

Until the End

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

In the small office sat a short, heavysset man. A slight smell of animals was noticeable in the air as the man leaned over the stack of papers on his desk, when there was a knock at the door.

“Come in!” called the man.

The door opened and in walked one of the strangest looking people the man had ever seen.

“Can I help you?” he asked.

“Yes, my name is Tzadok. I would like to apply for the job opening.”

“Tzadok?” the man said. “Is that why you have the letter ‘צ’ pasted to the front of your hat?”

“Oh no,” answered Tzadok. “That stands for ‘tzadik’. You see, my name is ‘Tzadok Hatzadik’.”

“What a fascinating name, please have a seat,” the man said, gesturing at the wooden folding chair across from the desk. “So how did you hear about the job?”

“Well, actually my cousin Lemel the Lamdan from South Fallsburg, New York was visiting me and he told me that he had read in the newspaper that there was an opening for a zookeeper at the Jerusalem Zoo.”

“I see,” said the man, cracking a sunflower seed between his teeth. “And do you have any experience working in a zoo?”

“Do I have zoo experience?” Tzadok asked, astonished. “Why I personally helped Mayor McGillicuddy transport all of the animals to the new University City Zoo two years ago. And I once volunteered feeding the animals at this very zoo! And I have many animals in my apartment. And I’m a donkey hair expert —”

“Okay, okay, you sound qualified enough,” the man said. “You can start right now. I have a spare uniform for you over here. I need you to wash all of the animals. Are you comfortable with that?”

“Absolutely!” Tzadok said. “I won’t let you down!”



That afternoon, a tired Tzadok was sweating profusely as he scrubbed a zebra.

“Boy were you dirty,” Tzadok told the zebra. “I thought I was going to end up washing off all of your stripes.”

Finally Tzadok finished washing the zebra and headed to the gorillas, the last cage on his list. One by one, he bathed each gorilla with banana-scented bubble bath, until they were all clean.

“Well that’s that!” Tzadok said, clapping his hands in satisfaction. “Have a wonderful day, my monkey friends!” Tzadok closed the cage behind him and started heading for the zoo exit.

Tzadok was so busy congratulating himself on a job well done that he didn’t notice the commotion erupting behind him, until he saw a gorilla galloping past him towards the zoo exit.

“Chaimkel! Come back!” Tzadok yelled, running after the gorilla. “Oy, I must have forgotten to lock the cage!”

Tzadok dashed out of the zoo, just in time to see the gorilla climb into a bus waiting at the bus stop and start driving off.

“Chaimkel! Stop! You don’t have a driver’s license!” he yelled, but it was too late and the bus disappeared into the distance.

After the police had finally stopped the bus and captured the loose gorilla, Tzadok found himself being escorted once again into the Jerusalem Prison.

“Tzadok,” said Rav Volender, the prison rov. “What brings you here today?”

“Rebbe, it wasn’t my fault!” lamented Tzadok. “I got a new job at the zoo, and I did everything

perfectly. The only thing I forgot to do was to lock the gorilla cage at the end of the day. What’s the big deal? So I just forgot the last thing on my list. I was basically done with work anyway!”

“Tzadok, Tzadok,” Rav Volender said. “Do you know what this week’s parsha is?”

“I’m assuming something to do with gorillas?” Tzadok said.

“Gorillas? Why would you say that?”

“Because whenever I get arrested you always seem to connect it to the parsha.”

“Hmmm...” Rav Volender said, stroking his beard. “Is that so? Well in any event, it’s Parshas Tetzaveh. And there is a possuk that says ‘בָּאוּ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְפָנַי ה’ - when [the kohen gadol] enters the kodesh [his bells sound] and when he leaves’. Now the reason the Torah makes mention of the kohen leaving is to teach us an important lesson: finishing something is just as important as starting it. *Shleimus* is an important *middah* of the Torah Jew. You can’t just run off before you complete your job. Anything a Yid does must be done all the way.”

Just then a prison officer showed up. “Come with me, Tzadok,” he said. “Your cell is ready.”

“Yes sir,” replied Tzadok. “Do you know what this week’s parsha is?”

“Um, no,” replied the nonreligious officer.

“It’s Tetzaveh!” said Tzadok. “And that means you have to complete your job properly and lock my cell door!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

The Torah emphasizes the end of Avodah to let us know that the whole Avodah is important, whether the beginning or the end.

Let’s Review:

- Why did Tzadok think it wasn’t so bad that he left the gorilla cage unlocked?
- Why is “the end” just as important as the beginning?



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