



KINDER TORAH[©]



*For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Acharey Mos*

In Honor of a Complete Recovery for Zachary Avigdor Groffman

No Exceptions to the Rule

"Come, Avi, hurry! We'll be late for class."

"Relax, Chaim. We still have two minutes until the school bell rings."

"I know but it's a five minute walk from here to the school gate."

"What are you worried about? We'll be three minutes late. What is so terrible about that?"

"There are two reasons that I want to be there on time. First of all, three minutes of Torah learning is very precious, Avi. However, I can make up the loss by staying later after class. The second reason is what I am really worried about. The new rule of the school."

"What rule is that, Chaim?"

"Didn't you hear? The school gate will be closed one minute after the bell rings. If you come late you will be locked out."

"That can't be. How do they expect people to keep to that rule?"

"Apparently, a lot of time has been lost due to lateness. The principal wants to put a stop to it. Therefore, he passed this rule. So, let's hurry and make it on time before the gate closes."

"You go right ahead, Chaim. I'm not worried if I get there a few minutes late. It's only the first day of the new rule. They are bound to be lenient. And even if they are not, I am still not worried. I'm not bragging but I am one of the best students in the class. I am always careful about things like this. I am sure that this rule was not made for people like me. It was made for the weaker students who either need the extra learning time or who have a habit of coming late."

"Okay, Avi. It's your choice."

"I'll see you in class, Chaim."

"I hope so."

With that, Chaim runs ahead toward the school. Just as the bell rings, he reaches the school gate panting and out of breath. Sure enough, one minute after the bell the gate is locked. Avi and a few other latecomers come to the gate, asking the guard to open it.

"I'm sorry boys, I can't open the gate today. Didn't you hear about the new rule?"

"But please, can't you make an exception just this one time?"

"The principal gave me strict orders, boys. No exceptions to the rules."

"Sir, can I please speak to the principal?"

"You want to speak to the principal? That's asking a lot, young man."

"I know, but I have a good reason. Can you please call him on the phone."

"Okay, young man. What is your name?"

"Avi."

"Hello, Rabbi Cohen. Yes, it's Sholmo, the guard at the gate. There is a young man here named Avi who wants to speak with you."

"Young man, the principal is on the phone. He will speak with you."

Avi takes the phone and begins speaking with Rabbi Cohen.

"Rabbi Cohen, I found out about the new rule today on the way to school. I came to school about three minutes late today and am locked out. I understand why the new rule was made, but I feel that the Rabbi can make an exception for me today. After all, the rule was made for weaker students and habitual latecomers. Not for someone like me. Correct?"

"Avi you are an excellent student, Boruch Hashem. Please tell me how this week's parsha begins."

"Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of the two sons of Aharon."

"Excellent Avi. Usually the Torah writes, 'Hashem spoke to Moshe saying'. Why this time does it write 'after the death of the two sons of Aharon?'"

"I often wondered about that Rabbi Cohen."

"Rabbi Chaim Ben Attar, the great sage who wrote a commentary on the Torah entitled the 'Ohr HaChaim' answers this question. This verse is directed toward Moshe Rabbeinu, the man who came closest to Hashem. He is called 'Hashem's

trusted one', who is able to enter the holy section of the Mishkan. He is the greatest prophet who ever lived. Still, he should not think that his closeness to Hashem would allow him to break the rules. The sons of Aharon were 'krovim' (of close relationship) to Hashem. Still, that did not help them. When they broke the rules, they had to suffer the consequences. Hashem was teaching Moshe that a close relationship does not allow one to break the rules. So you see, Avi, the rules were not made to be broken. Although you are an excellent student, and we are very close, you must still obey the rules."

"I understand Rabbi Cohen. The most important rule to learn is that there are no exceptions to the rules." "100% Avi. May Hashem always guide you along the straight path, with no exceptions to the rule."

Kinderlach . . .

The rules were made to be followed, not broken. That bad middah (character trait) of gayva makes us want to break the rules. "I am important. I can break the rules. I have protecsia." That is what the yetzer hora is telling us. Let's beat that yetzer hora by always following all of the rules. No exceptions.

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