



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Sefer Devarim sponsored by:



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נצבים - ראש השנה

New Mitzvos

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New Mitzvos

Rav Volender, the rov of the Jerusalem Prison, headed out for his lunch break and hurried to his daily seder with Tzadok “Hatzadik”, who had recently been released on probation. Rav Volender entered the small *shul*. It was mostly empty, except for a few people sitting and learning.

“What are you doing, Tzadok?” Rav Volender asked.

Tzadok was standing at the *bimah* with a stack of bills in his hand and was repeatedly putting them into the *pushke* and taking them out again.

“Ah, rebbe!” Tzadok greeted Rav Volender. “I’m doing *mitzvos*!”

“Um...” Rav Volender said. “Are you sure?”

“Of course! I’m giving *tzedakah*! I gave more *tzedakah* today than I ever gave in my entire life!”

Tzadok took the wad of bills out of the *tzedakah* box one last time and stuffed them into his pocket. “Okay, rebbe, I’m ready to learn,” he said.

“Um...” Rav Volender said again. “Aren’t you supposed to leave the money in the *pushke* when you give *tzedaka*? Or is this some new *segulah* you’ve invented?”

“Ah, *kavod harav*,” Tzadok said seriously. “Even I could never invent a *segulah* as holy as this. I found this *segulah* in the Torah.”

“Oh really,” replied Rav Volender, taking a *Chovos Halevavos* off of the shelf.

“Oh yes,” Tzadok said. “In last week’s Parsha it says that if we do *mitzvos*, Hashem will give us all sorts of good things. I never realized that doing *mitzvos* was a *segulah*!”

“Well *mitzvos* are a lot more than that,” Rav Volender said.

“Yes, I know! They’re like the biggest *segulah*! But the problem is, it’s hard to find *mitzvos* to do all the time. Like the last time I tried building a *mizbeiach*, I got arrested for blocking traffic on *Rechov Shmuel Hanavi*. And



I don't have an eved ivri, so I can't put a hole in his ear. But then I realized - I can give tzedakah!"

"Um..." Rav Volender said yet again. "But you took out all of the money you put in."

"Exactly!" said Tzadok excitedly. "That's why I gave all of my money to tzedakah - that made me poor so I was allowed to take the money out of tzedakah. This way I can keep giving tzedakah over and over. I must have given a million shekel today already!"

"First of all," said Rav Volender. "Learning Torah is also a mitzvah - it's bigger than all of the other mitzvos. You could have just opened a sefer and learned. But tell me, Tzadok. What did you do today before you came to shul?"

"Hmmm," said Tzadok, stroking the remaining half of his beard. "After Shacharis, I ate breakfast. Then I did my laundry and took out the garbage. And after that I went to the zoo and asked if I could get a job brushing the teeth of all of the animals."

Rav Volender opened his Chovos Halevavos.



“Look here, Tzadok. The Chovos Halevavos says that any action a person does is either a mitzvah or an aveirah.”

Tzadok looked horrified. “Doing laundry and taking out the garbage aren’t mitzvos. So it’s an aveirah to do that?”

“No,” said Rav Volender. “But it can be a mitzvah if you do it for the right reason. In this week’s parsha Hashem gives us the mitzvah to ‘choose life’. All of the things you did today are necessary to serve Hashem. You need to have clean clothes, a clean house, and a job so you can afford food to eat. But when we do these things, we must do them *lesheim shomayim*. If, when doing even the most mundane things, we have in mind that we are doing them so that we can serve Hashem, then we are being mekayeim the mitzvah of **וּבְחַרְתָּ בַּחַיִּים** - choosing life.”

“Wait, so when I turn on the fan in my bedroom, that could be a mitzvah?” Tzadok asked.

“Correct,” said Rav Volender.

“And when I put away the groceries, that is also a mitzvah if I have in mind that I’m doing it to serve Hashem?”

“Absolutely!”

“Wow! So everything is a mitzvah! So I can look for the hairs from Bilaam’s donkey and it will be a mitzvah!”

“Wait, Tzadok,” Rav Volender said warningly. “Remember, doing things *lesheim shomayim* is only a mitzvah if the thing you are doing is not an aveirah. Wasting your time on silly things like that is not what Hashem wants you to do. But doing things which make it easier to do what Hashem wants from you? Those can all be mitzvos, no matter how small.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

let's review:

- How can we turn regular everyday things into mitzvos?
- What kind of things cannot be mitzvos, no matter what?