

Being Happy

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Rav Volender arrived at the Jerusalem Prison Purim morning to read the Megillah for the inmates. Even though it wasn't fun to be in jail, the prisoners were still getting into the Purim spirit. Some of the inmates had even decorated their cells in honor of the happy day.

The prisoners all made their way to the Beis Midrash, where Rav Volender read the Megillah. Rav Volender always tried to make his Krias Megillah extra enjoyable for the inmates who didn't have the opportunity to fully celebrate Purim.

"Achar hadvarim ha'eileh gidal Hamelech Achashveirosh es Haman -" the Beis Midrash erupted with noise as the prisoners stamped their feet and banged on the tables. But Rav Volender also heard an odd sound coming from somewhere in the room. At the next "Haman" he heard it more clearly. It sounded like someone saying "ohmmm...". The third time he read Haman's name, there was no mistaking it. It was definitely the voice of Tzadok "Hatzadik". Rav Volender looked around the room, but didn't see Tzadok anywhere.

A few minutes later, while everyone was banging by "Haman", Rav Volender finally spotted Tzadok, sitting on the floor and trying to touch his toes. What was he up to now?

When Krias Megillah was over and davening finished, Rav Volender approached Tzadok.

"A freilichen Purim, Tzadok!" Rav Volender said warmly.

"Purim sameiach." Tzadok answered solemnly.

"Is everything okay, Tzadok?" asked Rav Volender. "Why are you so serious? And why were you on the floor during Krias Megillah?"



“Oh, I was doing yoga,” Tzadok answered. “I read that in ancient India, also known as ‘Hodu’ - which is mentioned in the Megillah - there was a great man named Harav Mabuk Talihashkewal. And he said that there is a big mitzvah to do yoga during Krias Megillah on Purim.”

“Where on earth did you read this?” Rav Volender asked.

“Oh it’s in the new sefer I’m writing,” Tzadok answered proudly. “I’d be happy to learn it with you b’chavrusa.”

“I’ll make you a deal, Tzadok,” replied Rav Volender. “If you learn the entire Mesillas Yesharim with me, I will learn some of your sefer with you.”

“Really?” Tzadok said. “That’s great! It will make you a big talmid chacham!”

“You think so?” Rav Volender asked. “Just from learning one sefer?”

“Yes, it’s full of segulos to make you a talmid chacham!” Tzadok said. “For example, if you tie a red string around your nose by havdalah, and hold your breath while smelling the besamim, it will -”

“Wait, Tzadok,” interrupted Rav Volender. “How can you hold your breath while smelling?”

Tzadok thought about that for a minute. “Hmmm... that’s a great kasha. I wonder if anyone else asks that. Maybe the Rambam - we should look it up.”

“You still didn’t tell me why you look so serious today,” Rav Volender said.

“Oh, that’s simple. I didn’t eat my ‘hamanfish’ yet.”

“Your what?”

“Did I never tell you about my hamanfish? I take a tuna fish sandwich and cut it into triangles. I eat it every Purim - it’s a segulah to make you happy on Purim! Oh, Rebbe, this year I was planning to teach all of Klal Yisroel about hamanfish but then that wild

gorilla I set loose landed me back in prison. Can you please help me, Rebbe? I need you to spend the rest of Purim, distributing hamanfish to everyone in Yerushalayim so they can all be happy today. Here, I even made you a plate!”

“Tzadok, Tzadok, calm down,” Rav Volender said. “You don’t need hamanfish to make you happy on Purim.”

“You mean there’s another segulah for that too?” Tzadok asked, surprised.

“No, Tzadok, there’s no segulah necessary to be happy.”

Tzadok laughed. “That’s a good Purim joke, Rebbe,” he said.

“No, Tzadok, I’m serious. On Purim we’re happy because Hashem turned the entire world upside down in order to save the Yehudim. And he continues to do amazing nissim for us every day.”

“Really?” asked Tzadok. “I didn’t know that.”

“Here, let me give you an example.” Rav Volender picked up one of Tzadok’s “hamanfish” sandwiches. “Look at this bread. Do you know how many miracles are in a single piece of bread? A few tiny seeds dropped into dirt turned into stalks of wheat which were then kneaded into dough and baked to perfection. And look at the tuna fish. A fish, swimming in the ocean, has proteins, fats, and oils that are extremely healthy - and it’s delicious too! Hashem’s world is full of incredible wonders - and they’re all for us! He’s taking care of us every day, every minute. How can you think about that without being happy?”

“So you’re saying I was right?” Tzadok asked.

“Wait, what?” said Rav Volender.

“You just said it - hamanfish make people happy!”

Have a Freilichen Purim!

Let’s review:

- Is there a mitzvah to eat hamanfish on Purim?
- How many hamanfish must one eat in order to be mekayem the mitzvah?



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