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WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Pleasure and Shabbos

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Part I. Bread of Holiness

The Holy Bakery

In this week's *sedrah* the Am Yisroel is commanded by Hakodosh Boruch Hu to bake twelve loaves of bread and to display them on a golden table in the Beis Hamikdash: וְלִקְחֵתְּ סֹלֶת וְאָפִיתָ אֹתָהּ שֶׁתִּיִּם עֶשְׂרֵה חֲלוֹת – You should take fine wheat flour and bake it into twelve loaves ... and you should set them up in two stacks, six in each stack, on the pure table, before Hashem (Emor 24:5-6).

Now, there's a question here because we're talking about the holiest place on earth now, the

place where the Shechina resides; it's the place where every act, every procedure, was *kodesh kodoshim* and here the Am Yisroel were commanded, by means of their representatives, the *kohanim*, to be bakers! Not to meditate in the words of the Mesillas Yesharim or Chovos Halevavos but to bake twelve loaves of bread and to leave them sitting on the table all week long.

Now I must tell you beforehand, I must apologize because the Rambam says he doesn't understand the idea of the *shulchan* with *lechem hapanim*. A table with bread from which the *kohanim* eat on Shabbos? He says he has no explanation (Moreh Nevuchim 3:45). The Rambam says he doesn't know and here, in a little synagogue in Flatbush, a nobody is going to come along and give an explanation? It's uncomfortable but what can I do? What can I do – I can't help myself.

Don't Be a Horse

And so we'll say as follows: it's noteworthy that these loaves are the sole instance of an offering in the Sanctuary which is kept for display. It's true that the bread was eaten on Shabbos, but that was only the culmination of a week-long exhibition. And all week long, whatever *avodah* the *kohen* was busy with, every time he passed by he took note of the bread being showcased on the golden table. And therefore it is obvious that the function of this *avodah* is to emphasize the supreme importance of bread.

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Now, it could be that we don't see what's so special – it's only bread after all. But that's exactly the point! We're learning now that it's *not* just bread – it was *kodesh kodoshim*, it was *holy bread*. And you know why it's so holy? Because it's teaching us *daas*; it's giving us a mind. Bread is one of the great testimonies to the Creator's wisdom and the *lechem hapanim* is a symbol that the function of bread is to make us aware of Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

Now don't make any mistake about this; it's plain common sense what I'm telling you now only that it requires some thought. Because if you look at a piece of bread like a horse looks at bread, you'll have the mind of a horse. But if you learn how to look at bread, you'll begin gaining a Torah mind.

How are you supposed to look at bread? Well, if you ever admired a beautiful diamond and wondered at the texture, the sparkle, the beauty of it, you should know that it's *nothing at all* compared to a piece of bread. Bread! Bread is unequaled in creation; there is *nothing* in the whole universe like it. Except your brain – you'll agree that your brain is superior. But bread is a miracle! Not one miracle – it's miracles upon miracles.

### Difficult for G-d

You know, there's a statement in the Gemara (Pesachim 118a) that קָשִׁין מְזוֹנוֹתַי שֶׁל אָדָם בְּקִרְיַעַת יָם וּדְגָיָם, a man's *mezonos*, his food, is as difficult as tearing apart the Yam Suf. And it's a *maamar* that is misunderstood by everybody because when you ask a person, "How is business?" so if he knows a little Gemara he replies with this statement. "It's not easy; it's *k'kriyas Yam Suf*."

But actually that's not true at all because most people do get their food; look around and you see that most people are eating. Unless they're trying to reduce, everybody is gaining weight. But let them try to split the Yam Suf.

So you must say that this statement means something else. It means that it's more difficult for

*Hashem* – for Hashem to give you food, it's more difficult than opening up the Yam Suf.

### No Exaggerations

Now, we know of course nothing is difficult for Him but it means that when it comes to bread there are even bigger miracles, more miracles, than took place at the Yam Suf. And since we know עַל הַיָּם לָקוּ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמְאַתָּים מִכוֹת, that 250 *nissim* took place on Yam Suf so it means there are at least 250 miracles when you eat bread. When bread is produced, it's a succession of hundreds of miracles.

Now when I say hundreds, I'm understating it. The truth is that the number is so remarkable that you won't believe me. "A *guzma*," you'll say, "He's just exaggerating." But the plain truth is that *millions* of details need to cooperate to make bread. I won't be able to take up the time now and describe for you all the *nissim* taking place in the making of food – first of all, I know very little; and even if I would tell you the little I do know we would never be able to leave this place; you'd never go home.

