

Lesson of Challah

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Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Junior

"Wow, isn't the weather beautiful?" Shimmy said as he walked home from cheder with his brother.

"Yeah, I told you that the low pressure front passing north of us would bring cooler temperatures and nice breezes," Yitzzy said.

"Well thank you Hashem for low pressure fronts," laughed Shimmy. "It's nice to have a break from the recent heat wave."

As the boys approached their house they noticed their nextdoor neighbor, Stevey Risnik, sitting on his front porch looking sad.

"Hi Stevey, is everything okay?" asked Shimmy.

"Hi Shimmy, hi Yitzzy," Stevey said glumly. "I just got home from school and the front door is locked. I don't think anyone is home."

"Oy, that's terrible!" said Yitzzy. "Why don't you come over and use our phone to call your mother?"

"That would be great!" said Stevey with a smile.

"Hi Mommy!" called Shimmy and Yitzzy as they walked into the house.

"Hi boys!" Mommy said with a smile, as she came out of the kitchen.

"Mommy, we told Stevey he could use our phone since he's locked out of his house."



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"Of course!" Mommy said with a smile. "Go ahead, the phone is right there."

A minute later Stevey hung up the phone with a frown.

"What's wrong, Stevey?" Mommy asked.

"My mother is stuck in traffic downtown," Stevey said. "Apparently there was a major accident and the road is completely closed because helicopters are landing on the highway to evacuate the injured people. She doesn't think she will be home for at least another hour."

"Oy, that sounds terrible!" Mommy said. "Why don't you join us for lunch - you can wait here until your mother comes home."

"Really?" Stevey said, surprised.

"Of course," smiled Mommy. "It would be our pleasure." - "Basya, Yaeli, lunch is ready!" Mommy called.

Stevy followed the Greenbaum children to the kitchen, where the table was set with a beautiful lunch.

"Why doesn't everyone go wash," Mommy suggested as she placed a steaming hot loaf of bread in the middle of the table.

"You guys wash for bread even during the week?" Stevey asked.

"Of course," replied Shimmy. "You don't wash when you eat bread?"

"We do on Shabbos. But during the week, we just hold the bread in a napkin so we don't have to wash. Why don't you guys do that?"

"Well," said Yitzy. "You're really only allowed to do that if you're somewhere where there is no water and you don't have the ability to wash. And besides, washing is a Mitzvah and we always want to do as many Mitzvos as we can!"

"Interesting," said Stevey.

Everyone washed and made Hamotzi, and started eating the delicious food Mommy had prepared.

"Who wants to thank Hashem first?" asked Mommy.

"Wait, what?" asked Stevey, confused.

"Oh, I'm sorry I should explain," Mommy said. "In our house, we go around the table and thank Hashem for something at each meal."

"I don't understand," said Stevey. "We already thanked Hashem when we made Hamotzi. And we're going to thank Him again when we bentch. Isn't that enough?"

"That's a great question," said Mommy kindly. "Let me ask you, do you know about the Mitzvah of Challah?"

"Of course!" said Stevey. "We eat challah every Shabbos!"

"No, I mean the Mitzvah of taking *challah*."

"You mean like when we buy it in the store?"

"No," said Mommy. "When we make bread, there is a Mitzvah to take off some of the dough. In the time of the Beis Hamikdash, that dough would be given to the Kohein."

"I thought Terumah was given to the Kohein," Stevey said, remembering what he had learned in Hebrew School.

"It is!" said Mommy. "But even though Terumah was taken off of the wheat, when we make bread, we have to take off yet another 'terumah'."

"Why are there two Mitzvos with the same food?" wondered Stevey.

"Not just two," said Mommy. "There is also Maaser, and Terumas Maaser, not to mention Leket, Shichichah, and Peiah. And of course, *brachos* before and after eating. Can you think of why we have so many Mitzvos with regards to food?"

Stevy shook his head.

"Because when we do Mitzvos we think about Hashem. And there is so much chessed that Hashem does in giving us delicious, nutritious food, that we must never stop thanking Him for providing us with bread and all of the other yummy things that we eat."

"So that's why you thank the Hashem at every meal," Stevey said, finally understanding.

"Exactly!" Mommy said with a smile.

"Well then," said Stevey. "I'd like to thank Hashem for giving me such wonderful neighbors who graciously invited me to their home for supper and taught me such an important lesson!"

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

The mitzvah of challah teaches us that Hashem wants to remind us constantly of his kindness.

It is the greatest happiness for us to constantly thank Him.



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