

Vayechi / וַיְחִי

## You're Being Watched!

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# Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings  
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Rav Volender, the Rov of the Jerusalem Prison, had just finished davening Mincha, when a colorful booklet on a nearby table caught his eye. The title read "Toras Avigdor Junior" - what was this? Rav Volender was familiar with the wonderful Toras Avigdor booklets that were published every week, but he didn't know there was a version for children too!

As Rav Volender read the story, his eyes narrowed. This story was about himself and Tzadok "Hatzadik", who had several times been an inmate at the prison. What was going on? How could anyone know the exact details of his conversations and interactions with Tzadok?

Determined to get to the bottom of this, Rav Volender headed straight to the regional Toras Avigdor headquarters. As he approached the building he saw that there was a man inside, sitting by a window, busy writing a story.

Rav Volender approached the window and watched the man. He appeared nervous and kept glancing nervously over his shoulder at Rav Volender as he continued to write.

Just as the man finished writing, he looked up in shock as the door to the office opened and in walked none other than Tzadok "Hatzadik", once again missing half his beard and holding what looked like a black bottle! Rav Volender



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was just as surprised. What was going on here? He hurried inside to investigate.

Rav Volender walked into the room, just as Tzadok started his sales pitch.

“Would you like to buy a bottle of my new beard tonic?” Tzadok asked. “It will make your beard thicker and fuller instantly!”

“Tzadok!” said Rav Volender. “What are you doing here?”

“Ah, Rav Volender, what a surprise! Are you here to buy my beard tonic?”

“What?” asked Rav Volender. “The only one here who looks like they need beard tonic is you - why is half of your beard missing again? And why does your ‘tonic’ smell like chocolate syrup?”

As he spoke, Rav Volender noticed an open Toras Avigdor Junior booklet from Parshas Vayigash which had a picture of Tzadok accidentally cutting off his beard.

“Well, I guess that explains it,” he said to himself. Turning to the writer, he asked, “So you must be A. Ben Ami. I came here to ask you how you have managed to get information about conversations between Tzadok and myself. Also, what gives you the right to publish stories about us without our permission?”

“Well my real name is Aharon Spetner,” the man replied. “A. Ben Ami is just a pen name. And honestly, I must say I’m quite confused. I thought you and Tzadok were fictional characters that I invented for the Toras Avigdor Junior stories. I didn’t know you were real people.”

“Maybe you are also fictional,” suggested Tzadok. “How would you know? And maybe that’s why your name doesn’t appear on the cover, since you aren’t real.”

As Aharon thought this over, Rav Volender looked at the story he had just written.

“If you don’t mind some constructive criticism,” Rav Volender said gently, “this story can use some work. It really doesn’t read so well. And there’s no ‘takeaway’ at the end. What’s the lesson?”

“Well it’s hard to concentrate when someone is watching you work,” Aharon replied defensively.

“But someone is always watching you!” Rav Volender said. “Hakadosh Boruch Hu doesn’t stop watching you for a second. You know, Rav Miller used to say that you must live your life with the constant awareness of being watched. If someone watching you disturbs you to the point where your writing suffers, then perhaps you are not used to the idea that Hashem is watching you all the time.”

Aharon thought this over. Rav Volender was right. He really needed to think about Hashem’s constant presence and how he was always being observed.

“Thank you, Rav Volender,” he said. “You’ve reminded me about a valuable lesson.” He frowned as he looked back at his story. “And you’re right about this story. It’s terrible. Who would believe that Mayor McGillicuddy was megayer and went to learn in Brisk?” He crumpled the paper and threw it out.

“But what will I do now? I don’t have time to come up with another story. Rav Volender, can you help me think of something?”

Rav Volender smiled. “Reb Aharon, I’m sure you’ll think of something.” Turning to Tzadok, he said “come Tzadok, I have a Mesillas Yescharim shiur to give. You should come along - it will be good for you.”

And with that, Tzadok took a swig from his bottle of “tonic” and he and Rav Volender walked out of the office together.

## Takeaway:

*In this week’s parsha Yaakov tells his children that the Avos walked “before Hashem”.*

*It means that they always felt Hashem’s Eyes on them and that’s why they were such Tzaddikim.*



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