### Out of Thin Air

Bread comes out of nowhere every day. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of bread materialize out of the atmosphere every day. Don't think it comes out of the earth. The *aretz* gives only a tiny contribution to the *lechem*. We say הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ because the roots of the wheat are in the earth but actually only a *tiny part* comes from the earth; the majority comes from the air. It's *mavhil*; it's just unbelievable. If you ever studied any science, you'll know that bread comes out of nowhere. You hear that? Bread is air! You have to become excited when you hear that!

How does air become bread? It's a *nes*! How did the starch come about? How did the plant produce starch? It's using the sunlight. The sun is sending its rays from 93 million miles away to the plant and the plant has a little chlorophyll –

another *nes* – a material that is able to take the sunlight and produce starch.

But sunlight is not enough. To make bread you need some carbon dioxide too – it's part of the recipe. So the plant takes in some carbon dioxide from the air and it combines with the sunshine and gets to work making starch.

Now, carbon dioxide is only three parts out of ten thousand in the air. And the plant is standing here sucking the carbon dioxide from the air around it. In a minute, it has exhausted all the carbon dioxide. So the plant should die. No! Hakodosh Boruch Hu made the wind. **אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְעוֹלָם בְּלֹא רוּחוֹת** – *Without the winds, the world couldn't exist* (Taanis 3b). The wind keeps the air moving, so as the plant exhausts the carbon dioxide from the air around it, the wind pushes some new air into place and the air keeps on moving – *nissei nissim*.

### **Eating a Miracle**

And so, a little bit of water and carbon dioxide, some sunlight and chlorophyll, and the little wheat plant gets busy combining them and producing starch. That starch is the wheat; that's the bread. That's *cheilev chitah* – that's the fat of the wheat. And so if you're holding a piece of bread you have to know that you have in your hand a piece of miracle.

That's why our Sages decreed that **אֵין זוֹרְקִין אֶת הַפֶּת** – *you can't throw bread* (Brachos 50a). *Derech erez!* Let's say your son says, "Abba, throw me a piece of *challah* please." "Oh no," you say, "I don't play catch with *challah*. *Challah* is a *nes*." Would you throw let's say the *urim v'tumim*?! Imagine the Kohen Gadol said to you, "Hand me the *urim v'turim* please," would you throw it? You would take it with the biggest *derech erez* when you hand it over to him.

You have to be polite with bread. It's Hakodosh Boruch Hu's miracle. The *urim v'tumim* is such a rare miracle, but bread is no less. The truth is it's bigger! The piece of bread is more *nissim* than the

*urim v'tumim* – more *nissim*! It's a life-giving product that's created from sunshine combined with a little carbon dioxide and water. Not that the sunshine helps the food come into existence; *the sunshine becomes part of the food*. You're eating sunshine and carbon dioxide when you eat bread. That's what it is.

### **G-dly Wisdom**

Now, the next time you're nice and hungry, why don't you go outside and see what you can do. You have everything you need after all; there's plenty of air and carbon dioxide and earth and sunshine. You couldn't do a thing! Not only you. Nobody in the world can do it. Even the biggest chemical company can't make bread; it's such a *nes* that the greatest chemical geniuses at DuPont can't duplicate it. They'd become millionaires with the patent.

Now, that's how a *kohen* was thinking when he saw the *lechem hapanim*. He's busy with the *avodah*; he's walking past the open doors of the *heichal* carrying *dam* of the *korban* or whatever else he might be doing and out of the corner of his eye he sees the *lechem hapanim*; "Ooh wah! *Lechem!* Loaves of bread on a golden table!" And he's reminded to think about these things.

Other things too. He's thinking about the wheat seed. The farmer puts a wheat seed into the ground and it rots away and it produces a root and a stem. The seed rots away and a root and a stem begin growing out. How does such a thing happen? And the root always grows down and the stem always up. Never the opposite. No matter how you put the seed it never happens that the root goes up and the stem down. It's a miracle, *chochmas Hashem*.

### **The Library and The Factory**

Now, I'm just talking kindergarten talk now because it's a million times more complicated than that; in that little seed after all, is all of the machinery needed to make wheat plants. Only it's

so minute, so microscopic, that you don't realize what's doing. There's marvelous machinery there – it's like a big factory a block long – and it's all concealed in the cells of that seed.

