

Vayishlach / וַיִּשְׁלַח

Forever On Guard

By: A. Ben-Ami

Illustrations by: M. Weinreb

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Mayor McGillicuddy sat back in his large, ornate office chair as he gazed appreciatively at the large picture of himself hanging on the wall.

"Mr. Mayor?" came the voice of his secretary over the intercom. "You have a phone call."

"I'm sorry," replied the mayor, "but I'm extraordinarily busy right now - unless it's an emergency."

"He said his name is Zaduk Hazadeek."

"Tzadok??? Of course, put him right through!"

Mayor McGillicuddy picked up the phone. "Hi Tzadok, what can I do for you?"

"Hello, Mr. Mayor," said Tzadok. "I looking now for job. I vas vondering if maybe you wanted to hire me again as your kabbalah advisor?"

"Hmmm," mused the mayor. "I don't really need a kabbalah advisor now that I've won reelection. But tell me, where have you been working since we last spoke? Maybe I can find something for you."

"Vell," said Tzadok hesitantly. "I vas in the Jerusalem Prison..."

"Working in a prison? That's great! I have just the job for you - we need to hire a new gate guard for the medium-security prison here in St. Louis. When can you start?"

"Oh boy, tank you very much!" Tzadok said with relief. "I can start right away - I'll be on ze next plane!"



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A few days later, Tzadok was dressed in his new Department of Corrections uniform and stationed at the entrance to the prison. As Tzadok happily patrolled the prison entrance, the sound of cheerful music approaching made him look up and he saw an ice cream truck approaching. Forgetting that he was on duty, Tzadok quickly ran towards the truck and flagged it down.

Tzadok approached the truck and asked the driver if he could look at the different ice cream bars to see which had a hechsher. Tzadok was so busy examining each package that he didn't appear to notice the loud alarm sounding behind him. After he paid the ice cream man and turned to walk back to the prison, he was dismayed by what he saw: dozens of prisoners were escaping from the gate he was supposed to be guarding.

"Halt! Stop! In ze name of law!" Tzadok cried, but to no avail. The prisoners quickly ran out of sight in all directions. Tzadok sat down on the grass and began to cry.

Rabbi Bromberg was sitting in his seat at Agudas Yisroel of St. Louis, learning before Mincha. He looked up as he heard the sound of sobbing from the doorway.

"Tzadok," said Rabbi Bromberg. "What's wrong?"

"Oh, Rabbi," wailed Tzadok, walking into the shul. "Everything is wrong!" Tzadok proceeded to tell Rabbi Bromberg how Mayor McGillicuddy had just fired him for the slight oversight of letting the prisoners escape while he went to buy ice cream.

"I don't understand," complained Tzadok. "I just stopped paying attention for one tiny minute. Why should I lose my job over zat?"

"Sit down, Tzadok," Rabbi Bromberg, pulling up a chair next to him. "I want to explain something to you. Do you know the story about Yaakov Avinu's fight in Parshas Vayishlach?"

"I tink so," Tzadok answered. "Didn't he sit on top of mountain and hold up his hands while ze Bnei Yisroel fought war against ze Yevanim?"

"Not exactly," replied Rabbi Bromberg. "You see, Yaakov Avinu was attacked by the *Sar shel Eisav*, a *malach* otherwise known as the *Yetzer Hora*. And while Yaakov Avinu did a good job fighting all night against this *malach*, he relaxed his grip for one second and the *Sar shel Eisav* managed to hit him, dislocating his hip. And for that reason, when eating meat, Yidden do not eat the *gid hanasheh* - because it is located on the hip of the animal."

"I don't understand," said Tzadok. "Just because Yaakov Avinu weakened for one second, so we can't eat a certain part of an animal forever? If he was weak he should have taken wrestling lessons!"

"Tzadok, this is the fight against the *Yetzer Hora* we're talking about. The 'wrestling lessons' for that fight are learned from *mussar seforim*, like *Mesilas Yesharim*, *Shaarei Teshuvah*, and *Chovos Halevavos*.

"Today, your *Yetzer Hora* distracted you with an ice cream truck and look what happened! Learning *mussar* and improving our *Yiras Shomayim* is the way to train ourselves never to relax even for a second in our battle against the *Yetzer Hora* so that things like this won't happen."

"My rebbe Rav Volender in Yerushalayim told me to learn those *seforim*," Tzadok said thoughtfully. "Maybe I'd best head back to Eretz Yisroel and to my rebbe, so I can train better for wrestling my *Yetzer*."

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

We are in a constant fight against our Yetzer Hora; if we weaken for even a moment, the consequences are forever. We must be very careful.



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