

Purim / פורים

It's All About Serving Hashem

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

It was Purim morning in the Jerusalem Prison and all of the inmates had spiced up their prisoner's uniforms in celebration of the festive day. They had just heard *krias Megillah* and had finished *davening*, and Rav Volender, the prison rov, was giving his daily *Mesillas Yesharim shiur*.

"So you see, the *Ramchal* is saying that it's important not to be the type of person who is always looking to relax," said Rav Volender. "Because, such a person..."

Rav Volender's voice trailed off at the raucous sound of singing coming from outside the prison *beis midrash*.

"Excuse me, can you please keep it down? We're in the middle of a *shiur* here... Tzadok? What are you doing? Why aren't you attending my *shiur*? And where did you get that cat? And why are you dancing with a cat in the middle of the prison? Are you drunk? How did you get wine in the prison? And how on earth did you manage to lose half of your beard yet again?"

"Purim *Someiach*, *kavod harav!*" Tzadok "Hatzadik" said, still dancing, a ragged-looking cat in one hand and a cup full of purple liquid in the other. "This isn't wine - it's grape-flavored *petel!* And this isn't a cat - it's *Eliyahu Hanavi!*"

"Wait, what?" Rav Volender asked, bewildered.

"Yes, I found this cat in the prison yard last night and I could tell that it was no ordinary cat. He was eating a piece of cake - and I remembered that you told me the story about how a *malach* gave *Eliyahu Hanavi* a cake after the story of *Har Hakarmel* so I immediately knew that this cat must be the holy prophet *Eliyahu!*"



“Tzadok,” warned Rav Volender. “If the guards see you with that cat you’re going to be in a lot of trouble.”

“Kavod harav,” Tzadok said. “The guards are not religious. So they won’t be able to see Eliyahu Hanavi.”

“And why are you missing half of your beard again?” Rav Volender repeated.

“Oh, Eliyahu Hanavi scratched my face when I picked him up and took off part of my beard. Hashem must have told him to do that. *Vina-vina-vinahapoch Adar, visimcha visasson zachor latov!*” Tzadok resumed singing and dancing, holding the frightened cat tightly so it couldn’t escape.

“Tzadok, Tzadok,” Rav Volender said, but Tzadok did not appear to hear.

“TZADOK!” Rav Volender bellowed.

Tzadok paused his dancing.

“Kavod harav,” he said. “I need to sing to Eliyahu Hanavi because he looks so sad and you taught me that a navi needs to be happy in order to get a *nevuah*.”

“Tzadok,” said Rav Volender, ignoring this last statement. “Why didn’t you come to my *Mesillas Yesharim shiur* today?”

“Rebbe, it’s Purim!” Tzadok said. “Who has time to learn today? We need to be singing and dancing all day!”

“Well, Tzadok, it is true that it is extremely important to sing and dance on Purim and not to sit around glumly. And of course there are the *mitzvos hayom*. But the most important *mitzvah* of the day of Purim is to learn Torah!”

“It is?” asked Tzadok. “More important than eating *hamanfish*?”

“*Hamanfish*?” Rav Volender asked, confused.

“Yes, don’t you remember? It’s the new *mitzvah* I invented where you have to eat a triangle shaped tunafish sandwich on Purim to remember the rotten fish that Haman’s daughter dumped on her father’s head.”

“Tzadok, you can’t invent a *mitzvah*. And where does it say that she dumped fish on Haman’s head?”

“I say it,” Tzadok said proudly. “She dumped smelly garbage from the window. It probably smelled because there was old smelly fish in it.”

“Tzadok,” Rav Volender said. “We’re getting way off topic here. The important thing I am trying to tell you is that Purim isn’t just a day of fun. It is a day of *avodas Hashem*. And therefore, we must start it off in the right way, by spending time learning Torah. And by doing so, we demonstrate that all of the exciting and fun things we do today are also part of *Avodas Hashem*.”

“Oh, so is that why children everywhere have *Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzadik*, where they all come to learn in shul on Purim?”

“Of course, why else?”

“Oh I thought they just do it for the treats and prizes,” Tzadok said. “And you weren’t giving out any treats or prizes so I didn’t come.”

“No, no, Tzadok. We don’t learn for the treats and prizes. We learn because this is what Hashem wants us to do. Now why don’t you join my *shiur*? We still have ten minutes left.”

**Have a Preilichen Furim
and a Shonderful Wabbos!**

let’s review:

- Is the cat in the story really Eliyahu Hanavi?
- Why is it important to spend some time learning Torah on Purim?



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