Not only machinery but all of the information, all the instructions needed to make the bread are there. If you would try to write it out in books, the biggest library in the world will not have enough books to record all the information. They try; they've written books but they can't go through the whole subject. The real library, you know where it's written? It's written on the helix of the DNA molecule in each seed. Instructions in the millions for how to produce wheat. And each bit of information is precisely numbered to step forward in sequence – not a second before it's needed and not a second too late – in the right moment it comes in and gives this bit of information.

Now, all of that and much much more was on display in the Beis Hamikdash at all times. It says לָחֶם פָּנִים לְפָנֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. *Tomid* means it's on the table without even the slightest interruption. Even when the *kohanim* come on Shabbos to remove the bread, as they're taking off the old bread, they're already pushing on the new bread; the display of Hashem's wisdom shouldn't go lost even for a second.

That's the lesson of the *lechem hapanim*, the twelve loaves of bread that were on display on that golden table. It's so that we should know how to look at bread; we're training ourselves to make use of the bread that we see all the time and make sure to engrave the lessons of the *chochmas Hashem* on our minds – it means that the bread is for the purpose of creating our minds.

## Part II. Bread of Knowledge

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### Get Excited

Now, everything that was done in the Beis Hamikdash was a lesson – what took place there

was only a hint, a *mashal*, for the thoughts that we're expected to have in our heads; all of the procedures that we read about in the Torah symbolize something important that we're expected to study. And therefore, when we talk about the *lechem hapanim*, let's keep in mind that it's *mechayev* us; that bread that was displayed on a golden table obligates us to always keep in our minds the importance of bread.

It means that the next time you see a piece of bread on your table, you have to be excited about it. "Ooh wah! I'm looking now at *maaseh nissim*. Kriyas Yam Suf is child's play compared to bread! This is remarkable!"

"Oh," you'll tell me, "but how can I be excited? I see it every day." So Hashem says, "Is that My fault? I'm giving it to you every day, therefore you shouldn't be excited? You want Me to give it to you once in ten years? So learn to be excited!" Just like the *kohanim* were expected to think about it and not get used to it, you also have to learn to be excited about a piece of bread.

### An Italian Education

Let's say you pass by a bakery. You look in the window and you see loaves of bread. Don't just take a quick look and walk further. Stop and look. Say, "Isn't that wonderful?!" Where does bread come from? Say it with your mouth. "It's a miracle! Nobody can make bread out of nothing. *Hamotzi* – He is the One who can bring forth bread from the earth!"

Now, of course if you're an ordinary person so you're too much of a wise guy to do that. To stop and look in the window and think about the miracle of bread?! But we're talking now to people – men and women, boys and girls – who want to make something out of themselves.

Years ago I used to wait for a bus at a certain corner and there was an Italian bakery on that corner. And I would stand there looking in the window while I was waiting. I saw there twenty

kinds of bread – all kinds of bread, in different shapes and sizes. And I studied them. I was amazed! Of course, I couldn't eat their bread but it was remarkable to see. I was looking through the big glass window and I was *misbonein*. And I did it for a long time because I had to wait there on the corner every day for the bus. It was an education for me. If you pass by a window like that, you should utilize it.

### **Fill Your Stomach**

But the truth is that all this is just an introduction to the subject for tonight. It's an important introduction but I want to talk to you now about something that's even more fun than looking at bread. Because what happened with that *lechem hapanim*? What did they do with the bread at the end of the week, when Shabbos came? Did they take the loaves and put them on the *mizbeach* and burn them up to Hashem as a symbol of gratitude?

No, no, that's not what was done. Every Shabbos the bread was taken off the table and distributed among the *kohanim* to be eaten. In order to complete the lesson of the *lechem hapanim* that were on display all week long, the *kohanim* got busy chewing and filling their stomachs.

Now, that needs an explanation because it seems so crude, so distasteful. Here we're talking about *daas*, about filling our minds with wisdom and suddenly we're cheapening the whole subject by talking about filling our stomachs instead.

### **Learn From the Pros**

The answer is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is wiser than us. And He knows that the best way to learn is when you take all of your thinking, all of your ideals and ideas, and you chew on them. Don't deceive yourself; thinking alone is not enough. It's good but it's not good enough however. Do you know when ideas make an impression on a person? When you sit down to eat. Thinking is excellent, absolutely, but there's nothing like eating when it

comes to making an impression on the mind of a person.

