



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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Buried Treasure

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Parshas Yisro

Cozying Up

Horki Cheder, Rosh Chodesh Elul

Mendel was so excited. Now that he was in sixth grade, his class would finally get to daven Mincha with the older boys in the cheder's beis midrash. The beis midrash was originally the main Horki shul before the new building was built - the Horki Rebbe used to daven there every day! Countless stories were told about the mofsim that the Rebbe performed in this holy room.

Mendel and his classmates made their way to Mincha full of excitement. They slowly walked into the holy room filled with awe. They found their new seats and trembled when the chazan began korbanos.

"Ashrei yoshvei veisecha!!!" Mendel and his classmates screamed along with the older boys and the rebbeim. It was such an incredible feeling, davening in this place of kedusha. Mendel didn't take his eyes from his siddur, scared to even look around for one second. During Shmoneh Esrei, it was so quiet you could have heard the hairs falling out of Tzadok HaTzadik's beard, had he been there!

"That was the best Shmoneh Esrei of my life," Mendel told his friend Heshy as they made their way to the schoolyard after davening ended. "I don't remember ever having so much kavanah."

"Me too," agreed Heshy. "I could feel the kedusha of the holy beis midrash flowing through me - I bet my tefillos went straight to the kisei hakavod!"

Five months later

"Mendel," said Heshy, as the boys made their way to mincha. "I've brought my new Flybar SuperDisk 5200 to cheder today!"

"You mean the frisbee that flashes as it spins and plays music as it flies?" whispered Mendel excitedly as they entered the beis midrash.

"Yeah, I already loaded the new Jimmy Newbrush album on it," Heshy replied, opening his siddur. "Did you hear the new song, Lecha Noveia?"

"No, my sister was telling me about it, though - I can't wait to hear it."





There was a loud “clopp” on the bimah and the boys looked up to see their rebbe, Rabbi Tannenbaum, glaring at them. The boys quickly stopped talking and looked into their siddurim.

It was hard for Mendel to concentrate during davening, as he kept thinking about Heshy’s SuperDisk. And it didn’t help that during chazoras

hashatz Heshy was moving his head in circles, pretending to be a frisbee. He couldn’t help but giggle, until he got another stern look from Rabbi Tannenbaum.

After davening, the sixth graders all rushed to be the first out of the beis midrash so they could have an extra fifteen seconds to play during recess.

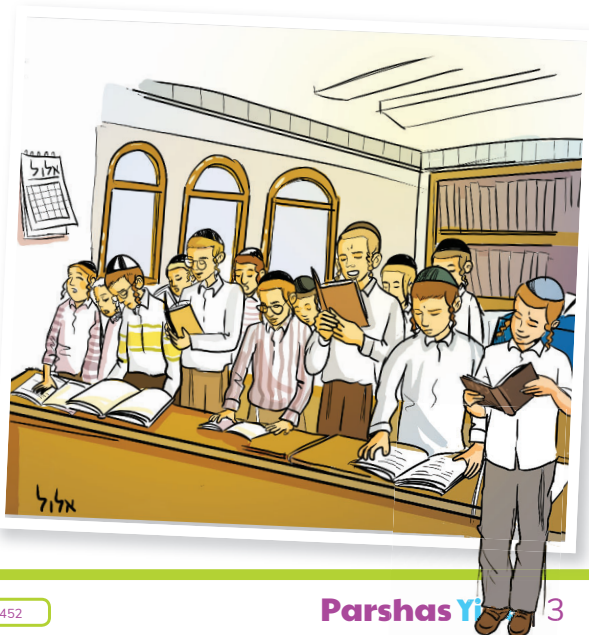
“Wait, boys,” Rabbi Tannenbaum demanded.

Everyone froze at the sound of Rabbi Tannenbaum’s gruff order.

“Sit back down in your seats,” he said.

Everyone quickly returned to their seats in the beis midrash.

“What’s going on with you boys?” Rabbi Tannenbaum asked, his voice softer. “Do you remember the first time you walked into this beis midrash? You were shaking with excitement and wonder at the opportunity to enter such a holy room. And now? What happened?



Boys are whispering during davening, making silly faces, giggling? What changed?"

Everyone sat sheepishly as Rabbi Tannenbaum continued.

"When Klal Yisroel received the Torah, Moshe Rabbeinu warned them not to get too close to *Har Sinai*, because getting too close to a place of such *kedusha* was punishable by death. That's important to remember, because a *beis midrash* is also a place of *kedusha*. It's not on the same level as *Har Sinai*, where we couldn't come physically close to it, but at the same time we cannot act in a *beis midrash* the way we would act during recess in the schoolyard.

"Now I know that you boys are aware of this, because on Rosh Chodesh Elul, you showed the proper fear of the *kedushas beis midrash*. Nobody talked, everyone davened, nobody even looked outside of their *siddur*. So what happened?"

The boys looked at each other. This was a good question. What *did* happen? Why didn't they feel the same way as they did back in Elul?

"I'll tell you what happened," Rabbi Tannenbaum said, as if reading their minds. "You got used to it. You come here every day, and soon you became so familiar with the *beis midrash* that you lost the feeling of fear and respect of a *makom kadosh*.

"This is a very important lesson that you're hearing right now. Often the first time we do something special, it means a lot to us and we properly respect it. The trick is to never stop thinking about that. To always remember the *kedusha* of *Hashem* and to act properly when we walk into a *shul* or *beis midrash* as if it were our first time."

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

It's not good to "cozy up" to kedusha – we get so used to it that it doesn't affect us. That's why Hashem told us to be careful and not get too close to Har Sinai.

Let's Review:

- What was the difference between the first time the kids davened in the *beis midrash* and the way they davened months later?
- What trick did Rabbi Tannenbaum teach them?

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