

Acting Chosen

By: Aharon Spetner
Illustrations by: M. Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

“Basya,” said Morah Esty, right after the school bell rang at the end of the day. “I want you to be in charge of the school’s submission to the Tu B’shvat project this year.”

Basya gasped. It was always an eighth grader who was in charge of the Tu B’shvat project - maybe sometimes a seventh grader who was chosen to lead the school’s project for the statewide Tu B’shvat event. The event was attended by thousands of girls from Beis Yaakovs all over New York and pictures of each project were printed in all of the frum newspapers. Not only that, but the girls who made the most creative project would win a lifetime supply of bukser!

“Me?” asked Basya. “But I’m only in fifth grade.”

“You are a very creative girl and you work really well with other people,” Morah Esty said. “We think that you have what it takes to create an amazing and beautiful project.”

Basya couldn’t believe her ears. She profusely thanked Morah Esty for the opportunity and rushed off to ask her friends to join the project. They all agreed to meet at Basya’s house that night after supper to plan it.

That night, the four girls gathered in the Greenbaum dining room and started working on their ideas.

“How about we make a tree out of plaster, with all sorts of actual fruit hanging from it?” Basya suggested.

“Ooh, I like that,” Channie said. “But what if instead of just fruit, it’s actual baskets of fruit?”

“I like it,” replied Basya. “But the tree will have to be much bigger than I was imagining.”

“I have an idea!” Malky said excitedly. “Let’s have the tree, surrounded with grass, next to a creek. My father can probably help us install a pump so we can actually have real running water in the creek!”



"Oh. My. Kneidlach." Rochel said. "That is the most a-may-zing idea I ever heard."

"Let's start sketching our ideas," Basya said, pulling out some paper and crayons. "This way we'll have a good idea of exactly what we are going to make."

As the girls began drawing, Basya suddenly remembered something.

"We should ask Devorah if she wants to join. She's the best artist in the class and she doesn't have so many friends. She'd really appreciate being included."

"That's an amazing idea," said Rochel.

So Basya went to the phone and called Devorah.

"I'd love to join," Devorah said shyly. "I'll be over in a few minutes."

When Devorah arrived, the girls showed her the ideas they had so far.

"Why does it have to be so complicated?" asked Devorah. "Why can't we just do a pretty poster with glitter and yarn tassels?"

"Because this is going to be seen by thousands of girls," Rochel explained. "Last year the eighth graders from Beis Yaakov Ro'eh Bashoshanim had a remote-controlled helicopter that dropped fruit which parachuted down over everyone's heads - and they didn't even win the contest!"

Devorah frowned. "I don't know. We're just fifth graders. It feels like too much work."

The other girls looked up from their papers at Devorah.

"Maybe she's right," Basya said after a moment. "And what would we do with a lifetime supply of bukser? Who likes that stuff anyway?"

The girls looked at their drawings and started to wonder if they should just let the eighth graders do it as usual.

"Girls," came the voice of Basya's mother from the doorway to the kitchen. "Can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Okay," Basya said glumly.

"In this week's Parsha we learn about the makkos. And if you notice, even though all of Mitzrayim suffered, the Bnei Yisroel did not. Not one Jewish animal died. Not a single hailstone fell in goshen. And while everyone else in Mitzrayim suffered from the terrible boils of makkas shchin, not a single Yid got even as much as a pimple.

"Now you might have not thought about that, because why should the Bnei Yisroel suffer from the makkos? But the Torah goes out of the way to say that Hashem separated us from the Mitzrim for the makkos. This is because we are the am hanivchar - the chosen people."

"Okay," said Basya. "But what does this have to do with our Tu B'shvat project? I still appreciate the fact that Morah Esty chose me. I'm allowed to back out if I want."

"Because, as Rav Avigdor Miller says, being chosen isn't just a title that you don't do anything with. It means we have to take advantage of the fact that we're chosen and utilize it. It means spending our time doing mitzvos and chessed. It means always looking to see how we can do more ratzon Hashem and demonstrate that we are worthy of being chosen."

Basya smiled. "I get it. Morah Esty chose us because she thinks we're special enough to do this project. She chose us for a reason. And if we don't put effort into doing the best we can, then we were chosen for nothing."

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

We are the Chosen People, let's act Chosen!

We need to show Hashem that we appreciate being Chosen, by acting the part.

Let's Review:

- What is different about this year's Tu B'Shvat contest?
- How do YOU think the Chosen People should act?



To listen on the phone, Dial:

USA: 718-289-0899 | UK: 0333-015-0752 | Israel: 079-704-0089 | Canada: 438-771-0452