In business, if you want to make a big sale so if you're an amateur salesmen you think that the best way is to take out a big prospectus describing your product, how good it is; and you show the customer all the benefits of your product, how it's better than your competitor's product. Wonderful! Very good! But he's falling asleep; he's yawning.

If you're a good salesman what do you do? You take him to a restaurant and sit down to a big lunch. And while he's eating, that's when you get busy plying your trade; that's when you feed ideas into his head. And then when you're at the end of the meal and you see that he's full – he's burping already – that's the time to sell your product. That's when you ask him, "You want to buy my product?" And he'll give you an order.

And that's why at the end of the week, when Shabbos came, the *kohanim* got busy ingesting all these ideas they thought about all week long. All of the *daas* that was on display all week was now going to be engraved even deeper into their minds. They chewed on the *lechem* and were thinking, "Ahh! Delicious! It's true! All those ideas I was thinking about all week taste wonderful!" That's how the *kohen* ate the *lechem hapanim*; he was ingesting the lessons it taught him all week.

### **Information Versus Knowledge**

Now before we proceed we should take a little time to explain this term *da'as*; and we should be sure to keep it in mind during the entire hour because it's crucial for understanding our subject. *Da'as* does not refer to information in the sense that people usually understand it. *Chochmah* is 'information' but *da'as* means 'clarity of information'.

All the things we learn with our minds, that's not the chief accomplishment of life, oh no. Many people understand and know and nevertheless have never absorbed, have never taken into their inner consciousness the real truths of life. דעה

דַּעַת הַחִכְמָה לְנַפְשְׁךָ means to know the wisdom, to be *margish* it, to feel it.

I always give the same example. A mother is standing in her kitchen, and the little boy comes in and starts fooling around. So the mother yells at him, “Don’t touch the stove! It’s hot; you’ll get a burn. It hurts!” Now, a little boy knows that his mother is an Encyclopedia Britannica. He believes his mother knows everything and he believes *be’emunah sheleimah* that it hurts.

But what does he do? He puts his finger on the hot stove and burns his finger. “Ow, Mommy! It hurts!” Oh, now he learned another form of knowledge! Before it was intellectual knowledge but now he knows sensory knowledge. His mother told him it burns; yes, he believed that. That’s called *yedias haseichel*. But now that his finger was burned by the fire, he felt it with his senses; that’s called *yedias hachush*, sensory knowledge, and that’s a new kind of knowledge entirely. There’s no comparison between them. And when it comes to knowledge of Hashem, it’s not enough *yedias haseichel*; you have to have *yedias hachush*.

### **Shabbos: A Day of Daas**

On Shabbos we sing a song ‘*Deror Yikra*’ and when we study that song, we see that it begins with the theme of proclaiming leisure. *Deror* means leisure, freedom from physical obligations. Now, we don’t have time right now to study all the stanzas of that song but if you look there you’ll see that it’s describing all types of freedom that our nation will merit in the future, on the *Yom Shekulo Shabbos*.

But the last stanza of the song is what we’re going to talk about now, our subject. It’s talking about Shabbos and it says, דַּעַת הַחִכְמָה לְנַפְשְׁךָ – *Know wisdom for your soul*, וְהָיָא כְּתֹר לְרֵאשִׁיךָ – *and it will be a crown upon your head*. A crown in the next world means the *daas* you acquired in this world. The more you gain a Torah mind in this world, the more prepared you are for the happiness of *Olam Habo*,

and therefore the *zemer* says “get busy knowing wisdom for your soul, so that it should be a crown upon your head.”

Now, you have to know that the end of that stanza is an explanation of the first words: How will you know wisdom for yourself? How will you acquire the wisdom that will be a crown on your head in *Olam Habo*? שְׂמֹר שַׁבָּת קְדָשְׁךָ – *by keeping Shabbos properly*.

### **More Than Shomer Shabbos**

Now it doesn’t mean merely to be a *shomer shabbos* – of course that in itself is extremely valuable but that’s not enough if you want to acquire a crown for yourself. *Shemor Shabbos kodshecha* means to keep it the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended. And He intended Shabbos as one of the great opportunities to acquire a mind in this world. What’s the purpose of Shabbos? The purpose of Shabbos is to acquire *daas*!

