



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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Thank You for Walls

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Thank You for Walls

It was a beautiful spring day, but the Greenbaum family was inside, as were most families in the world, trying to stay safe from the coronavirus. Shimmy Greenbaum was in the living room, looking out the window at the empty park across the street. Behind him, his brother Yitzy was reading a book on the floor and his four-year-old sister Yaeli was dancing around with a spatula in her hand, singing “Pharaoh in pajamas in the middle of the night.”

“Shimmy!” called Totty. “Did you hear me calling you?”

Shimmy turned around. “Sorry, Totty, I was daydreaming. I just wish I could go outside and play. We’ve been stuck here for a million years already and I’m so sick of our house. I’m sick of the living room and the dining room and our boring games and books. I just want to go out and play with my friends.”

“Oy, I’m sorry to hear that,” Totty said. “I’m going out now for a few minutes to pick up our grocery order. Why don’t you come in the car with me and get some fresh air?”

A few minutes later, in the family’s car

“Shimmy,” said Totty, “I know you’re sad that we’re stuck at home but you should know that it’s not your surroundings that make you happy or sad — it’s your thoughts. You can think like this: ‘Isn’t it wonderful that we have a house that keeps us warm and comfortable and safe? Don’t you see what a brachah that is?’”

“What’s the big deal about a house?” said Shimmy. “It’s just walls.”

Totty started to answer, but just then he stopped at a red light and Shimmy noticed a scary-looking man sitting in an old refrigerator box. He was surrounded by a lot of cats and next to him was a shopping cart filled with empty soda cans. “Totty!” exclaimed Shimmy. “Look at that crazy man with all those cats. Does he live in that cardboard box?”

But before Totty could answer Shimmy's question, the light turned green and they pulled away into the pickup lane outside the supermarket where a worker began loading boxes into the back of their car. "Yes, Shimmy. That cardboard box is his 'house.' Sometimes, for a change of scenery, he spends the night on a bench in the park but either way he has no shower, no bathroom and not even a bed.

"Wow," said Shimmy, a startled look on his face. "That's sad, to have no house to live in."

The drive back home was mostly quiet, as Shimmy thought about what he had just seen. They pulled up into their driveway and began unloading the packages. As they carried them into the house, Totty turned to Shimmy and said, "Shimmy, do you understand what a gift Hashem gave you today by showing you that man and his cats?"

Shimmy looked horrified. "A gift?! It was scary and sad. How could that be a gift?"

Totty smiled. "You know, in this week's Parsha, Rav Avigdor Miller asks a similar question. Hashem says that when we would arrive in Eretz Canaan, He would "give tzora'as in the houses in our land." Now, Hashem chose the word 'v'nosati,' to 'give,' so it should sound like He's giving us a present, but actually when there's tzora'as



in the house it's a real tzorah! The whole house has to be emptied and the walls are broken down — it's not fun at all!

“But the answer is that when someone was being kicked out of his house, he was being taught a very important lesson that he wouldn't have known otherwise. When he finally came back to his home, he was so happy that he danced for joy. He realized that having a house is FUN!

“Boruch Hashem, we have a house to keep us dry and warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We should be dancing with thanks to Hashem over the fact that we have sinks and bathrooms and bathtubs to allow us to stay clean and fresh!

“So you see, Shimmy, by showing you that nebech man with his shopping cart and cardboard box, Hashem was giving you a gift. He was showing you how lucky you are to be living like a king in such luxury and comfort.”

Shimmy thought for a second and broke out into a wide smile. “How silly of me,” he said. “Thank you so much, Totty, for giving me a new way to look at things. And thank You to Hashem for giving me the gift of being able to see the refrigerator box man!”

As they brought the last of the groceries into the kitchen, Shimmy turned to Totty and said, “Totty, this may sound silly, but can we do a little dance to celebrate the wonderful gifts Hashem has given us in our home?”

“Silly?!” said Totty. “That's the smartest thing I heard all day!”

And so, Totty and Shimmy danced into the living room, singing their new “Thank You, Hashem” niggun.

“Totty, Shimmy,” said Yitzky. “Are you guys okay? What's going on?!”

“We're celebrating,” said Totty. “We're celebrating how lucky we are to have a beautiful, safe house to live in! Come join us and Shimmy will explain it all to you later.”

Wishing Everyone a Happy and Healthy Shabbos!

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