

Lesson Six: Thoughts



“וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם”

(שלח טו, טז)

“And you shall not turn after your hearts.”



The Babysitter

CHARACTERS: Menucha (Babysitter), Shaina, Rosie

Menucha: Hi Shaina and Rosie! I'm Menucha, your babysitter for tonight. Your parents just left the house. They're going to be home after midnight. I see you're already in pajamas, which is great! Would you like me to read you a bedtime story and say Shema with you?

Shaina: No thank you... our Abba always tells us a story.

Rosie: Yeah, and our Ima always says Shema with us.

Menucha: Right... but they're not here tonight. Are you sure you don't want me to do it? I can make it fun.

Rosie: We're fine.

Shaina: I'm going to sleep. I'll say Shema myself.

Menucha: All right... I'm turning out the lights. I'll be right out in the living room if you want me to come back. Should I close the door all the way?

Shaina: Yes, please.

Menucha: Okay. Good night! I'm closing the door now.

Rosie: (*whispers*) Shaina, did she leave?

Shaina: Yes.

Rosie: I miss Abba and Ima.

Shaina: Me too. I can't fall asleep.

Menucha: Girls? I'm sorry, I just had to come back because I heard talking. Are you okay?

Shaina: We miss our parents. We want them to come back.

Menucha: I know you do. Try to fall asleep quickly, and you'll see them in the morning!

Rosie: We want to fall asleep, but our thoughts are keeping us awake!

Menucha: Girls, I know you didn't want me to read you a story, but I have the perfect solution to share that may make you feel better. I'm in high school, so I learn a lot of interesting things. This year, we actually learned a section of the Alter Rebbe's Tanya today which spoke about how to deal with thoughts that keep disturbing us.

Shaina: What does that have to do with not being able to fall asleep?

Menucha: Let me explain. The Alter Rebbe speaks about a person who has difficulty keeping distracting thoughts from entering his mind while he's davening. Instead of fighting a battle to keep the thought away, the person should simply pretend the thought doesn't exist, and keep on davening.

Rosie: I don't really get it.

Menucha: Let me give an example. Let's say you are in your house, and a stranger is knocking. Do you open the door if you don't recognize the person?

Shaina: Of course not! I would pretend I'm not even home.

Menucha: Exactly. Once you open the door, you are giving the stranger permission to be in your house. That's not a good idea. So, let's take it back to our topic here. You are having thoughts about missing your parents. Those thoughts are distracting you from falling asleep. How can you apply this idea from Tanya to help you out?

Rosie: Ohh! I can just tell my brain, "Please be quiet! I'm trying to fall asleep."

Menucha: Exactly. And what will you do if that thought comes knocking on the door of your mind again?

Shaina: I can think about something happy, like the free ice cream I'm going to get at the end of Project Elevate, our Tznius learning program!

Menucha: Wow! That program sounds really exciting. What did you learn in camp today about Tznius?

Shaina: I learned -- hey, it was actually about this! We need to make sure to keep our thoughts refined, because Tznius isn't just about how we dress; it's about how we think, speak, and act! Today we learned about how important it is to make sure to be Tzniusdig with our Machshavos, our thoughts.

Rosie: Yes, just like when the Yidden would bring Korbanos. They had to make sure to have the right Kavanos in mind.

Menucha: What a great connection! Yes, it's super important to make sure our thoughts are positive and full of Kedusha. Well, now you are an expert. If a thought comes to your mind to try to disturb you, just remember the Alter Rebbe's advice and you will be okay!

Rosie: Thank you so much. I'm already feeling better.

Shaina: I'm even feeling happy right now for Abba and Ima, knowing that they are having a good time at the Chasuna!

Menucha: I'm so glad to hear that! Do you see? When we ignore the disturbing thoughts, we can quickly think about something good. Then we are on the right track!

Rosie: Wow, thank you! I like what you taught us! If the Yetzer Hara tries to disturb me with a thought, I'm going to imagine the stranger knocking at the door, and I'll quickly think about something good. It will help me for so many things, such as with the Mitzva of Tznius!

Menucha: I'm so glad to hear you found this advice helpful! You know girls, it would be a wonderful idea for you to keep a diary. Every day, you can write down some happy thoughts to think about before you go to sleep!

Rosie: I love that idea! Tonight I will think about how much Hashem loves me.

Shaina: And I'm going to look at the picture of the Rebbe one more time and think about all the Mitzvos I'm going to do tomorrow, such as giving Tzedaka right away!

Rosie: Menucha, I have a question for you. Could you teach us some more lessons from Tanya? Maybe you can come to our house again?

Menucha: Yes sure, Bezras Hashem.

Shaina: Thank you so much! I'm feeling so much better now. I'm ready to fall asleep.

Rosie: You're the best babysitter in the world!

Menucha: Oh girls, I'm really proud of both of you. Your parents will definitely shep much Nachas! Oh my, take a look at the clock -- we've been so deep in conversation that it's gotten very late... Have a good night!

Shaina, Rosie: Good night!