



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Sefer Devarim sponsored by:



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שבת טובה

The Little Things

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The Little Things

Chiya rushed into the *beis midrash*. Seder started ten minutes ago and his *chavrusa* was waiting for him.

“Sorry,” he mumbled as he bumped into another *bochur’s shtender*, knocking a pen to the floor.

Chiya arrived at his seat, moving the used tissues he had left there the night before to the seat next to him, and opened his *Gemara*.

“Yossi, did you find an answer to the *kashe* we had yesterday?” he asked his *chavrusa*.

“Good morning, Chiya,” answered Yossi with a smile. “I actually saw something interesting. If you look in the *Maharam*, you’ll see that –”

Both *bochurim* looked up to see Dovy, an older *bochur*, standing there.

“Chiya, the *mashgiach* wants to see you,” Dovy said.

Chiya and Yossi looked at each other. What could the *mashgiach* want?

“Good morning, Chiya,” the *mashgiach* said with a warm smile as Chiya approached him. “We need to talk.”

“Did I do something wrong?” asked Chiya nervously.

“Chiya,” said the *mashgiach*. “It’s *Aseres Yimei Teshuva*. I think it’s important that you take this time to look at some of the things you need to work on.”

“But I’m learning well,” said Chiya, confused. “And I’ve been coming to *Shacharis* on time and everything.”

“Chiya, yesterday I saw you pushing to get to the front of the lunch line.”

“Well, I was hungry,” Chiya mumbled defensively.

“And the day before that, when I was looking for my hat on the hat rack, I saw that you had placed your hat on top of my hat.”

“I didn’t know that was the *mashgiach’s* hat,” said Chiya, his face reddening. “I didn’t want to walk all the way to the other side of the coat room because I was in a hurry to get to my *chavrusa*.”

“And last night you left dirty tissues on your seat in the *beis midrash*. And this morning I saw you knock down someone’s pen from his *shtender* without even picking it up for him - and then you moved your old tissues onto someone else’s seat instead of throwing them in the garbage.”



Chiya stood there uncomfortably, not knowing what to say.

“Chiya,” the mashgiach said. “Now during Aseres Yimei Teshuva is a great time to work on improving your midos. I’d like to help you with that.”

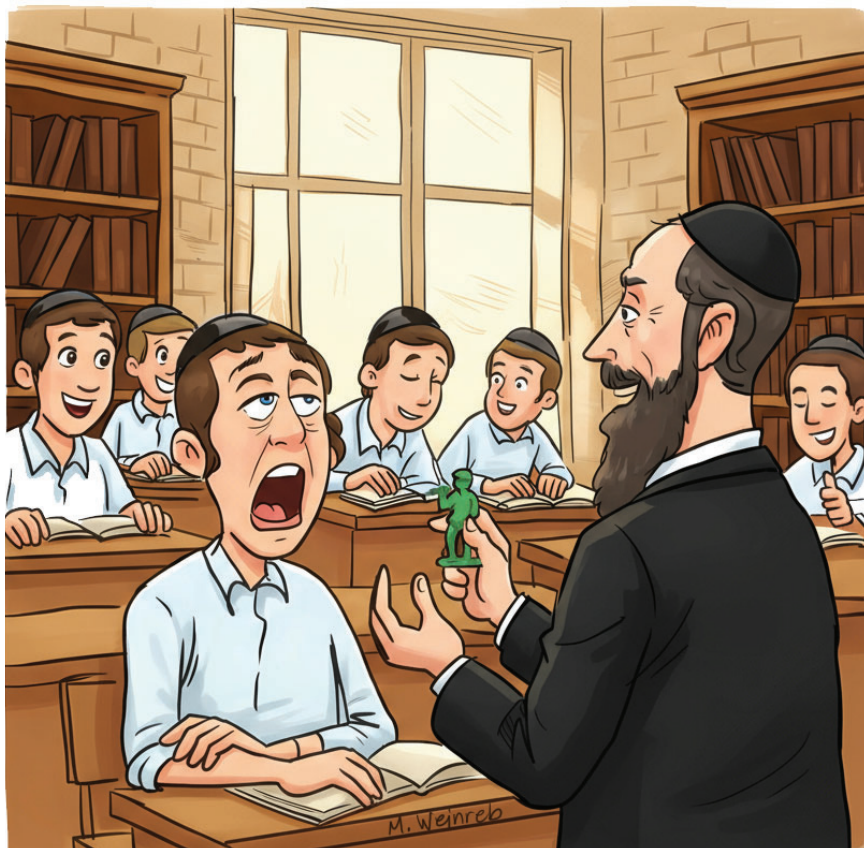
“But rebbe,” Chiya said. “These are all such small things. Why is the mashgiach making it sound like they’re so terrible?”

“Good question,” the mashgiach replied. “But I have a meeting now with the Rosh Yeshiva. Let’s continue this tomorrow.”

* * *

The next morning, Chiya entered the beis midrash with his eyes half-closed. He stifled a yawn as he stumbled through the door and rubbed his eyes while walking to his seat.

“Good morning, Chiya!” said the mashgiach, as Chiya walked by.



“Oh uh, hi, good morning rebbe,” Chiya said groggily.

“Chiya, are you still wearing your *shluf koppel*?”

Chiya reached up to his head and felt the giant *yarmulke* he usually wore while sleeping.

“Oy I was so tired I must have forgotten to switch it for my regular *yarmulke*,” he said.

“Why are you so tired?” asked the *mashgiach*.

“I don’t know, I couldn’t sleep last night,” Chiya replied. “I kept tossing and turning - I couldn’t get comfortable.”

The *mashgiach* reached into his pocket and pulled something out.

“Do you know what this is, Chiya?” he asked.

“Is that one of those little green army men?” asked Chiya, confused. “That’s not mine, rebbe, I promise.”

The *mashgiach* laughed. “I know it’s not yours, Chiya. It’s mine.”

Chiya’s eyes widened. Why would the *mashgiach* own a little toy like that?

“Well, actually it’s my grandson’s,” the *mashgiach* clarified. “But I borrowed it. I put it under your bedsheet last night. That’s why you didn’t sleep well.”

Chiya now looked even more confused. “What?” he asked, wondering if he was still asleep and this was a very strange dream.

“Look how small this toy is, Chiya. It’s tiny. But it still bothered you last night, right?”

“Now let’s think about your *neshama*. Can you imagine how uncomfortable it must be for your *neshama* to have these little tiny *aveiros* poking into it? Even the smallest *aveirah* or bad *midah* causes extreme discomfort to your *neshama*. It’s not enough to just *daven* with *kavanah* and learn all day. We must work towards perfecting ourselves.”

“I - I - I never thought about it like that before,” Chiya stammered.

“Well, the good news is that now you did!” the *mashgiach* said with a smile. “That’s a huge step towards *teshuvah*. Now that you have this understanding, you can use our nightly *mussar seder* to work on improving these bad *midos*. And you can come into Yom Kippur ready for a full *kaparah*!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos and Gmar Chasima Tova

let’s review:

- What’s so bad about small *aveiros*?
- In what way did reading this story help you prepare for Yom Kippur?

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