

Mayor Pharaoh

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Eli rushed into the classroom on Tuesday morning. “Benjy,” he said breathlessly. “Did you hear about Mayor McGillicuddy’s latest contest?”

“Ooh, what is it?” asked Benjy excitedly, as other boys gathered around.

“The mayor is up for reelection and he needs posters for his campaign. But he ran out of campaign funds after he invested it all in trying to make a new cologne that smells just like him. Apparently nobody wanted to smell like the mayor.”

The boys all laughed at the silliness of their mayor.

“So what does the winner of this contest get?” asked Yossi. “Obviously there is no cash prize if the mayor ran out of money.”

“The winner will be named ‘Mayor McGillicuddy Junior,’” said Eli. “And he will be in charge of picking the winner for the next contest that the mayor holds.”

Everyone started excitedly discussing the possibilities of winning the contest. Would the winner get an office in City Hall? Maybe they would be able to convince the mayor to distribute free kosher candy each Erev Shabbos?

Meanwhile several boys pulled out crayons, markers, and large pieces of paper and began to design their posters, but the morning schoolbell rang a couple of minutes later. Everyone quickly put their things away and sat at their desk as Rabbi Bromberg entered the classroom.

That morning, it was hard to concentrate even though Rabbi Bromberg shared several entertaining stories. One particularly funny tale was from his days as a bochur when he and his friends rented an ice cream truck



during *bein hazmanim*, yet the boys just seemed to be in their own world as they could not stop thinking about what they would do if they became Mayor McGillicuddy Junior.

At recess, the boys immediately pulled out their drawings and continued working on their posters.

“Look, Eli,” laughed Yossi. “In my poster, Mayor McGillicuddy is wearing a purple cape and a gold crown. Wouldn’t it be hilarious if I won and the mayor actually started dressing like that?”

Some boys took the contest more seriously and were drawing elaborate pictures of the mayor and highlighting his campaign promises. Others were engrossed in deep discussions about what contest would come next and whether they would be fair if they were going to be judged by a child.

The boys were so preoccupied that they were startled when the end-of-recess bell rang and Rabbi Bromberg reentered the classroom.

“Boys, I think we need to talk,” Rabbi Bromberg said, as everyone took their seats. “Does anyone here think that Mayor McGillicuddy might be a little bit like Paraoah?”

Yossi raised his hand. “But Rebbi, we’re not slaves,” he said.

“Okay, but were the Bnei Yisroel slaves when they started working for Paraoah?” Rabbi Bromberg asked. “He paid them originally. First in gold, then in silver, and then they had to work for free.”

The boys started looking nervous.

“Is Rebbi saying that this contest is a plot by McGillicuddy to get us to become his slaves?” asked Eli.

“No, I don’t think our mayor is that smart,” Rabbi Bromberg said. “And it would be illegal, too. But it might be a plot by the *satan*.”

This didn’t make the boys feel any better. Being slaves to the *satan*, if anything, sounded worse than being slaves to McGillicuddy.

“I’m not saying there is anything wrong with participating in a contest, although you should ask your parents’ permission first,” continued Rabbi Bromberg. “However, look how preoccupied you are with it. You didn’t even laugh at the story about when I was a *yeshiva bochur* and my friends and I rented an ice cream truck and sold pastrami sandwiches from it instead of ice cream.”

“Can Rebbi please tell it to us again?” asked Effy, who seemed sad that he had missed what sounded like a hilarious story.

“Maybe later,” said Rabbi Bromberg. “But look at how much this contest is taking away from your learning and serving Hashem. There is nothing wrong with having some fun as children, but when things outside of the Torah take up all of your time, you are falling into the same trap that our forefathers did in Mitzrayim.

“We must always remember that everything we do in our life - even eating ice cream or running around during recess - is part of our *avodas Hashem*. But when those things become our focus, then that means we are slipping into becoming slaves to the *satan*, the same way the Yidden in Mitzrayim became slaves to Paraoah.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let's Review

- How is Mayor McGillicuddy like Paraoah?
- How are some ways that eating ice cream can be a form of serving Hashem?



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