

Beshalach / בְּשַׁלַּח

Traffic and Complaining

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

The Greenbaum children climbed excitedly into the back of Totty's car. They hadn't seen Zaidy and Bubby in what seemed like ages, and today they were driving to Monsey to visit them.

"I can't wait to have some of Bubby's famous chocolate chip caramel cookies," said Shimmy as he buckled his seatbelt. "I almost forgot what they taste like!"

"I don't think anyone could forget what her cookies taste like," Basya said. "They're too delicious to forget. But I also want to see Bubby's new garden. Mommy said she is growing her own cucumbers and tomatoes!"

Yitzzy looked up from the book he was reading. "Zaidy told me on the phone that he recently got a set of the original Vilna Shas - I want to learn from it - can you imagine, a 150-year-old Gemara?"

"I want to see Zaidy and Bubby's wings!" chimed in little Yaeli.

"Wings?" asked Basya. "Zaidy and Bubby are people - they don't have wings."

"Yes they do!" insisted little Yaeli. "Mommy said they flew to Eretz Yisroel!"

"Yaeli," Yitzzy said. "They flew on an airplane. People can't grow wings. And even if we did, we wouldn't be strong enough to fly with them - our bone density is too high."



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As Totty drove, the children chatted happily about all of the things they were looking forward to on their visit to Zaidy and Bubby's house. However, as time passed, traffic got slower and slower, until they finally came to a halt in the middle of the Palisades Parkway.

"What's going on, Totty?" inquired Yitzy from the back seat.

"I'm not sure," Totty said, trying unsuccessfully to peer past the endless line of cars ahead of them. "But it looks like this trip is going to take a lot longer than we thought."

"Just great," grumbled Shimmy. "I was supposed to be eating Bubby's cookies by now."

"Now now," Totty said softly. "Let's not complain. We have so much to be grateful for."

"Well I don't," Shimmy continued, getting even more aggravated. "And Yaeli fell asleep on my shoulder and she's snoring in my ear. How much worse can this day get?"

"That's enough, Shimmy!" Totty replied, this time more firmly. "There will be no more complaining for the rest of this trip. This is not how Yidden act."

Shimmy stopped complaining, but continued scowling at little Yaeli, whose snoring seemed to be getting louder by the minute.

"Totty," Yitzy said respectfully. "I know we always try not to complain, but sometimes it's really hard, especially when we're stuck in traffic like this. I mean, even the Bnei Yisroel complained in the Midbar, didn't they?"

"Yitzy," Totty replied. "Do you think that the Bnei Yisroel complained about every little thing in the Midbar? Imagine you were on a three-hour hike on a hot day and discovered that you forgot to pack a water bottle. Don't you think that would be uncomfortable?"

"Oh yes," agreed Yitzy. "That would definitely be harder than being stuck in traffic. But hopefully

someone else could lend me some water or a can of soda."

"Okay," continued Totty. "But the Bnei Yisroel were walking day and night in a boiling hot and dry desert. For **THREE WHOLE DAYS!** And there was no water to borrow, and there definitely weren't any cans of soda, either. There were men, women, children, even little babies. And there was not a single tiny drop of water for them to drink. And even then, for **three days**, not one person complained. Not a peep! Can you imagine that?"

"But doesn't the Torah say that they did complain?" Basya asked.

"Yes, it does, but that was only after three days - and then they complained - **once**. Rav Avigdor Miller tells us that the point of this story was to show us how unbelievable the Bnei Yisroel in that dor were, that they didn't complain until after three whole days of being dehydrated in the hot desert. We're talking about people of an incredibly high *madreigah* - no other nation in the history of the world could have endured such a *nisayon* without complaining."

"I never realized that," Shimmy said meekly. "I'm sorry for complaining. Boruch Hashem we are in a comfortable car and we even have bottles of water with us in case we get thirsty."

Just then the traffic started moving again. "Oh wow, Boruch Hashem," said Totty. "It looks like we should be there in another twenty minutes!"

"Hey Shimmy," whispered Yitzy, turning to his older brother. "You know, all this talk about the desert, reminds me of Bubby's cookies."

"Why?" Shimmy asked.

"Because it's a dessert!" Yitzy said with a grin, as he leaned back in the seat and looked back into his book.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

We should think about our holy ancestors in the Midbar when we're tempted to kvetch, whine and complain. Let's try to be like them and control ourselves, focusing only the good that we get from Hashem!



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