Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Vayigash / וַיִּגַּשׁ

Look and See

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"Hi Shimmy!" Yitzy greeted his older brother as everyone walked out of cheider at the end of the day. "Do you want to come with me to Moishy Raskner's house after supper? His grandparents bought him a telescope - we're going to look at stars and planets."

"I don't think so," replied Shimmy. "The latest issue of The Adventures of Yaari and Divshi is out and I want to read it."

"You don't want to see the rings of Saturn?" asked Yitzy, surprised.

"Not really. That type of stuff doesn't really interest me. But thanks for offering."

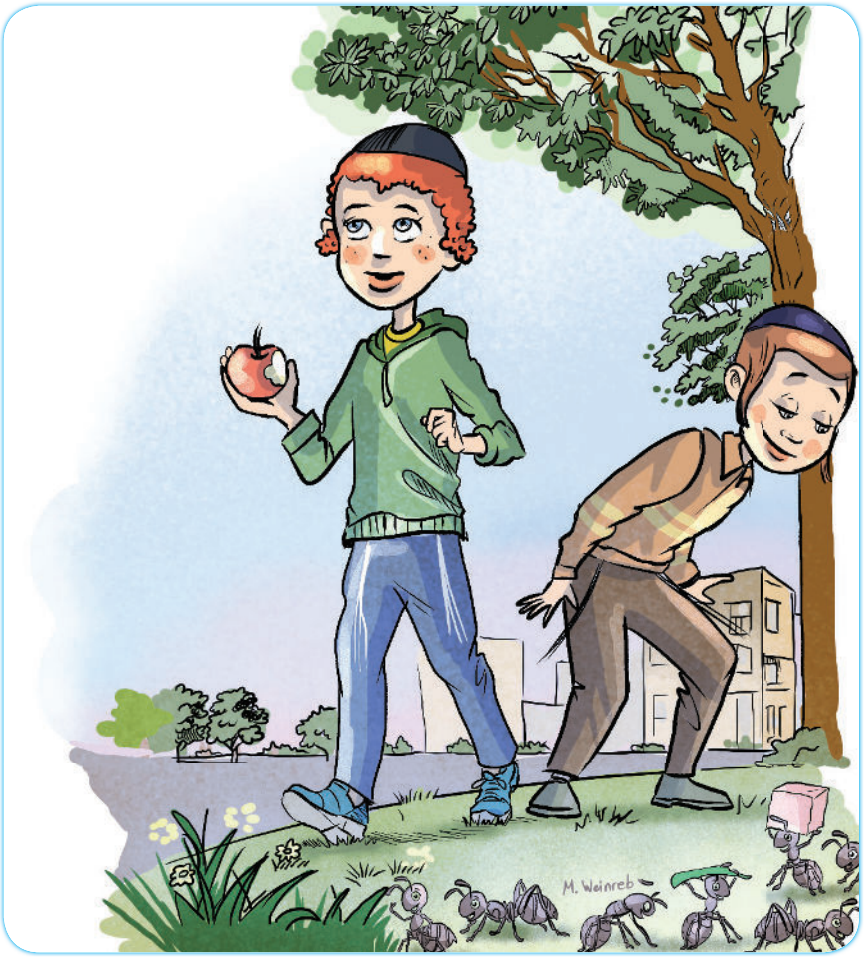
Shimmy pulled a shiny red apple out of his bag. "Bachatanolemelecholam borei pri ha'eitz," he mumbled and took a big bite out of the juicy fruit.

"Amein?" Yitzy said hesitantly.

"Why did you say 'amein' like you're asking a question?" asked Shimmy.

"Because I wasn't sure if you actually said the *brocha*, you mumbled it so quickly."

"I said the *brocha*," Shimmy insisted. "I just said it quickly because I'm so hungry."



"Yitzy, what are you doing?" asked Shimmy a few minutes later. "Why are you stopping?"

"Look, there's an amazing anthill over here!" exclaimed Yitzy, who was bent over, looking at the ground. "Someone dropped a cracker next to it and you can see hundreds of ants taking crumbs and bringing them into the hole. Why, I bet a few of those crumbs could feed a tiny ant for a lifetime! But they keep coming back and bringing more. I bet by tomorrow the entire cracker will be gone."

"Okay, but can we keep walking? I want to get home already."

"Sure," said Yitzy with a smile as he stood up and continued walking. "Do you want to hear a question Rebbi Caplan asked today?"

"Okay," agreed Shimmy.

"After Yaakov Avinu hears that Yosef Hatzadik is still alive, he says 'אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת - I will go and see him before I will die'. Why was it so important for Yaakov Avinu to go see Yosef?"

"Um... because Yosef was his son and he loved him," Shimmy said.

"I know, right? That's what everyone in the class said too. But Rebbi Caplan said that tzadikim on the level of Yaakov Avinu don't just drop all of their *Avodas Hashem* just because they want to visit their son. It's not like Yosef was a little boy who needed his Totty - he was a big *tzadik* who was in charge of all of Mitzrayim."

"Okay, so why did he want to go?" asked Shimmy, taking another bite from his apple.

"So Rebbi Caplan explained that going to see Yosef was part of Yaakov's *Avodas Hashem*. Because Hashem gave us a power of sight to be used to be more aware of him. For example, did you look at the peel of your apple before eating it?"

"I saw that it was red, if that's what you're asking," Shimmy said.

"Okay, and isn't that amazing? Isn't it incredible to look at the beautiful color Hashem gave it, which makes it more enjoyable to eat? And what about the fact that the peel serves as a perfect wrapper that keeps the fruit fresh?"

"I told you, I was hungry," Shimmy said defensively.

"Okay, but what about the anthill? Do you know how much *niflaos haborei* you can witness by just watching ants work for a few minutes?"

"Yeah, but I wanted to go home and relax," Shimmy protested.

"Or even the opportunity to look through a telescope and see the stars and planets - it's an incredible chance to see the wonders of Hashem's creation."

Shimmy was quiet.

"Now of course, if you are learning Torah, we probably shouldn't interrupt that to go look through a telescope. And you don't have to necessarily stop and look at every anthill if you are in a hurry. But Hashem wants us to use our eyes to pay attention to all of the amazing things that he put in the world for **us**."

"I hear," said Shimmy. "But what does that have to do with Yaakov and Yosef?"

"Because as much *hakoras hatov* as Yaakov had to Hashem for Yosef still being alive, he knew that he could gain an even greater level of connection to Hashem if he would see it with his own eyes. Because it's important to use our eyes to look at things that make us more aware of Hashem."

Shimmy looked at the half-eaten apple in his hand as he thought about this. "Yitzy!" he exclaimed. "I just realized that the outside of the apple peel is like plastic - it's *mamesh* waterproof like a high-quality food wrapper, like you said! And look! These little seeds in here - if you think about it, they're like tiny little apple factories - just add water and you get a new tree full of apples! It's amazing how much *chochma* Hashem put into a little apple!"

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

Hashem gave us the power of sight to be used to be more aware of him. When we see His greatness and goodness, we can grow a lot.

Let's Review:

- Why did Yitzy stop on the way home from school?
- What are some of the lessons you can think about when you 'see' an apple?

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