



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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Doing in this World

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Doing in this World

"Yitzy," asked Shimmy, as the two boys headed to cheder. "Why are you bringing a clipboard with you?"

"Oh it's because of something I read in one of Totty's old Toras Avigdor booklets."

"Rabbi Miller said you should bring a clipboard to cheder?" Shimmy asked, confused.

"No," Yitzy said. "But he brings the possuk from this week's Parsha that we say every week in kiddush. 'וַיָּשָׁבַת מְכָל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת' - on that day Hashem rested from all of the work which He created to do". Rabbi Miller asks what it means 'which He created to do'? And he answers that Hashem put us in this world to do, to create, to kiviyachol take over from the work that Hashem started."

"Okay, I understand that," Shimmy answered. "But what does a clipboard have to do with it?"

"Isn't it obvious?" Yitzy asked his confused older brother, who clearly did not see what was obvious. "We need to improve the world. And I am going to do that by teaching everyone all of the Taryag Mitzvos - imagine how much better a place the world would be if everyone knew all 613 mitzvos by heart! Isn't that a great idea?"

"I guess so," said Shimmy.

"So what's Mitzvah number 46?" asked Yitzy, taking out his pen.

"Um I don't know - sefiras ha'omer?"

"Nope," Yitzy said, making a mark on his clipboard. "Mitzvah 46 is shte halechem!"

"Oh okay," Shimmy replied not too enthusiastically. "Thanks for teaching that to me."

"Amazing!" Yitzy exclaimed. "Now remember that and I'll test you on it later today!"

"Um... okay," Shimmy repeated, as they approached the cheder.

In the courtyard, a bunch of boys were throwing a frisbee around before class started. Yitzy ran towards them, his clipboard gripped tightly in his hand.

"Pinny! Chezky! Dovy!" he called.

"Good morning Yitzy!" replied Chezky as he caught the frisbee in mid-air. "Do you want to play with us?"

"No, I've got something much better in mind!" Yitzy said brightly.



The boys stopped playing with their frisbee for a moment. Something better? What game did Yitzy have in mind?

"What's that?" asked Dovy with interest.

"Do you know what Mitzvah number 215 is?" Yitzy asked, looking at his clipboard.

"What?" Dovy said, confused.

"Mitzvas asei number 215," Yitzy repeated. "What is it?"

"Uh... I don't know, why don't you ask Rebbe Caplan?"

"No, I know what it is - I'm asking you! It's *bris milah*!"

"Okay," Dovy said, while Chezky tossed the frisbee to Pinny, who started running to catch it. "Thanks for telling us."

"Wait!" called Yitzy as Dovy turned to rejoin the frisbee game. "I want to teach you more Mitzvos!"

"Okay, that sounds great," Dovy called. "Maybe during lunch!"

Yitzy walked away, disappointed that his friends didn't seem to be as excited as he was about his new project.



“Good morning, Yitzchok. Is everything okay?” asked Rebbe Caplan as Yitzy walked past him.

“Good morning rebbe,” Yitzy said. “Yeah, everything is fine. It’s just that my friends aren’t as interested as I thought they’d be in learning all Taryag Mitzvos.”

Yitzy told Rebbe Caplan what he had read in Toras Avigdor and about his new project to teach everyone all of the Mitzvos. Rebbe Caplan listened patiently as he described what he was trying to do.

“I don’t understand how I’m supposed to make Hashem’s world a better place if nobody will listen to me,” he finished dejectedly.

“Yitzchok,” Rebbe Caplan said. “I actually remember that Toras Avigdor booklet. You didn’t read the whole thing, did you?”

“Well no,” Yitzy explained. “As soon as I read about how we have to make the world a better place I ran to get a clipboard and I made this chart of all of the Mitzvos.”

“Well, if you would have been a bit more patient you would have seen what Rabbi Miller said next. He says that the most important thing we can improve in this world is ourselves!”

“But I already know all of the 613 mitzvos by heart,” Yitzy replied.

“That’s gevaldig!” Rebbe Caplan said warmly. “But that doesn’t mean that you’re done working on yourself. Self-improvement is a lifetime avodah. It’s a job that never ends.”

“So the only thing I’ll ever get to improve in this world is myself?” Yitzy asked, somewhat disappointed.

“Of course not!” Rebbe Caplan answered. “You will find that there will be many times in your life where you can help improve things - or even other people who are willing to listen to you. But you must remember that first and foremost, YOU are the most important thing that you have to work on. That’s why we have mussar seforim like Chovos Halevavos and Mesillas Yesharim. These teach us how to make ourselves into better people, which in turn makes the world a better place.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

Hashem created us “to do”, to accomplish change within ourselves by becoming better people.

Let’s Review:

- What is Yitzy thinking when he asks someone a number?
- What is the best way to partner with Hashem in creating the world?