We’re learning something new about Shabbos now. It’s the day that’s set aside for creating a Torah mind. Of course, every day is good for that; on Wednesday you can also accomplish a lot; but which day is the best day of the week for creating a mind? No question about it, it’s Shabbos. That’s what the day of leisure is all about – we rest from *melacha* so that we can be free to acquire *daas*; to fulfill the words of that song: דַּעַת הַחִכְמָה לְנַפְשְׁךָ – *Teach yourself daas*, וְהָיָא כְּתֹר לְרֵאשִׁיךָ – *and that will be your crown in the Next World*.

### **The Day That Teaches Daas**

And that’s the purpose of Shabbos. You didn’t know that, did you? Shabbos is a day of leisure, a day of *deror yikra*, not that you should put on your pajamas and climb into bed and sleep all afternoon. It’s so that you can be free to get busy working to create a mind. Shabbos you have more time; *deror yikra*, you’re at leisure which means you have the opportunity to think about Hashem and acquire *daas*.

And what's the best way to do that? What's the best way to acquire the sensory knowledge of Hashem's wisdom and kindness in this world? By means of *oneg*! Not only are we going to look at the *challah*; we're going to eat it! And so just like the *kohanim* in the Beis Hamikdash ingested all of the great ideas on Shabbos, we do the same thing. Shabbos is a Day of Daas and so we sit down to a nice luscious repast for that purpose.

Now that, however, requires eating in a certain manner. Because most people fulfill the eating, and there's no question that it's a mitzvah, but they're losing out on the great benefits. Because the greatness is not in the eating; it's in the *daas* you acquire by means of eating. The food is going down to your stomach but at the same time the *daas* is going into your brain. That's the real way to eat.

## Part III. Bread of Shabbos

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### Always Eating

And that brings us to the great subject of eating on Shabbos. You know, some people call *frum* Jews "kishkeh Jews" – it means intestinal Jews – because we're always eating. But the truth is, it's very important. Because we're here in this world, to acquire a mind, and one of the best ways of getting a mind is by means of your stomach.

It means that a Jew has to learn how to eat on Shabbos; it's a whole Torah and it takes some practice. The truth is you have to know how to eat on the weekdays too – it's an important subject that we'll speak about one day, *bli neder*, but on Shabbos surely you have to know how to eat.

That's why when you sit down at the table on Shabbos and you see the *challos* on display, you should know that it's telling you that it's time to get to work. When you're sitting at the *seudah*, that's the work you have to do on Shabbos. That's your *melacha* on Shabbos.

And therefore it's a good idea to imitate the *kohanim* and take note of the *challah* on the table. Don't just dive into the food. Make sure to be prepared, to think thoughts beforehand.

### Something From Nothing

You sit down and you're waiting for everyone; so you take a peek at the *challah*. They're so beautiful, the *challos*; you should compliment the *baalebuste* by the way. If she baked them let her know how beautiful they are. If she didn't bake them, don't say anything. But either way, you're looking at the *challos* and admiring them. They're such an exquisite display of the *chochmas Hashem* it's a shame we have to eat them.

But the truth is it's not a shame at all because it's by means of eating that the lessons will go down. It's the lessons that you want to digest; the food is merely the way you're going to achieve that. That's the best way to do it!

Now we can't expect that you'll begin eating like a *kohen* right away. It takes practice. So this Shabbos you'll start with the first bite of *challah*. The very first bite, you're eating to celebrate *brias haolam yesh meiayin*, that Hashem made this world and everything in it out of nothing. That's what Shabbos celebrates, the creation of the world from nothing; and that's one of the reasons we eat *challah*.

So while you're chewing, you're thinking about how this *challah* came from almost nothing at all and you remind yourself that really the whole world is *ayin*; it's nothing at all. Just like this bread came from nothing, from a little air and sunshine, that's how the world was created. But at Creation it was *really* nothing; no sunshine, no air, no nothing.

### The First Lesson

Did you ever hear of such a thing, to make things out of nothing?! בְּרַבֵּר הַשָּׁמַיִם נִעָשׂוּ! just by the word of Hashem the heavens came into existence, וּבְרֹוַח פִּי כָּל צְבָאָם. The sun, the moon, the winds, the rain, the soil, the stars, whatever you

see, all are nothing but the *devar Hashem*. That's called *ayin*. Hashem willed it into existence.

