



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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The Making of a Tzaddik

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Hindy, Nechy and Chezky



The Making of a Tzaddik

The Day After Yom Kippur.

“Thank you for being such a big help,” said Totty as he looked up at Tzvi who was standing on top of the ladder. “You’re making sure everything is secure up there?”

Today was “Putting up the Sukkah Day” in the Markowitz home which meant everyone was busy. Mommy was in the kitchen cooking for Yomtiv, and Esther and Avromi were at the dining room table with little Dovid Aryeh making new decorations for the sukkah.

Yehuda and Totty were carrying out the sukkah boards but they were too heavy for Tzvi – also he didn’t like getting splinters – so he had found his own work to do on top of the ladder.

“Yes, Totty. Everything is very tight and strong. You and Yehuda did a perfect job. I’m just gonna do the last part and put the schach down on the beams! Don’t worry Totty. I’m being very careful!”

“I’m sure you are Tzvi,” said Totty, “and that’s very helpful of you. But there’s only one slight problem – actually two of them. First of all, according to many poskim only someone who is bar mitzvah can put down the schach. And second, the schach can only be placed down after three walls are already up. So if we would rely on your help right now, we’d be sitting in a possul sukkah all Yomtiv and we wouldn’t get the mitzvah.”

“Here we go again,” said Tzvi sadly as he slowly came down the ladder. “Yesterday Mommy told me that I made a mistake when I washed negel vasser up to where my fingers start. She said that on Yom Kippur we only wash up to the knuckles. I’m always being told that I’m doing something wrong even if it’s just a tiny little mistake.”

“That makes you just like Moshe Rabeinu,” said Totty as he watched a dejected Tzvi come down the ladder.

“Moshe Rabeinu also had a Mommy and Totty who told him when he made mistakes?” said Tzvi his eyes widening with surprise. It was hard for

Tzvi to even imagine Moshe Rabeinu as a little boy; for sure not a little boy who made mistakes.

“Well, I’m sure he did,” said Totty, “but I’m talking about something that happened much later in Moshe Rabeinu’s life when he was already a very big tzadik.

“In this week’s parsha we see that Hashem Himself tells Moshe he had made a mistake and He criticizes him for a tiny little aveirah. It was such a small aveirah that the meforshim have a very hard time trying to figure out what it even was. Rav Avigdor Miller once said in his shiur that we would need a very strong magnifying glass to see Moshe Rabeinu’s aveirah. But Hashem didn’t let it pass quietly. He told Moshe, “You rebelled again Me and because of that you can’t come into Eretz Yisroel.”

“Isn’t that too strict?” asked Tzvi. “Moshe Rabeinu was a really big tzadik and I’m sure he was trying the best he could. Why couldn’t Hashem just give him a break? When such a big tzadik does such a small aveirah that you need a magnifying glass to see it, why can’t Hashem just let it pass by quietly?”



That's a good question Tzvi. So listen to what Rav Avigdor Miller said. He said that the reason Hashem told Moshe about his mistake was because Moshe Rabbeinu wanted that!

Moshe Rabeinu knew that we all make mistakes. That's OK; we're human beings after all. Only Hashem is perfect. But one of the things that makes a person a tzadik is what happens after he makes a mistake.

Some people think it's more fun just to be able to think they're always right. It's uncomfortable to be told you're wrong. But a wise person knows that he's in this world for a hundred and twenty years just to get better and better every day. And it's not easy to get better unless you're willing to hear about the mistakes you make.

Somebody who wants to succeed in this world likes to hear when he makes even a tiny mistake, because he wants to know about anything he does wrong so he can become better!

And that's what the Rambam writes that even though nobody could ever be a navi equal to Moshe Rabeinu but everyone could be a tzadik like Moshe was. Because to be a tzadik means that you're trying to get better and better every day. It means you're always making mistakes but you're always learning from your mistakes – you're not running away from them.

And so by making that mistake with the schach and understanding now what was wrong you're a step closer to being a tzadik like Moshe Rabeinu. Today you're only a little tzadik but you're on your way to being a bigger and bigger tzadik because you're always improving and growing!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos



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