

שְׁמִינִי / Shemini

Remembering Olam Haba

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Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Junior

Shimmy and Yitzy Greenbaum excitedly got on the brand-new hoverboards that Zaidy and Bubby had just bought for them and glided down the street, carrying bags of Toras Avigdor booklets. Riding hoverboards was so much more geshmak than riding their old bikes.

The boys approached Congregation Anshei Maaseh and brought one of the bags inside. After neatly placing the booklets on the bimah, they headed back outside, excited to get back on their boards. But when they got outside, they were dismayed to see that their hoverboards were no longer there!

“Our hoverboards were stolen!” Shimmy said, about to cry. “We were just inside for less than a minute! How could this happen?”

“This is the worst day ever!” Yitzy said, a tear trickling down his cheek. “How could this happen? How could Hashem do this to us?”

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Later that day, Totty and the boys headed to visit their great-uncle Velvel. Uncle Velvel had recently suffered a stroke and had to be moved to a nursing home.

As the boys walked into the nursing home, they looked around at all of the old people. Many were just sitting there, staring into space. A few were playing checkers, and others were just sitting around with grouchy faces.



“What a boring place to be,” Yitzy said. “Uncle Velvel must be miserable here.”

“I don’t think he’s miserable,” Totty said with a smile, pointing down the hallway.

The boys looked, and to their surprise they saw Uncle Velvel sitting at a table learning from a Gemara, a huge smile on his face.

“Hi Uncle Velvel,” Totty said.

“Hello!” Uncle Velvel replied joyfully. “It was so nice of all of you to come visit me. And perfect timing too - I just figured out the answer to a kashe I had on this Tosfos for over forty years!”

Uncle Velvel paused, seeing Shimmy and Yitzy’s sad faces. “Is everything okay?” he asked.

Shimmy and Yitzy explained how their brand-new hoverboards had been stolen. “It’s the worst day of our lives,” Yitzy lamented.

Uncle Velvel reached over awkwardly with his left hand to take the glass of water a passing nurse had offered him.

“Since my stroke I can’t use my right hand,” Uncle Velvel explained.

The boys looked at each other uncomfortably, realizing that they must sound like babies complaining to Uncle Velvel about their hoverboards when he could no longer use his right hand.

“Listen boys,” Uncle Velvel said, opening the Chumash that was next to his Gemara. “Boys, look here at Parshas Shmini. The Mishkan had been erected. Klal Yisroel were celebrating. And then, all of a sudden, Aharon’s sons Nadav and Avihu were killed by Hashem. How could Hashem

have done something like that on such a happy day?

“And the answer is, because sometimes Hashem needs to remind us that there is more than just this world. We can get so caught up with enjoying ourselves that we can forget that there is a much bigger world waiting for us in *Olam Haba*.

“Look at me, for example. I was going along with my routine, enjoying life, trying to be a good Jew. But Hashem sent me a message with this stroke, telling me ‘Velvel! You’re not in this world forever! Remember what you’re working towards!’

“Well I didn’t need to be told twice. I immediately realized that I need to start getting more serious about *Olam Haba*.” Uncle Velvel tapped his Gemara. “I don’t know when, but a day is approaching when I will be given a *farher* on everything I learned - I need to prepare myself for that day!”

Shimmy and Yitzy listened to this and thought about it. It made sense, but it still hurt to not have their hoverboards.

Uncle Velvel sensed what the boys were thinking. “I have an *eitzah* for you,” he said. “Try to think about this lesson. Make a real effort to understand and feel that *Olam Haba* is more important than anything else. I can’t make any promises, but perhaps you might get your hoverboards back. After all, if you learned the lesson already, there might not be a need for you to no longer have your hoverboards!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let’s review:

- Why did Hashem cause such a tragedy to happen on the happy day of *hakomas haMishkan*?
- How was Uncle Velvel different from all of the other people in the nursing home?



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