That's the first and most obvious of all the lessons of Shabbos, that בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים; Hashem made the world out of nothing. Now this is something that has to be absorbed in our minds. It's easy to say it, to talk about it, to think about it, but that's only *chochma* and we want more than that; we want דְּעָה הַכְּמָה לְנַפְשֵׁךָ, we want to transform that wisdom into *deah*, into real knowledge. We want to accustom ourselves that whatever you see in the world, it's *devar Hashem*. And it needs a great deal of training until we get into that mood.

### **Eating Books**

And so, imagine the mother of the house would come in from the kitchen carrying a tray of *chumashim* for the Shabbos *seudah*. Everyone would get a *chumash* and open up to Bereishis and we'd start reading about Creation, that would be the meal. Wonderful! But that's not enough. We have to digest the ideas with our bodies too! Because it could be that your mind is enjoying it but your body is not so interested. We want our bodies to participate too; I want my mind and my body to unite in understanding this great concept. And so I sit my body down at the *seudah* and now it's going to enjoy; my body is going to work together with my mind.

So you're chewing on the *challah* and you're thinking. "Ah! *Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*, the miracle of the production of food! And you're thinking of *yesh mei'ayin*. "I'm eating the Word of Hashem." Not only did it come from nothing but it's going to change again. You're chewing and you're thinking about how as soon as your teeth get to work, immediately the starch begins converting into sugars. By means of the enzymes in your saliva the starch turns into sugars in your mouth.

And once you swallow the bread, then begins the great adventure. It goes down into your gut and it's propelled along the digestive tract by *nissei*

*nissim*; they give it a name – peristalsis – but a name doesn't change the fact that it's moving along with millions and millions of miracles.

### **You Are What You Eat**

Even if you knew all the sciences of today, you cannot enumerate a small fraction of the wonders that are taking place with that piece of bread as it travels through your system. Once it gets inside of you, it starts going through thousands of transformations.

It's breaking down into all the various components that are then reassembled again into the materials needed by your organs; your kidneys need some things, your heart other things. Your eyes, your toes, your scalp; there are so many different places the bread has to go. And each destination needs something else. And so by means of miracles the bread is replacing the used up materials that your organs, your body, lost by your working, by your using them.

Miracles upon miracles are taking place now. If you can explain to me, without writing a whole library of books, how bread becomes eyes. Bread becomes eyes! This bread that came from nothing, and now it's making me. You have to think about that while you're eating. Your eyes are the result of what you eat. Your skin, your heart, your brain, your blood. Everything is now revitalized.

You're not the same person today that you were yesterday because your materials have been broken down and carried off in the waste or breathed out by your lungs. Every day you're a new man. Your shape is the same. You have the same sized nose, the same lips. That's the plan of Hakadosh Baruch Hu you shouldn't get lost, that people should continue to recognize you. But the truth is you're not the same as you were last week. You're new material! The food that you ate changed you. You are the bread you ate. It means that sunshine became *challah* and then the *challah* became your eyes! *Nissei nissim!*

## Watery Soup

Not only the *challah*. The soup and the chicken too. When your wife serves the chicken soup – number one is you say thank you, that's the first thing you think about. But then you talk to the children. "You know that this soup is all water? Isn't water a *nes*? What is water? Water is hydrogen and oxygen. That's all it is. Try to drink hydrogen and oxygen. You'll still be thirsty. But Hakodosh Boruch Hu makes a *nes*. They come together and it becomes water."

Just think about that when you eat the soup. It's a miracle! Because that soup, that water, becomes you! Two gases combined together that made this life-saving elixir that gives you *koach*. It causes your blood to run inside of your veins. It makes your eyes sparkle. It's you. You're 80% water.

And the chicken. Why do we eat chicken? Of course, we eat it because it tastes good. But while we're enjoying it, we have to learn the lesson of the chicken. When you sit down to eat the chicken so the father says to his children, "Children, we're going to eat chicken now! A very important part of the *seudah*."

"Who cares? It's just chicken," they say.

## Corny Chicken

"No," you say, "it's not just chicken." And you explain to them that chicken is also nothing but *devar Hashem*. What is a chicken? A chicken eats chicken corn and chicken corn is not meat. It's only the *devar Hashem* that makes chicken corn turn into chicken meat. How can a vegetable turn into proteins? The chicken is protein. Chicken corn is not protein. The answer is it's the *devar Hashem*. He made a machine, a chicken, that's capable of taking carbohydrates and manufacturing from it protein.

