

Vayakhel / וַיִּקְהַל

The Secret Ingredient

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Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Junior

"This is it!" Totty said as the Feldsteins pulled up to a cozy-looking cottage in Marco Island, Florida.

"Wow," said Esty. "Our own private beach! Too bad we're only staying here for one night..."

The Feldsteins got out of the car and brought their suitcases into the cottage.

"What's that smell?" asked Shmuli, wrinkling his nose.

"Come on, Shmuli," Mommy said jovially. "It's not that bad. It's just the smell of the saltwater in the air. You'll get used to it."

After unpacking their bags, Totty took out the cooler and portable grill and everyone headed to the beach to enjoy a barbecue and watch the sunset.

"Are you sure we packed enough food?" asked Esty, peering into the almost-empty cooler.

"Esty, we're heading back to North Miami Beach in the morning," Totty said. "Just sit back and enjoy the sunset."

"Where's the sun?" asked Esty, looking back at the sky.

"That's strange," Totty said. "It was there just a minute ago."

A loud clap of thunder made everyone jump.

"Uh oh, it looks like a storm is coming in," Totty said, after making a brocha on the thunder. "Quick, let's bring everything inside!"

No sooner had they brought the cooler and grill inside than torrential rain started pouring down. The cottage creaked as water hit the windows like bullets.

"Totty, I'm scared," Shmuli said.

"There's nothing to be scared of," Totty said, just as the power went out.

"Aaaaah!" screamed Esty in fright. "Mommy! Where are you!"

"I'm right here," Mommy said calmly as Totty flicked on a flashlight. "Let's all get to bed. I'm sure the storm will be over by the morning."



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“Good morning, *kinderlach*,” said Mommy, opening the window shades.

“Huh?” grunted Shmuli. “It’s the middle of the night.”

Indeed, it was so cloudy outside that the cottage was still dark.

“It’s 8am,” Mommy said. “Let’s get dressed. It’s time to head home.”

“I don’t think it’s happening,” Totty said, walking into the room. “Look outside.”

Shmuli and Esty said *modeh ani*, washed *negel vasser*, and headed to the window.

“There’s a river out there!” Shmuli exclaimed, looking at the flood of water rushing down the street.

“But tonight is Shabbos!” Esty said nervously. “What are we going to do?”

“B’ezras Hashem the roads will clear up soon,” Totty said. “For now, let’s daven and eat breakfast.”

But soon it started raining again. There was no way the Feldsteins were going to make it home for Shabbos...

* * *

The front door opened and Totty entered the cottage, soaking wet, and carrying two grocery bags.

“Totty!” said Shmuli. “Did you go swimming in this weather?”

“Almost,” laughed Totty, taking off his drenched coat to reveal his sopping wet clothing underneath. “By some *neis* I found a small store that was open and I bought whatever kosher food I could find for Shabbos.”

Everyone got ready doing the best they could to transform the rickety kitchen table into a Shabbos table. Esty taped some paper together to make a makeshift tablecloth, Totty put a small bottle of grape juice and two small rolls on the table, Mommy opened the cans of tuna fish, and Shmuli arranged the potato chips as nicely as he could.

“L’kovod Shabbos kodesh,” Totty said.

* * *

“*Ka ribon olam...*” Totty sang. But Shmuli and Esty just sat there glumly.

“What’s wrong, *kinderlach*?” asked Mommy. “You haven’t even touched your potato chips and tuna.”

“It doesn’t feel like Shabbos,” Shmuli said.

“Yeah, this isn’t Shabbos food,” Esty pouted.

“What do you mean? This is delicious Shabbos food,” Totty said, popping a potato chip into his mouth. “*Me’ein olam haba!*”

“How is this Shabbos food?” asked Shmuli.

“*Kinderlach*,” Totty said. “Do you think meat and chicken is Shabbos food? Goyim eat meat and chicken, and we also sometimes eat meat or chicken during the week. Is that Shabbos food?”

“When we eat it on Shabbos it is,” Shmuli said.

“Right. And why aren’t potato chips and tuna fish Shabbos food when we eat them on Shabbos?” asked Mommy.

Shmuli and Esty thought about this.

“Shabbos food is Shabbos food because we add a secret ingredient; we make it *l’kovod Shabbos*. If you make meat and chicken on Friday and don’t think once that it’s *l’kovod Shabbos kodesh*, then it is missing the secret ingredient and it is not Shabbos food any more than a bag of chips.

“Shabbos is a holy day, as holy as the *Beis Hamikdash*. And just like one would only enter the *Beis Hamikdash* after preparing themselves properly, we must prepare ourselves for Shabbos by remembering that everything we are doing is all for the holiest day of the week.

“So of course we try, as much as we can, to make fancy food for Shabbos and to wear nice clothes. But that is only *shabbosdik* if we prepare properly. When we shop for Shabbos, cook for Shabbos, and get dressed for Shabbos, we MUST remember to think ‘I am doing this *l’kovod Shabbos*.’ We may not have our Shabbos clothes here or Mommy’s fancy chicken soup, but *boruch Hashem* we have tuna fish and potato chips! Let’s enjoy it *l’kovod Shabbos kodesh!*”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Let’s Review:

- Why do Shmuli and Esty feel like they don’t have Shabbos Food?
- What makes Food Shabbosdik?



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