

שמיני / Shemini

Dog Food Mishloach Manos

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Shimmy went into the kitchen where all of the remaining mishloach manos packages were piled on the table. Wow, there were so many yummy things to choose from! There were taffies and chocolates, hamentashen and rugelach, and what looked like fifty different types of cookies! What should he pick?

Shimmy's eyes were drawn to one very fancy mishloach package - this one hadn't been opened yet! Shimmy peeled off the cellophane - inside was a gooey homemade kokosh cake oozing with chocolate - YUM!

Just then, little Yaeli walked in holding a big box. "Hi Shimmy!" she said. "Want some siwial?"

Shimmy looked at the box. "Yaeli!" he exclaimed, wrinkling his nose in disgust. "That's not cereal, that's dog food! Where did you find that?"

"Next to the stweet!" Yaeli replied proudly.

"Uch, that's disgusting!" Shimmy said, reaching for the box. "Give me that!"

"No! It's MY siwial!" Yaeli protested, jerking the box away. A few bits of dog food popped out of the bag and flew onto the kitchen table, right as Totty walked into the kitchen.



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“Totty,” said Shimmy, holding his nose. “Yaeli is walking around with dog food!”

Totty reached down, took the box from Yaeli, and looked at it. “Well at least it has a hechsher,” he said with a laugh, pointing at the kashrus label on the box before throwing it into the garbage and handing her an old spatula to play with instead.

Relieved, Shimmy turned back to the kokesh cake in his hand.

“Wait, Shimmy,” said Totty. “That mishloach manos didn’t come with a card or say who it’s from. So we can’t eat it - we don’t know who sent it or what the kashrus is.”

“But Totty,” protested Shimmy. “It’s probably fine. I mean who would make **kokosh cake** with non-kosher ingredients? It’s such a Jewish food! I’m sure it’s kosher!”

“Shimmy,” said Totty. “I know it looks delicious, but would you want to *chas veshalom* take a chance on eating something that Hashem doesn’t want you to eat? I agree that it’s probably kosher, but why don’t you choose something from items over there that have a good hechsher printed on them?”

Shimmy looked where Totty was pointing. “Blech! Ew! No way! That’s where the dog food spilled!”

“Oh Shimmy,” said Totty looking closely over the table. “I don’t see any pieces of dog food anywhere here. They all went onto the floor. And look - this strawberry-vanilla pudding with chocolate-caramel sprinkles looks absolutely delicious!”

“I don’t care,” Shimmy answered. “If there’s even a chance that there was the tiniest piece of dog food in something, I’m not touching it, no matter how good it looks or tastes. That’s what dogs eat!”

Shimmy continued, “my Rebbi told us that Hashem offered Adam Harishon that humans could eat and enjoy grass - that we would never have to work for food since we could just go outside and eat what grows wild in the fields. And Adam Harishon said no, because we’re not animals - we’re a tzelem Elokim - it’s disgusting for us to eat the same thing that animals eat.”

“Ah,” said Totty. “And what about this cake of questionable kashrus in your hand? The same way that humans are better than animals, Yidden are better than humans. We are *bonei melochim* - we are the sons of the King. We eat royal food. We don’t eat the same food as the rest of the world. Other people can eat slimy oysters or pig meat and just shove it into their mouths without a *brocha*. But we Yidden are extra careful when we eat. We never put something in our mouths without first thanking Hashem for it and we always make sure we know where it came from and that there is no question that it is good for our Neshama.

“You know, I was once at the airport and I saw all of these people walking up to a food stand, buying food, and just eating it. No *brocha*, no questions about what was in it, just eating without thinking. How can a person just put something into his body without knowing where it came from and without giving thanks to the One who created the food? At that moment, as I unwrapped the tuna fish sandwich that Mommy packed for me, I was so thankful to be a Yid - someone who lives and eats like royalty.”

Shimmy thought about what Totty said. Then he placed the kokosh cake back in the bag and instead chose a bag of cookies with a clear hechsher and no signs of dog food on it.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!



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