

How We See Others

By: Aharon Spetner

Illustrations by: M. Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

The school bell rang and Yitzy ran down the hallway towards his classroom. Suddenly, he stopped. Who is that new boy walking into his classroom? And why is he wearing maroon-colored pants? "Oy, what a nebach," thought Yitzy. "I can tell just by looking at him that he's not going to fit in with us. I mean, did he actually choose to wear pants like those? That's so weird"

Yitzy shook himself out of his thoughts as he noticed his rebbi approaching and he quickly walked into the classroom and sat down in his seat.

"Welcome back, everyone," began Rabbi Caplan. "And I'd especially like to welcome a very special new member of our class." All eyes turned to the new boy as Rabbi Caplan said, "Everyone say hi to Yaakov Kehos Raskner, who just moved here from Manchester, England!"

"Kehos??" thought Yitzy. "What kind of name is that?"

"Strange," thought Yitzy. "Not only did his parents give him such a funny middle name, but he actually uses it. He's definitely not going to be one of my friends...."

As soon as the recess bell rang Yitzy ran outside with his new shiny green frisbee to play with his friends, being careful not to even look at Yaakov Kehos.

"Wow!" said El'e as he caught the frisbee from Yitzy and threw it towards Ruvy. "This is the best frisbee I've ever seen!"

"I know," said Yitzy. "I got it for afikomen. It even came with a booklet, with tips on how to ..." Yitzy's voice trailed off as he saw the new boy walking toward them. "Hi, chevra! You mind if I join you?"



“Sure, Yaakov Kehos!” shouted Ruvy as he caught the frisbee. “Catch!”

Yitzy looked on as the frisbee glided from Ruvy and Yaakov Kehos effortlessly jumped high in the air with his arm outstretched to snag the spinning disc. Yitzy was speechless.

“Wow!” said the entire group of boys. “What a catch!”

“Thanks,” said Yaakov Kehos, as he turned to Yitzy with a smile. “Yitzy, right? What a brilliant flying disc you have there. And you throw it quite well, I must say!”

Stunned, Yitzy hurriedly smiled and mumbled thanks. This boy’s friendliness had caught him off guard.

Just then the bell rang again. As the boys were walking breathlessly back to class, Yitzy heard someone say, “Yaakov Kehos, are you named after your grandfather? My father was telling me about him the other day; how he did so much for Klal Yisroel and how he even once flew to Washington DC to convince a Senator not to draft yeshiva bochurim into the US Army!”

Yitzy was so lost in thought that he didn’t realize he had stopped walking to the classroom, until he suddenly heard his rebbi’s voice.

“Yitzy, is everything okay?” asked Rabbi Caplan. “You don’t seem like yourself.”

“Honestly, Rebbi,” Yitzy whispered, “I’m really embarrassed. I thought I was a smart kid. And I know I’m supposed to like every Yid and everything,

but when I saw how the new boy was dressed and heard his name and his funny accent, I was sure I wouldn’t like him. But then I started to get to know him and I see how great he is! He’s super friendly, comes from a special family, and he catches a frisbee better than anyone I’ve ever seen! I can’t believe I was so silly!”

Rabbi Caplan smiled as he put a hand on Yitzy’s shoulder. “Yitzy, you’re not silly! You’ve actually made a mistake that the Torah says even the smartest of people, the *dayanim* of the Sanhedrin, might make. That’s why in this week’s parsha, Hashem has to warn *dayanim* to judge people accurately. Because even the most intelligent people can be fooled by their first impressions of people, by how they look and what they wear.

“That’s why the Torah tells us: ‘Wait! Ignore the *chitzoniyus* and look inside the person! Look at his *maalos* and see what he’s really about!’ Rav Avigdor Miller says that when you look at another Yid, the first thing to do is not to guess who he is and try to figure him out, but to look for his good *middos*, and say, ‘Ah, what a wonderful Yid!’ Everybody has something good about them!

“Even if the only thing you can see is that he wears a yarmulke, the thought you should have is ‘He’s my brother!’ and you should be excited about him!”

Yitzy looked thoughtful for a second, and then smiled. “Thank you, Rebbi,” he said. “I don’t think I’ll ever look at another Yid the same way again!”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Let’s Review:

- Why was Yitzy sure he wouldn’t be friends with Yaakov Kehos?
- What should be our first impression of a new Yid we meet?



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