

“What Did You Say?”

By C. Miller

for Olomeinu Magazine

Illustrated by Mordechai Zeffren

Yehuda ran out of the classroom holding his bag of potato chips and making a bracha as he ran. "Avigdor, you'll pitch for my team today. Elazar, you'll catch. Hey, is that a new mitt?"

"Right. My father just bought it for me. Looks real nice, doesn't it?"

"Sure does. It makes our team look great. I'm glad you brought it."

The boys played hard. Yehuda's team was up first and got to second base on the first play. Elazar got them home just as the bell rang.

"Great game!" said Yehudah to Yeshaya, the other team captain. "We're going to win the New York yeshiva when we play next Sunday."

"I have an idea," said Elazar. "Let's all wear light-blue shirts on Sunday. That will look almost as if we have uniforms."

"Great idea," said Yeshaya. "It will make our team look terrific."

Elazar took out a chocolate bar from his pocket, and absent-mindedly made a bracha as he lovingly packed up his new mitt. He passed a few pieces to the boys on his team, who made hurried brachos and stuffed the pieces into their mouths so they could gather their gear. Rabbi Hamburger didn't look too happy.

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"Sit down, boys, and open your Chumashim. If you learn well till lunch, I'll tell you about a surprise that is being planned for Chol Hamo'ed Pesach." The boys were excited. They listened carefully as Rabbi Hamburger explained the psukim. They all wanted to hear about the surprise. Five minutes before the bell was to ring, Rabbi Hamburger asked the boys to close their Chumashim.

"You learned very well, boys. Now for the surprise. Listen carefully to the rules. The principal is being very strict and anyone who is not prepared with what I will tell you is needed, will not be able to participate. Here are the rules:

Number one, syper mishum lip bimunday.

Number two, caws feidala.

Number three, choosapadna,

And the surprise is, hi-key mintrays."

The boys looked puzzled. Asher raised his hand. "Sorry, boys. No time for questions now. The bell is about to ring. Be sure to comply with all the rules."

"I don't get it," said Yehudah, as the boys put on their jackets. "Maybe Rabbi Hamburger had something wrong with his mouth."

"But everything he said was clear except for the rules and the surprise," said Yeshaya in a very puzzled voice.

"How can we obey the rules if we don't know what they are?" wailed Elazar.

The next morning Elazar came to school with a shopping bag. "My Aunt Yehudis gave me two extra blue shirts, in case someone doesn't have one," he announced.

"What a terrific team you're going to have," said Rabbi Hamburger as he walked into the classroom. "Has everyone taken care of what he needs for the surprise?"

"We couldn't hear."

"It was so fast!"

"The words were not clear."

"You're right, boys," said Rabbi Hamburger, as he handed out notes for the parents with the rules for the surprise clearly typed.

RULES FOR CHOL HAMO'ED TRIP

1. SIGNED PERMISSION SLIP BY MONDAY
2. COST IS \$5.00
3. CHOOSE A PARTNER FOR HIKING AT MINDY TRAILS!

"And do you realize that this is exactly the way your brachos sound to Hashem? Rushed, not clear, parts of words missing. Do you think Hashem is happy with your brachos?" The boys looked ashamed.

"Your team is important to you," continued Rabbi Hamburger. "You want it to be dressed up in important-looking uniforms. Your brachos are very important to Hashem. He loves you and wants to hear beautiful brachos from you. Making a bracha while running to the field or packing up your mitt is not proper. Let's try to dress up each bracha by saying it slowly and carefully."

