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Learn To Be Happy

Rav Volender, the Rav of the Jerusalem Prison, walked down among the cells to say good night to the prisoners, when he heard a strange knocking and scratching sound. Looking inside cell 273, he saw Tzadok “HaTzadik” holding a rock and carving something into the wall.

“Good evening Tzadok,” Rav Volender said. “May I ask what you are doing?”

“Ah, Rav Volender!” Tzadok said, looking up at his rebbe. “I made a calendar on my wall showing how many days I have left until my trial. I can’t wait until I finally get released from this miserable place - I have nothing but tzaros here!”

“Nothing but tzaros?” Rav Volender responded. “I was under the impression that you have been treated very well.”

“Very well?! Then how do you explain me being assigned to scrub the toilets for three days in a row?!”

“I believe that was your punishment for cutting off half your beard and trying to sell hairs to prisoners as ‘hairs from Moshiach’s beard’, a *segulah* to get out of prison early,” replied Rav Volender softly. “We’ve discussed not selling phony *segulot* many times.”

“Well yeah, but this *segulah*’s not phony,” said Tzadok impatiently. “As soon as the judge lets me go and I become Moshiach, I will immediately give the command to release all those who bought my beard hairs.”

“Tzadok, you’re not Moshiach.”

Tzadok blinked in confusion. It was so obvious to him that he was a “tzadik” and “Moshiach”.

“Tzadok,” continued Rav Volender. “In this week’s Parsha we read the ‘Tochacha’, where the Torah tells us the terrible punishments that Klal Yisroel may receive, *chas veshalom* for not listening to him. And do you know what the Torah says is the reason we would deserve such terrible punishments?”

“For not finding enough *segulot*?”

“No, Tzadok. The Torah says תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב מְרֹב כָּל - Because you didn't serve Hashem with happiness and a happy heart with of all the good that He gives you.

When Hashem showers wonderful brachos on us, and we don't appreciate them; we don't think about them and thank Hashem for them, **that itself brings us punishments!**

Hashem wants you to accomplish your purpose in life which is to always be thinking about Him. If you can do it because you're always thanking Him, great! But if you're not willing to put some thought into appreciating His gifts and thanking Him for them, He'll find another way to get you to think about Him. When things go wrong everyone remembers to daven to Hashem.

That's what the possuk means, "instead of serving Hashem in happiness, you'll have to serve Him with trouble."

"But that doesn't apply to me," said Tzadok, "I never had any good things in my life."

Just then the rock Tzadok was holding slipped out of his hand and landed on his toe.

"OW!!! " Tzadok howled, grabbing his foot in pain. "My toe! It's bad enough being in prison but now I'm going to have to hop around like this?! Why is Hashem doing this to me?!"

"Oy vey," said Rav Volender as he helped Tzadok sit down on his bed. "I'm so sorry but that's exactly what the possuk is saying. Even when you're having a rough day, you have to learn to focus on the good. Look at you,



you're healthy, you're getting three delicious meals a day here in prison. Just the fact that you are alive is a reason to thank Hashem.

"Even if you're cleaning toilets in the prison, the fact that you are healthy should make you a very happy person who is always thanking Hashem. And if you don't – if you forget to thank Him for all the good things, then, instead of the good, sometimes Hashem has to remind you about how good it was by taking it away."

Tzadok looked frustrated. "That's easier said than done," he said, as he rubbed his swollen toe. "It's so hard to thank Hashem. Even this bed only has one pillow - and the prison mattress is not the double deluxe extra special soft one that I'm used to. It's so uncomfortable!"

As Tzadok said these last words, one of the legs of his bed collapsed, sending him tumbling to the floor.

"See!?!? And now my bed is missing a leg - how can you say Hashem does good things for me - how am I supposed to sleep like this?" Tzadok started pulling out even more hairs from his beard in frustration as he sat on the floor with his pillow and blanket.

"Tzadok, have you noticed that the last two chances you missed out on thanking Hashem for something, immediately something bad happened to you? Maybe you should try focusing on the millions of good things that Hashem is giving you? You're looking at me right now, so that means you have eyes! Boruch Hashem! You're breathing every few seconds, so that means your lungs are working just fine. Boruch Hashem! And right now your heart is pumping blood all the way down to your toe in order to get you healed again. A pumping heart! Boruch Hashem! And your beard too! You have that too!"

"But it's only half —" Tzadok caught himself in time. "Boruch Hashem I still have a half a beard left!"

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

*Living with gratitude makes us happier
and brings more Bracha in our lives.*



To listen on the phone, Dial:

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