



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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יתרו

Giving Proper Thanks

In memory of

חיים שמואל בן יצחק מרדכי

Sidney Gross (Pittsburgh)

May his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren
follow the path he and יבלח"ט Savta set forth.

Giving Proper Thanks

Rav Volender finished davening Shacharis at the Kosel and started heading towards the Jerusalem Prison, where he was the Rov. As he made his way through the narrow streets of the Old City, he encountered a most peculiar and shocking sight. Headed towards him was none other than Tzadok 'Hatzadik', whom he had met in prison last year. In each hand, Tzadok was holding a leash. On one was the largest frog Rav Volender had ever seen and on the other - a chimpanzee!

"Tzadok!" exclaimed Rav Volender, trying to sound friendly and not as if anything weird was going on. "How are you?"

"Oh Rav Volender!" Tzadok cried out. "How happy I am to see you! Look what I'm wearing! I was at a clothing gemach yesterday and at the bottom of a pile of clothes I found what is most certainly the Eifod of the Kohen Gadol!"

"You did?" asked Rav Volender. "How do you know it's the Eifod?"

"Of course it's the Eifod," Tzadok replied indignantly. "Look, it's 100% techeilet! I'm wearing it in preparation for when I become Moshiach!"

"Um... Tzadok," Rav Volender said hesitantly. "Moshiach is going to be from Shevet Yehuda, and not a Kohen. He isn't allowed to wear the Bigdei Kohein Gadol."

"Oh I didn't know that," replied Tzadok. "I'll give it to the Kohein Gadol when I see him."

Rav Volender chose to change the subject. "May I ask why on earth you are walking with a chimpanzee and a giant frog?"

Tzadok looked shocked. "Kvod Harav," he said, shocked. "Does the Rav not recognize these holy animals?"

Rav Volender looked at the animals again. "I'm sorry Tzadok," he said. "But I can't say that they look familiar to me at all."

"Rabbeinu!" Tzadok bellowed. "I found this giant frog next to the nuclear power plant in Dimona - his ancestors were the frogs from Makat Tzfardeia in Mitzrayim! And I rescued this chimpanzee from the Jerusalem Zoo because his great-great-grandparents were part of Makat Arov!"

"I see," Rav Volender said slowly, not really seeing at all. "And you're parading them through the Old City because...?"

“Because I’m taking them to see the Kotel!” Tzadok said with a huge smile. “When we read about the Makot a few weeks ago and how Hashem saved the Am Yisrael from Mitzrayim, it reminded me of how Hashem saved me from prison last year. I was filled with such *Hakarat Hatov* to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, *Yishtabach Shemo*, that I realized the only way to properly express my thanks would be to spend my time taking care of these holy animals.



“I feed them, I bathe them, and I sing and dance to entertain them. I spend my whole day serving Hashem by making them happy. And it’s not just the frog and the chimp!” Tzadok took a glass jar out of his pocket. “Look, I also have a bunch of lice from Makat Kinim!”

Rav Volender took a long, deep breath before responding. “Tzadok, Tzadok,” he said gently. “Did you ever wonder why in the Aseret Hadibrot it says **אָנְכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם**? Hashem had just taken us out of Mitzrayim a month and a half earlier - why did Hashem need to remind us?”

“Because the hot desert air made us forget?” offered Tzadok.

“No, no, of course we didn’t forget!” said Rav Volender. “Just the opposite! We were so filled with appreciation for what Hashem did for us that when Hashem offered the Torah we said **נִעְשָׂה וְנִשְׁמָע** immediately, without hesitation. We so badly wanted to do anything Hashem asked, out of thanks for the countless miracles he had just performed for us.

“So Hashem reminded us at Mattan Torah that we are forever indebted to him for all of the wonderful and amazing things that he did and continues to do for us.

“But instead of you davening in shul and learning Torah, you’ve been busy with these animals. That’s not Hakarat Hatov - the proper way of showing Hakarat Hatov to our Creator is by constantly doing his Mitzvot and fulfilling his will, as he told us at Mattan Torah! So why don’t you get rid of these silly animals and meet me at the prison where I will be giving a Mesilat Yesharim shiur? I’ll give you a visitor’s badge so the guards know that you’re not a prisoner,” he quickly added, seeing Tzadok’s frightened face.

“Oh Rav Volender, that sounds like a wonderful idea!” Tzadok exclaimed, bending down to remove the leashes from the animals.

“**No, Tzadok! Don’t!**” cried out Rav Volender, but it was too late. The chimpanzee and the giant frog were already bounding away down the road and out of sight...

To be continued next week...

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!



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