hashem really wants from you is a hundred *brachos*.”

“What’s the connection? asked Yitzy. “What does saying *brachos* have to do with this?”

“No calling out, Yitzy — remember? I was just getting to that. I once heard a *shiur* by Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l, and this is how he explained it. He said that Rabbi Meir is teaching us that the shortcut to coming to all of those great things in that *passuk* – loving Hashem, fearing Him, walking in His ways, and serving Him with all your heart – is by saying one hundred *brachos* a day.”

Rabbi Caplan started adding numbers together on the board, showing the boys how easy it is to say a hundred *brachos* every day. “The reason there’s a *halachah* that every day we each have to say a hundred *brachos* is that if you stop a hundred times a day to thank Hashem for something, it means that you’re constantly reminding yourself about the things that Hashem is giving you.



“You start right away when you get up in the morning, and you’re busy with making brachos all day long. You’re thanking Him that your body is working perfectly. You’re thanking Him for your Cheerios, and for giving you eyes and feet, and for your neshamah. And on and on and on — you’re busy talking to Hashem all day long till bedtime when you thank Hashem for the gift of sleep.

“But Rav Miller said that if we make the brachos like robots, then it’s not going to work — no matter how many brachos we say. You know why? Because a robot can’t love Hashem! We can program a robot to say words, but it’s just spitting out words — there’s no feeling in the words. What makes a brachah real is not the words — it’s the thoughts that go into the brachah.

“Then Rav Miller took out an apple and taught us how to eat an apple the Torah way,” continued Rabbi Caplan as he picked up the apple from his desk. “First he admired it like a person looking at a beautiful diamond. Then he said out loud, ‘Look at this delicious snack that Hashem made just for me! It’s sweet and tangy at the same time! It’s a food, but it’s also full of juice! And it has a wrapper that keeps it fresh! And when it’s time to eat the apple, I get to eat the wrapper, too, which adds even more taste! Wow! I love Hashem for giving me this apple!’

“And then he made a *Borei pri ha’eitz* and took a bite. And I’m sure that as he chewed that tasty apple, he thought about it more and more. And that was only one brachah! But that’s one step on the road to becoming a tzaddik by saying a hundred brachos a day.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos !



To listen on the phone, Dial:

USA: 774-298-9024

UK: 0333-015-4190

Israel: 055-508-6130

For this booklet dial: 2049#