Today we know that in order to transform something into a protein, you need one thousand steps of different nucleotides. Each one has to be

exactly tailored to a certain formula and they follow in sequence. A thousand steps just in one little process. It means that chicken is a *nes*! It's the *devar Hashem*.

That's the way to sit at the Shabbos table; you're thinking about these things. You sit around the table, you and your wife and your children and you're eating the *yesh mei'ayin*.

## You Are Nothing

But actually you are also *yesh mei'ayin*! You and your children are *yesh mei'ayin*! There's nothing in the world except Hakodosh Boruch Hu. *Hashem Elokim emes*, the Rambam (Yesodei Hatorah 1:4) says it's the only *emes* that exists. Only He is the *emes*. He's the only truth there is. Everything else is nothing but His will. So we are only His will and our children are His will and our food is His will. And therefore the whole world is demonstrated now to be nothing but a sign of the presence of the Borei.

Now, it could be after a while your wife and children get tired of hearing it. Keep talking anyhow. It goes in, it goes in. Little by little it goes in. And most importantly, it goes into you. Talk to yourself constantly, over and over again, all your life, and the more you review it, the more you attain *chochmah lenafshecha*, you get more Knowledge.

Now suppose someone is not capable of such intellectual pursuits. Let's say the woman of the house who is busy raising a big family and she works so much Erev Shabbos that she's sitting at the table and falling asleep while the husband is dilating about proteins and *yesh mei'ayin*. Should we say that she is losing out? She is not fulfilling the purpose of Shabbos?

There's no such thing. **אין הקב"ה מקפח שׁכר כָּל בְּרִיָּה** – Hakodosh Boruch Hu does not deny anyone his reward (Bava Kamma 38b). And therefore I'm not saying if a person doesn't think these thoughts that he's not fulfilling his duty as a Jew. As long as

he's *shomer Shabbos*, keeps all *dikdukei mitzvos*, very good. But there's no question that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is waiting for people who will be exceptional. As much as possible we have to become thinking people, people who are fulfilling the words **דַּעַה חִכְמָה לְנַפְשֶׁךָ**.

If a person keeps Shabbos in this sense then his reward is going to be so much greater than the person who kept the Torah but did not gain *deah*. When a person has gained the ability to understand the great truths of the *briah* then that same reward that others get will be to him multiplied immeasurably. And by that means, *vehi kesser leroshecha*, it's a crown on your head and with that crown, after 120 years, you'll sit in Gan Eden and be *neheneh miziv hashechinah*. If you do that, that's the way to live.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

#### LET'S GET PRACTICAL

##### Learning From the Showbread

This week I will *bli neder* find ten seconds every day to stop and pay attention to any display of bread that I come across in order to think about some of the manifold miracles involved in the creation of bread.

And then on Shabbos I will use the opportunity of the first bite of *challah* to review what I thought about during the week and to remind myself that the miracle of the creation of bread from nothing is a reminder of the first creation ever, when Hashem created the world from nothing.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

**What does it mean that the *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva were not נוהג כבוד זה לזה, that they didn't treat each other with respect?**

A:

We have to understand that our concept of *kavod* and the Gemara's concept of *kavod* is ברחוק מזרח ממערב, they're as far apart from each other as east is from west. What we are נוהג כבוד זה לזה in the politest society of today, is not up to par with *kavod* in the eyes of the Torah. And therefore the *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva are blamed only because they weren't *good enough*. And that's the plain truth. It's only that they should have been more respectful and more appreciative of each other.

But don't get any idea in your head that there is any place today where they are as polite and as considerate and as thoughtful as Rabbi Akiva's *talmidim* were to each other. Only that it wasn't good enough.

It's not good enough for great men. Like it says (Tehillim 50:3) וסביביו נשערה מאד - All around Him it is extremely turbulent. All around Hashem, the closer you get to Him, the more stormy it is. It's stormy close to Hashem! When you're close to Hashem you have to watch yourself. On that *possuk* the Gemara says: מלמד שהקודש ברוך הוא מוקרק עם חסיריו כחוט השערה - With those who are close to Him, Hakodosh Boruch Hu insists on correctness even to a hairsbreadth (Yevamos 121b). So that's why it's dangerous to be good. It's dangerous to be great because the bigger you are the better you have to be. And these men who were close to Rabbi Akiva were expected to be much better.

But don't make any error and think that they were rough or impolite to each other in the sense that people think of today.

TAPE # 215 (April 1978)