



Korach / קָרַח

Don't be Fooled!

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Tzadok “Hatzadik” stretched and yawned widely as he woke up in his cramped prison cell. He sat up, said *Modeh ani*, and reached down to wash *negel vasser*.

“Why are you washing your hands so many times?”

Tzadok jumped, startled, and looked up to see a familiar face sitting on the previously empty bed in his cell. “Dudu? Dudu Manor? What are you doing in prison? I thought you were a member of the Knesset now. When did you get here?”

“Oh I am in the Knesset now. But you know, sometimes Knesset members have to spend some time in prison. I was arrested late last night. They brought me here when you were already sleeping.”

“Well it’s so nice to see you,” said Tzadok, putting on his *tzitzis*. “And to answer your question, it is a *mitzvah* to wash your hands three times when you wake up in the morning. But I wash my hands seventeen times because it’s a *segulah* I invented. Come, let’s go to *shacharis*.”

“Shacharis?” asked Dudu, bewildered. “But it’s not my *bar mitzvah*.”

Tzadok laughed. “Come on, it’s fun!”

With nothing else to do, Dudu followed Tzadok to the prison *beis midrash*. After *shacharis*, the prisoners sat down to listen to the *Mesilas Yesharim* shiur given by Rav Volender, the prison Rav.

“So the *Ramchal* is telling us how easy it is to do *aveiros*,” Rav Volender was saying. “If we are not careful, we may end up doing terrible things without even realizing it, such as damaging someone’s property or stealing, as many of you know.”



“What I did wasn’t stealing!” Dudu blurted out. “I just took a million shekel from the money that the government was going to use to build the new orphanage in Yerushalayim. I did it so I could give one percent of it to tzedaka. It was a mitzvah!”

Silence ensued as everyone stared at Dudu.

“Dudu,” Rav Volender said. “First of all, you need to give ten percent of any money you make to tzedakah.”

“Ten percent???” Dudu exclaimed. “That’s crazy! Then the poor people are stealing from me!”

“Dudu, I can explain the laws of tzedaka to you at a later time,” Rav Volender said. “But let’s read the next line of the Mesilas Yescharim: **כֵּן הִיא עֲצַת הַיֵּצֵר**: **וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהַמְלִיט מִמֶּנּוּ אֶלָּא בְחָרָהּ עַל מַמָּשׁ עַל בְּנֵי הָאָדָם...** - the Ramchal is saying that the yetzer hara is extremely skilled in trickery and the only way to escape from him is with great wisdom and insight.”

“But I’m very smart,” Dudu insisted. “I wouldn’t even have gotten caught if someone didn’t overhear me talking about it in the elevator.”

“Dudu, do you know what this week’s parsha is?”

Tzadok leaned over. “Beshalach,” he whispered in Dudu’s ear.

“Why it’s Beshalach!” Dudu said, puffing out his chest. “As a leader of the Jewish people, it is my job to always know what parsha it is.”

“No, Dudu,” Rav Volender said, shaking his head. “It’s Parshas Korach.”

“Oh, is that the one where the snake bit Chava because she went to Achashverosh’s feast?”

“No, Dudu,” Rav Volender repeated. “Korach led a rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu. But how could he do that? He saw the nissim Hashem did through Moshe. He was at krias yam suf and Matan Torah. How could he argue when Moshe said that Hashem chose Aharon to be the kohein gadol?

“And you know what Korach said? He said that he knew Hashem told Moshe to pick Aharon, but that it was only because Moshe pressured Hashem into doing that. Can you imagine such a silly thing?

“And do you know why that happened? Because even though Korach was a very great man, he wasn’t careful about watching out for his yetzer hara. And he let himself be convinced of something that was clearly wrong.”

Dudu put an ashamed look on his face. “I see,” he said. “Fine. I’ll give ten percent of the money I stole to tzedaka.”

“No, Dudu!” Rav Volender said. “That’s your yetzer hara talking again! You can’t give any of that money to tzedaka because it’s not yours! Hashem doesn’t want your stolen money - you need to give it all back!”

Dudu looked around. “I didn’t hear my yetzer hara talking,” he said. “How can I escape something that I can’t hear and see?”

Rav Volender smiled. “By doing what you’re doing right now. Continue coming and studying Mesilas Yescharim with us every day, and you will learn how to know when your yetzer hara is talking and how to defeat him.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let’s review:

- How much of the money should Dudu give to tzedaka?
- What is the only way to fight our yetzer hara?



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