

# The Golden Cake

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## Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings  
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

## Junior

“Hi, ma! I’m home!” called Shimmy as he walked in the front door. There was no answer. “Hello?” he said, tentatively.

Looking into the living room, he saw his younger brother Yitzy sitting on the couch reading a book.

Yitzy looked up. “Hi Shimmy, Mommy just left to run some errands. She left a snack in the fridge and said to make sure the house stays clean until supper.”

“Thanks,” said Shimmy, walking into the kitchen and taking the bag of apple slices Mommy had left in the fridge. He sat down and ate very carefully, making sure to clean up after himself and then sat at the kitchen table to do his homework.

Suddenly he jumped up and ran to the living room. “Yitzy! Do you know what today is???”

Yitzy looked up from his book. “No, what’s today?”

“It’s Totty’s birthday!” Shimmy practically shouted. “And not just any birthday - it’s his fortieth birthday! You only get one of those in your entire life!”

“Oh,” said Yitzy. “We should sing Happy Birthday when he comes home.”

“Sing Happy Birthday? That’s it? Oy, Yitzy, don’t you realize? Mommy left and probably forgot all about it! Totty’s turning 40 and there’s not even going to be a cake! We’ve got to do something!”

“What can we do?” asked Yitzy.

Shimmy smiled. “We’ll bake Totty a cake!” he said as he marched into the kitchen.

“Wait,” called Yitzy. “Didn’t Mommy say she doesn’t want us making a mess?”

“This is different,” said Shimmy as he opened a cookbook and started rummaging for utensils and ingredients. “Mommy would want us to do this. Watch, she’ll be so proud!”



"I don't know..." began Yitzzy, but Shimmy was too busy reading the recipe.

"Let's see, this one is called 'Easy Chocolate Cake', but I know Totty likes vanilla. Maybe a vanilla cake with chocolate frosting... hmmm... Oh! Here's a recipe for 'Vanilla Challah!'"

"Shimmy," said Yitzzy. "How is a Challah recipe going to help you with a cake?"

"Oh it's easy," answered Shimmy, "it's just a matter of knowing which ingredients are important and comparing the fractions. So if one recipe calls for 2 ½ Cups of flour and the other for 4 ½, you just need to multiply the nominators by the denumirators and add them to the remainders..."

Shimmy's voice trailed off as he started mixing bags of flour, cups of water and oil, a dozen eggs, several packets of yeast, baking soda, and more...

### An Hour Later

"Hi boys, I'm back!" called Mommy, as she entered the house carrying a huge box with several bags on top of it. "I bought Dinner from 'Kosher Nosh', Totty's favorite - and one of those super-fancy triple-decker cakes from 'The Sweet Place', because tonight is..."

Mommy's voice trailed off as she entered the kitchen. The previously sparkling room looked like the inside of a dirty mixing bowl. The entire kitchen was splattered with a sticky goop. The black sludge seemed to also be endlessly pouring out of the open oven, and standing in the middle of the kitchen were Shimmy and Yitzzy looking up at her, dripping from head to toe with the stuff.

"What - happened?" she whispered hoarsely.

"Ummm... We tried to make a birthday cake for Totty," Shimmy stammered looking uncomfortably at the fancy cake box in Mommy's hands. "We thought you forgot..."

"What about keeping the house clean?" asked Mommy.

"Well, we thought you would be so proud of us for remembering Totty's birthday and making a cake! Don't you understand? We did it for you!"

### Later, after supper

"Shimmy", Totty said, taking him aside. "Mommy and I are very touched that you tried to do something special for my birthday. But you need to understand. Even with the best and sweetest intentions, at the end of the day you must listen to Mommy and me. It's not Kibud Av if you're doing something we asked you not to do. Does that make sense?"

Shimmy nodded. "I'm sorry Totty," he said softly. "I'll try to remember that for the future and not try to overthink when you or Mommy tell me something..." Shimmy's voice trailed off.

"Shimmy, is everything okay?" asked Totty.

"Yes," Shimmy answered. "It's just that I realized the answer to a question that was bothering me. I was thinking about this week's parsha and I couldn't understand how, so soon after hearing Hashem speak at Matan Torah, Klal Yisroel could make the *eigel hazahav*. But now it makes sense! They thought Moshe had died and they wanted a way to get close to Hashem. The problem was they did it in a way that Hashem didn't want them to do it. **My cake was like the *eigel hazahav*!**"

"Well," Totty said. "I wouldn't say that your cake was the *eigel*. But you're definitely right in your answer to the question. No matter how much we want to get close to Hashem, we can't think we know better and do it in a way of which he does not approve."

**Have A Wonderful Shabbos!**

### Let's Review:

- Why was it not Kibud Av for Shimmy to make a cake for Totty's birthday?
- How can we avoid making a similar mistake?



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