



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Sefer Bereishis sponsored by:



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וישלה

Staying Close

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Parshas Vayishlach

Staying Close

“Hey Shimmy! Hey Yitzy!”

Shimmy and Yitzy looked up as they walked out of the house into the cool brisk night and saw their neighbor, Stevey Risnik, waving at them.

“Hi Stevey,” Shimmy and Yitzy both said politely.

“Look at this!” Stevey said, holding up a flyer.

“This is for a non-Jewish school,” said Yitzy, taking the flyer and reading it.

“Yeah!” said Stevey brightly. “Look! They have basketball classes taught by a professional basketball player - so instead of struggling to read the Mishnah, I can be learning how to bounce a ball better!”

“Why do you want to stop learning Torah to learn how to bounce a ball?” asked Shimmy.

“Because I’m not good at learning Torah,” Stevey said. “Whenever the rabbi in school talks about Torah, my brain thinks about basketball and rocketships and race cars. So I’m going to ask my parents to send me to a school that is better for me.”

Shimmy and Yitzy looked at each other, horrified.

“Stevey, did you daven Maariv yet?” asked Yitzy, an idea forming in his head.

“Maariv? On a Sunday?” Stevey said, confused. “I only daven Maariv on Shabbat.”

“Come with us,” said Yitzy. “We don’t get to talk often. Let’s walk to shul together - it will be fun and Maariv only takes fifteen minutes.”

With nothing better to do, Stevey stuffed the flyer into his pocket and joined the Greenbaum boys on their walk to shul.

“So are you guys going to be like big rabbis or something?” asked Stevey.

“I dunno,” said Shimmy. “We’re still kids.”

“Yeah, but in your school, you guys learn so much Torah - I mean what’s the point unless you’re going to be like rosh yashivas or something? Are you the best in your classes?”



Both boys shook their heads. “No, we’re not the best,” Yitzzy said.

The boys arrived at shul and walked inside. Rabbi Stefnotsky was giving his world-famous Amud Yomi shiur. The boys listened while waiting for the shiur to end.

“Who’s that man over there holding his Gemara upside down?” whispered Stevey.

“Oh that’s Farmer Bazoigenstein,” said Shimmy. “He always comes here.”

After davening, as everyone left, Farmer Richard Bazoigenstein stopped and wished the boys good night.

“I don’t believe I’ve had the pleasure of making your acquaintance,” Farmer Richard said, holding his hand out to Stevey. “I’m Farmer Richard. Are you new in town?”

“Uh, hi, I’m Stevey,” Stevey replied. “I uh no, I uh go to a different shul.”

“Well it’s always great to meet a new Yehooddee,” said Farmer Richard.

“Uh, Mr. Bazoigenstein,” said Stevey hesitantly. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Sure, fire away,” Farmer Richard smiled.

“Do you find Gemara interesting?”



“I’ll tell you a secret,” whispered Farmer Richard, adjusting his overalls and straw hat. “I don’t even know how to read Hebrew very well. I just come and hold this here Gemorrah so I don’t look different from everyone else.”

“But why come to the shiur at all?” asked Stevey.

“I’ll tell you why,” Farmer Richard replied. “Because I don’t want to be a rowshaw like Eisav. You see our great-great-great-granddaddy, Yakoff Oveenu was a big Tzadeek and his brother Eisav wasn’t as good at learning as him. So Eisav decided that he should move out of the country. But I read in Toras Avigdor that this was a huge mistake for Eisav. Because Eisav could have stayed in Eretz Israel and become one of the shayvets, just like Yakoff’s children. His children wouldn’t have been holy priests and singers in the Beis Hamikdosh like Levy’s children, but they could at least have been Yehooideem. But instead, he left and became a goy.

“Well when I read that, I thought so what if I can’t be the rabbi of the shool? I can still be part of this holy congregation. So I come here with my Gemmorah and sit next to all of the talmeed chachams - even if I can’t be the best like them, at least I’m part of them and not the goyim in the street. Like Rabbi Stefnotsky always says, ‘it’s not about the amood, it’s about the keyvoot – it’s about coming every day and being here.’”

Farmer Richard wished the boys good night and left Stevey standing there, stunned. He pulled the flyer out of his pocket and looked at it again before crumpling it up.

“Shimmy, Yitzy, you guys have the right idea. So maybe I won’t be the best at learning Torah. But by staying in a Jewish school and learning Torah studies, I’ll at least be part of the Jewish People and not Eisav’s people!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let’s review:

- What mistake did Eisav make that Farmer Richard didn’t want to repeat?
- Why did Stevey decide not to switch to the non-Jewish school?