



Eikev / עֵקֶב

Praying and Praying and Praying

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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10am, in a jail cell in Yerushalayim

Rav Volender, the Rov of the jail, was making his rounds, when he heard a buzzing sound. As he approached the next cell, he saw Tzadok "Hatzadik" holding an electric shaver - and half his beard was missing!

"Good morning, Tzadok," called Rav Volender. "Why are you getting rid of your beautiful beard?"

As Tzadok looked up, a shower of freshly-cut beard hairs fell to the floor. "Because I don't need it any more," he said. "Hashem obviously doesn't like me or my beard, so what's the point?"

"What are you saying?" asked Rav Volender. "Why do you think that Hashem doesn't like you?"

"Because he doesn't listen to me!" Tzadok exclaimed. "I davened to Hashem to make me rich and then spent many hours inventing segulot to sell to people. And then I got arrested and the police took all of my money.

"After all that, I asked Hashem to give me a more comfortable bed in my cell, to give me grilled steaks instead of the soy schnitzel that they serve here, and for the police to release me from jail. And he didn't answer any of my tefilot!"



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"Wow," said The Rov. "You davened for all that?"

"Oh no," continued Tzadok. "I also davened that I should be taller and for a jacuzzi next to my bed. But not only that - I actually put a petek in this crack in the wall here in my cell. And he hasn't given me anything I asked for! So Hashem clearly doesn't want my tefilot and he hates me too!"

"Wait," Rav Volender interjected, puzzled. "Why would a petek in the wall of your jail cell do anything? It's not the Kotel."

"Oh, but it is," explained Tzadok. "You see, I made up a special tefilah that turns any wall into the Kotel, so you can daven to Hashem wherever you are and it's like you're right by the Makom Hamikdash! I used to sell that tefilah along with my segulot."

Rav Volender put his hand to his face as he considered whether he should reply to this last statement. However, he chose to ignore it and instead addressed Tzadok's complaint about Hashem not answering him.

"Tzadok," he said gently. "First of all, it is important to remember that Hashem doesn't just automatically give you **everything** that you ask for. Of course we can and should daven for what we want and need - and the tefillah itself can make us deserve something - but Hashem only gives us what He decides we should have."

"But I davened for a whole ten minutes!" protested Tzadok. "Surely, that's worth something!"

"Ten minutes???" said Rav Volender. "You know, this week's Parsha tells how Moshe Rabbeinu davened for **40 days** after the chet ha'egel that Hashem shouldn't destroy the Am Yisroel - **FORTY DAYS!!!** Can you imagine?"

"40 days?" echoed Tzadok. "Why did he keep davening? Hashem obviously didn't want to answer him."

"**He didn't???**" exclaimed the Rov. "Well then how do you explain the fact that you and I are standing here?"

Tzadok thought about this for a second. "Well I guess Hashem just got tired of Moshe's tefilos and just gave in." he offered.

"**TIRED???**" Rav Volender was almost shouting. "Are you even listening to yourself? It's the exact opposite! Hashem **NEVER** gets tired of our tefilos. That's the whole reason he didn't answer Moshe Rabbeinu right away. He loved his tefilos so much that he wanted him to keep davening."

"But it's not that Hashem needs our tefilos - oh no, just the opposite. The reason that Hashem loves our tefilos is because when we daven properly, it makes us think about Hashem. And the more time we spend thinking about Hashem, the closer we get to him and the more perfect we become."

"So by Moshe Rabbeinu davening his heart out for forty days, he achieved even greater levels of perfection and closeness to Hashem. That's exactly why Hashem waited so long before answering him."

"Incredible!" said Tzadok. "So do you mean that if I daven to Hashem for forty days at my personal Kotel in my cell, that I'll actually get a jacuzzi and steak dinners right here in jail?"

"No," Rav Volender answered. "I'm not saying that at all. But if you devote your time here in jail to davening to Hashem with all your heart, you will become a better person and closer to Hashem. And by doing so, you will b'ezras Hashem be zoche to a yeshua."

Tzadok looked regretfully at the half of his beard that was laying on the floor of the jail, and then back up at the Rov. "Thank you, Rabbi," he said. "I will right now start davening to Hashem with real devotion so I can become close to him and become a real Tzadok Hatzadik!"

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!



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