

Eikev / עֵקֶב

Filling the Quota

By: Aharon Spetner

Illustrations by: M. Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

"Avishai!" called Dovid from the very back of the camp bus. "Here, I saved you a seat!"

"Thanks!" said Avishai, grinning as he joined his friend and pulled out a brown paper bag, offering it to Dovid.

"Oooh, Super-Sour Tangy-Wincy Lemon Citric Extreme!" Dovid said, looking inside. "The most sour candies ever! They will go great with my extra salty charcoal flavored potato chips!"

"Bochatonamelecholom borei pri haadoma," Dovid mumbled as he popped some potato chips into his mouth. "Bochatonamelecholom shehakol nihyeh bidvaro." His eyes squeezed shut involuntarily as he chewed one of Avishai's sour candies.

Boruch, the boys' counselor, turned around to face them. "That's quite the brocha you made there," he said.

"Thanks," said Dovid absentmindedly, taking out a pen and marking a piece of paper from his pocket.

"What are you writing down?" asked Boruch.

"I'm marking off the brachos that I just made so I can make sure I say a hundred brachos each day," Dovid responded.

Woop woop woop-ooop!

Everyone jumped as a police car pulled behind the bus, lights flashing. The bus pulled over and a policeman climbed aboard.

"Do you know how fast you were going?" the officer asked.

"Uh no," replied the driver.

"Didn't know how fast you were going, huh?" the policeman repeated, smugly. "Well obviously you were speeding. Otherwise you would know your speed."

"Wait, what?" protested the bus driver as the cop started writing out a ticket.

"You!" the cop said suddenly, turning to a boy sitting right behind the driver. "Let me see your driver's license."



Boruch ran to the front of the bus. "What seems to be the problem, officer?" he asked.

"You were all speeding. And you are not wearing a seat belt."

"That's because I got up to speak with you," said Boruch.

The officer's eyes narrowed. "Okay," he said slowly. "I'll let all of you off with warnings. But I'll be watching you..."

The policeman left the bus and they continued on their way. Fifteen minutes later, they arrived at Speedway Go-Karts. The boys rushed off the bus excitedly and got in line.

Vrooom! Vrrrbmmmmmm vrrrrr!

Dovid pushed the gas pedal of his go-kart all the way down as he overtook Avishai.

"Haha!" Dovid exclaimed playfully.

Avishai tried to push his pedal through the floor in an attempt to overtake his friend.

Woop woop woop-ooop!

Dovid looked behind him. The police officer from earlier was in a go-kart himself, and was motioning angrily at Dovid.

"Pull over! All the way to the side!" yelled the officer.

"What did I do wrong?" asked Dovid nervously.

"What did you do wrong? Let's see, reckless driving, failure to yield, speeding..." the cop scribbled furiously in his ticket pad.

"Reynolds!" came a voice from the fence. "Get over here!"

Officer Reynolds looked up from writing Dovid's ticket. "Sergeant? What are you doing here?"

"A better question is what are you doing here?" Sergeant Adams replied angrily. "Pulling children over while go-karting? And pulling over their school bus and threatening everyone with tickets because you thought they were speeding?"

Officer Reynolds hung his head. "Well you see, sarge, you said we needed to give out 250 tickets this month. And it's almost the end of the month and I haven't given out nearly enough. So I've just been giving out tickets to everyone I see."

"That is the dumbest thing I ever heard," Sergeant Adams replied. "You don't give tickets to innocent people. We give tickets to people who violate the law. We'll discuss this later. Hand me your badge and gun. You are being relieved of duty effective immediately."

The police left and the boys enjoyed a fun day of go-karting.

"Dovid, Avishai," said Boruch, on the bus heading back to camp. "What did you think about Officer Reynolds?"

"He's so silly," Dovid laughed. "He thinks that they are supposed to give out tickets? Obviously the quota of 250 tickets was meant to encourage them to look for people actually doing something wrong, not a bunch of campers going go-karting."

"Okay, and what about making 100 brachos?" asked Boruch.

Dovid stared. "What about it?" he asked slowly.

"Well, do you think the point is to just mumble 100 brachos each day?"

"Ohhh..." Dovid said, realizing. "It's not just a number. Brachos are us acknowledging and thanking Hashem for feeding us, clothing us, and more. And we're supposed to think about that when we make a brocha - otherwise what's the point of making 100..."

"Glad to see you figured it out, Dovid. And one more thing. Why not slow down? I've never seen the word "bochatonamelechalom" in a siddur."

Dovid laughed and pulled out a potato chip from his bag and examined it, thinking about how much kindness Hashem did just in order to put this chip in his hand. "Boruch atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech haolam, borei pri haadoma," he said slowly, before putting it in his mouth, chewing, and enjoying the delicious flavor.

"You know what, Boruch?" he added. "It actually tastes better this way, too!"

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let's review:

- Why did Officer Reynolds want to ticket the boys?
- Why are we supposed to make 100 brachos a day?



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