

Tetzaveh / תְּצַוֶּה

Smelling With Our Brains

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Rochel Leah sat on the front steps of her house with her friend Sorah Miriam. The girls had just come home from school and were happily chatting. A new branch of Stern's Bakery had just opened next door and the whole block smelled amazing. Even the sight of the delicious cakes, cookies, and danishes in the store window had their mouths watering.

Just then the door to the bakery opened and a man walked out carrying a bag bursting with freshly baked bread. The smell from both the bread and the cakes inside the store seemed to waft right under the noses of the two girls.

"Oh that smells amazing!" gushed Rochel Leah.

"Yes!" Sorah Miriam cried out. "It makes me want to just run inside, grab a cookie and stuff it right into my mouth!"

"Sorah Miriam!" said Rochel Leah, shocked. "A Bas Yisroel shouldn't talk like that!"

Just then, the girls were interrupted by their neighbor, Rebbetzin Kalatsky, who was walking towards them.

"Ah! What an amazing smell!" the Rebbetzin exclaimed.

"Rebbetzin Kalatsky," said Rochel Leah, "do you also like the smells from the bakery?"



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“Oh yes, it’s wonderful,” answered the Rebbetzin, “but that’s not what I was talking about. I was talking about you girls.”

Rochel Leah and Sorah Miriam looked at each other. Nobody had ever complimented them on how they smelled before.

Rebbetzin Kalatsky chuckled at the girls’ confused expressions. “No girls,” she explained. “I wasn’t referring to how you smell, but to what Rochel Leah just said.”

“You can smell words?” asked Rochel Leah. “Is that something we’ll be able to do when we get older too?”

“You are able to do it right now!” smiled the Rebbetzin. “But you need to use your head instead of your nose. You see, hearing such gorgeous words coming out of your mouth when you said ‘a Bas Yisroel shouldn’t talk like that’ just as I was passing the bakery reminded me of how beautiful Klal Yisroel is!”

“What did the bakery have to do with it?” both girls asked together.

“Well you see,” said Rebbetzin Kalatsky, “It reminded me of a shiur I heard from Rav Avigdor Miller many years ago. He was talking about the Ketores in the Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash. Why was it so important to have sweet smelling incense burning in the holiest place in the world? And he says it was to remind us that *ruchniyus* and *kedusha* is what smells good in the world! The parsha of the Ketores teaches us that Torah and Mitzvos are the most beautiful things in the world and *frumme Yidden* who act in the ways of Hashem are the most beautiful people in the world.

“You said to your friend ‘a Bas Yisroel shouldn’t talk like that’. Ah! How beautiful are *Bnos Yisroel*, who say such things. Only in the *Am Hakadosh* do children talk in a special way such as that.”

Rochel Leah and Sorah Miriam looked at each other and smiled as the Rebbetzin continued.

“But we don’t need a bakery nearby to appreciate the beautiful smell of *Klal Yisroel*. Girls, why don’t you try smelling with your heads right now the beautiful scents of *Klal Yisroel*?”

Rochel Leah looked down the road and saw two *yeshiva bochurim* talking loudly in learning. “Ah! What a beautiful smell!” she said.

A man ran into the shul across the street to catch *Mincha*. “Mmm, delicious!” Sorah Miriam exclaimed.

“Ah!” said Rebbetzin Kalatsky. “Just listening to you girls is making *Klal Yisroel* smell sweeter and sweeter to me! I have to go now! Have a wonderful rest of the day!”

The girls said goodbye to the Rebbetzin, but continued looking for things to help them appreciate the exquisite smells of *Klal Yisroel*. A man giving *tzedakah*, a boy helping his older neighbor carry his groceries inside, a truck driving by delivering *cholov Yisroel* milk.

“Mmm, delicious!” said Rochel Leah.

“Ah... *geshmak*!” Sorah Miriam responded.

“Yummy yum yum!” Rochel Leah exclaimed.

Just then, Totty walked up to the house. “Hi girls,” he said warmly. “Are you also enjoying the smells of the bakery?”

“We are,” said Rochel Leah, jumping up for her father. “But that’s not what we’re talking about. We’re smelling *Klal Yisroel* with our brains!”

“What?” asked Totty, confused.

“Let me explain,” said Rochel Leah, as she opened the front door for Totty and they walked inside together...

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!



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