

Not All Fun and Games

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Boop beep boopity boop

Yanky sat on his bed, staring intensely at his gameboy, uselessly leaning to the left in an effort to make the ball go in the direction he wanted.

"Yanky," called Mommy from the other room. "Are you studying for your Chumash test?"

"Almost!" replied Yanky, groaning as the ball fell into a "noodle zone", causing him to lose a "life".

Yanky reached for his Chumash. Just one more attempt at beating the level and then he'd start learning...

Biddly-dink!

"Yes!" Yanky exclaimed, as he managed to knock the ball into a triple-score bonus zone. Hunched over, he rapidly smashed the buttons with his thumbs, grabbing as many bonus rings as possible.

"400,000 bonus points!" flashed across the screen. Yanky's heart pace quickened as he entered the "danger arena". If he could beat this he'd be closer to winning the game than ever before!

Ding dong!

Yanky vaguely heard the doorbell ringing. Sweat poured down his face as he unlocked the "fireball achievement". His thumbs were almost numb as he rapidly hit the buttons, shooting the flying crocodiles and dodging the falling cantaloupes.

"Yanky, Zaidy is here!" called Mommy.

"Okay!" Yanky replied, absentmindedly reaching for his Chumash again. Just one more level...

As Yanky began the final level of the game, he was so focused he did not even hear Mommy calling him, nor Zaidy's voice as he walked towards Yanky's room. Yanky was now controlling an underwater elephant



as he dodged submarine spaceships and radioactive seaweed.

“Yanky?” Zaidy said, knocking on the door and walking in, just as Yanky managed to maneuver past the golden gate, winning the game.

Yanky jumped off of his bed in jubilation, holding the gameboy in his hand.

“Zaidy!” he exclaimed. “I finally beat Super Happy Bonus Land! It took me so many tries and so many hours but I finally did it!”

Zaidy didn’t look amused. “You spent hours playing a game?” he asked sternly.

“Yes!” Yanky said excitedly, not noticing Zaidy’s stern demeanor. “It’s the hardest game in the world - and I, your grandson, was able to beat it before anyone else in my class!”

“What kind of *narishkeit* is this?” asked Zaidy angrily. “Why would a Torah Yid spend his time playing a *goyishe* game?”

“But Zaidy, this is a kosher gameboy - look, it has a *hechsher* on it!”

“And if they sold *chazir* with a *hechsher*, would you eat it?”

Yanky looked hurt at Zaidy’s words.

“Yanky, I can’t believe that instead of doing something productive you spent hours playing a game. This device is *treif* - look at the *bittul Torah* it has caused! It’s one thing for a child to spend some time relaxing, but hours? You should throw that gameboy right in the garbage.”

Yanky fought to hold back tears as Zaidy told him off instead of congratulating him for winning

his game. Later, after Zaidy left, Yanky told Totty and Mommy what had happened.

“I’m sorry your feelings were hurt,” Totty said. “But don’t you realize how lucky you are?”

Lucky? Yanky didn’t feel lucky.

Totty continued: “In Parshas Vaeira we see Moshe and Aharon walking in and out of Paraoh’s palace. How were they able to do that? Weren’t they slaves?”

“Well no, because Shevet Levi weren’t slaves,” Yanky said.

“Exactly, and you know why that was? Because their grandfather, Levi ben Yaakov, lived longer than any of the other brothers. And you know what that meant? The whole Shevet Levi had a Zaidy to tell them when they were doing something wrong. And the constant criticism from Zaidy Levi kept them from acting like the *goyim* in Mitzrayim. And because of that, they never agreed to work for Paraoh, so they were never enslaved.

“It’s never fun to be told that you’re doing something wrong, Yanky. But you have to realize that when someone gives you *mussar*, they are giving you a tremendous gift. We live in a generation where everyone only wants to hear nice things and nobody wants to be told off. But just like Shevet Levi in Mitzrayim, you, Yanky Segal, are so lucky to have an old-time Zaidy who tells you what you need to hear, not just what you want to hear.”

Yanky thought about this for a minute.

“Totty,” he said, holding out his gameboy. “Can you please hold onto this for me for a while? I want to learn Chumash and I don’t want it to distract me.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Let’s Review:

- Is it okay to play games?
- How is Yanky’s Zaidy like Levi ben Yaakov?



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