

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva

Reb Yanai with Am Haaretz

The holy *tanna*, Rav Yanai, was once on his way somewhere, when he encountered a man who was dressed in beautiful clothing. Impressed by the man, Rav Yanai invited him to come home with him for a meal. The man accepted the invitation and the two walked to Rav Yanai's home together.

When they got there, Rav Yanai invited the man in and began waiting on him. He seated him at the table and served him a piping hot meal and refreshing drinks. Rav Yanai was a *tanna*, and by serving the man in this manner, he showed him a considerable amount of honor.

A group of *talmidei chachomim* came to Rav Yanai's home, and they joined the man at the meal. They began to delve into some *pesukim* of *Tanach*, and noticing the respectable looking man at the table, they tried to include him in the discussion. It did not take them long to realize that the man had no idea what they were talking about. He was obviously ignorant in this area.

Surprised, they began a discussion regarding some *mishnayos*. They figured that every Jew knows *mishnayos*; this was surely a discussion the man would be able to participate in. Once more, however, they were greeted by blank eyes. The man had no clue what they were talking about.

He was a respectable figure, and they were sure there was a good reason for his unfamiliarity with *mishnayos*. Perhaps he was too busy to learn much. But at least *aggadatos*, stories and lectures, they were certain he would know. However, when they tried speaking to him regarding *aggadah*, he still drew blank. He did not know what they were referring to.

The *talmidei chachomim* exchanged glances with each other. How could it be he didn't even know *aggadah*? Just to be sure, they began speaking to him with *lomdus*, but that too, he did not understand. It was clear that this man was an ignoramus, and it was hard for the *talmidei chachomim* to accept. At this point, Rav Yanai was truly aggravated that he had overestimated his guest to such a degree. He stood up, putting an effective end to the discussion. "*Rabbosai*, let's *bentch*."

"Yanai, you *bentch* for me," The man said quickly.

The *talmidei chachomim* exchanged another glance, their eyebrows raised. Not only was this man completely ignorant on all Torah matters, yet it seemed he did not even know how to *bentch* on his own!

"Can you repeat the words of *birkas hamazon* after me?" Rav Yanai asked his guest. "Yes, I can do that," The man replied. "Okay, then, repeat after me," Rav Yanai instructed. "Say, אכול כלבא - פיסתיה דינאי - a dog ate the bread of Yanai."

Though the man was a complete ignoramus, he wasn't foolish enough to blindly repeat the words of Rav Yanai. He might not have known any *mikrah*, Mishnah, halachah, *aggadah*, or Talmud, and he might not have known how to *bentch*, but

he was smart enough to understand what Rav Yanai was saying, and it angered him that he was being called a dog.

He stood up, and grabbed hold of Rav Yanai's arm. "You are a thief; you've stolen my inheritance," He accused angrily. "You are holding me back from my *yerushah*."

Rav Yanai looked at him doubtfully. "What do you mean?" He asked. "What is your inheritance? What did I steal from you?"

The *am haaretz's* response was incredible. "I once walked passed a yeshiva," He recounted. "And I heard the little children saying, תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב – The Torah is the inheritance of the *kehilas* Yaakov." The man paused and looked at Rav Yanai. "It doesn't say that the Torah is the inheritance of the *kehilah* of Yanai, but rather that it is the *yerushah* of the entire *klal* Yisroel. This means that the Torah belongs to me. And therefore, the Torah you have is mine. Just because you are Rav Yanai and I am but an ignorant man, that does not mean that you have more claim over the Torah than me. By withholding the proper words of *bentching* from me, you are withholding my rightful inheritance."

The man's response teaches us an incredible lesson. Someone can be a tremendous *talmid chacham*, intelligent and diligent, who conquers *sugya* after *sugya* with relative ease. His stake in the inheritance of Torah is no less than someone who struggles with comprehension, with reading, with basic skills to learn Torah.

Therefore, if someone is struggling in learning, and someone else with better abilities does not try to help him understand what he is learning, he is akin to a thief who is withholding him from his rightful inheritance. It is our responsibility to look out for those who have a more difficult time learning and comprehending.

This story is from the Medrash Vayikra Rabba, 9:3

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

This story is taken from tape # A57

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