

# Keep Reviewing

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# Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings  
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Rav Volender, the rov of the Jerusalem Prison walked into the prison beis midrash, which was already filled with prisoners waiting for him to give his weekly mussar shmuess.

"Before we begin, are there any questions about what we discussed last week?" Rav Volender asked.

Rav Volender immediately regretted asking this question as Tzadok "Hatzadik"'s hand shot up.

"Yes, Tzadok?"

"How can I shecht mosquitos if we aren't allowed to have knives in the jail?" Tzadok asked.

"What... why... how... just... what???" stammered Rav Volender. "Mosquitoes don't need shchita, they're not kosher. Why would you need to schecht mosquitoes?"

"Well, the rov spoke last week about the need to have rachmanut on everything that Hashem created. So instead of swatting the mosquitoes in my cell, I want to schecht them, because that's a more merciful way of killing them."

Rav Volender gave his head a quick shake. "Tzadok, we don't schecht mosquitoes. Trust me, Hashem is okay with you swatting them."

"But rebbe," Tzadok began.

"Later, Tzadok," Rav Volender said forcefully. "I have a shmuess to give now..."

"The possuk in Koheles says 'וְזָכַר אֶת בּוֹרְאֵיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ בַּחוּרְתֶּיךָ' - you should remember Hashem in the days of your youth'. Shlomo Hamelech is telling us the importance of doing teshuvah when we are young. One reason is because the older we get, the harder it is to do proper teshuvah..."



Later, as the prisoners were getting ready to go to sleep, Rav Volender made his rounds to wish the prisoners good night. Before passing cell 27-D, Rav Volender said a quick perek of Tehillim.

“Good evening Tzadok,” Rav Volender said as he approached the cell. How are... **why are you painting your beard black???**”

Tzadok looked up, a dripping paintbrush in his hand, and his half-beard half-painted with black paint.

“Hi rebbe!” Tzadok said. “I’m doing exactly what you said in your *shmuess* today!”

Rav Volender racked his brain trying to figure out what on earth he said that Tzadok would understand to mean he should paint his beard.

“Rebbe, you said we have to do teshuvah when we are young. But I’m not young anymore, so I’m painting my beard black to make me younger so I can do teshuvah.”

“Tzadok, that’s not what I meant. It is never too late to do teshuvah and besides, painting your beard won’t make you younger.”

“Yeah, but maybe I can fool the *malachim* and they’ll put my teshuvah in the box with all of the young people’s teshuvah.”

“Tzadok, this might be the silliest thing I’ve ever seen you do. You can’t fool Hakadosh Boruch Hu. What happened to learning Mesillas Yesharim, like I’ve told you to do many times.”

“Oh, I read Mesillat Yesharim last year,” Tzadok said. “It didn’t do anything.”

“Did you read the *hakdama* to the *sefer*?”

“Oh no, rebbe. I didn’t have time for introductions. I jumped right into the middle of the *sefer* so I could finish it faster.”

Rav Volender pulled out his pocket Mesillas Yesharim and turned to the first page.

“Tzadok, look at the **very first** paragraph in the *sefer*. The Ramchal says it doesn’t work if you just read it once. You have to read it over and over in order to get something out of it.”

“Oy, that’s too much. Can you give me something else to learn that will work on the first try?”

“My dear Tzadok,” Rav Volender said, with what appeared to be never-ending patience. “In this week’s *parsha* it says ‘וְלֹא נָתַן ה' לָכֶם לֵב לְדַעַת וְעֵינַיִם לְרֹאוֹת וְאָזְנִים לְשִׁמְעַת עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה’. This means it took Klal Yisroel 40 years in the *midbar* to understand Matan Torah. And Chazal learn from this that in order to truly know something you need to learn it for **AT LEAST 40 years**.”

“FORTY YEARS?!?!?” Tzadok exclaimed. “Just learning one *sefer*???”

“At least!” Rav Volender said, handing Tzadok the worn *sefer* in his hand. “Tzadok, look at my *Mesillas Yesharim*. I’ve kept this same *sefer* in my pocket since my bar mitzvah and I learn from it every day. It is a *sefer* that you must learn over and over for as long as you are on this Earth. Without constant *chazorah*, you have very little chance of the Torah having any effect on your life.”

“Okay!” Tzadok said. “Please have the guards unlock my cell! I’m going to the *beis midrash* to learn right now!”

“No, Tzadok,” Rav Volender said. “Now is time to go to sleep. We have a *mussar seder* after *shacharis*. Why don’t you use that time to learn *Mesillas Yesharim*? Now have a good night.”

**Have a Wonderful Shabbos!**

### let's review:

- Why didn't Tzadok become a real tzaddik from learning Mesillas Yesharim?
- How many times should a person learn Mesillas Yesharim?



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