

Knead for Joy

PARSHA INSIGHTS - SHLACH (5759)

GO OFF WITH A GLAD HEART

I am dedicating this *d'var Torah* [lesson] to the students of RITSS High School. In particular, the graduates deserve special recognition. They have put in much effort and energy to learn Hashem's Torah throughout the years. May the summer break be spiritually uplifting and refreshing for all of them. May the graduates go on to higher levels of *ruchniyus* [spirituality] and development as *bnos Yisroel* [daughters of Israel], whether in *Eretz Yisroel* [the Land of Israel] or elsewhere.

The *pasuk* [verse] in *Koheles* [Ecclesiastes] we are about to examine is quite relevant for people journeying away on their own paths. It will also become obvious that it has much to do with today's *parsha* [Torah portion] of *Shlach*.

“Go eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a glad heart, for Hashem has already been pleased with your deeds” (*Koheles* 9:7). The members of this year's *Koheles* class are aware that the verse is hinting to *Parshas Shlach*, according to the *Midrash Rabba*. **“Go eat your bread with joy”** - this refers to the section dealing with the *mitzvah* [commandment] of separating *challah* [a piece set aside] from dough. “Eating bread with joy”, on a deeper level, means that one should enthusiastically study and fulfill a *mitzvah* associated with bread, namely the *mitzvah* of setting aside the *challah* portion when kneading. **“Drink your wine with a glad heart”** - enrich your soul by studying the section that discusses libations (drink offerings in the *Bais Hamikdash* [Temple]). Both *hafroschas challah* [taking of the small piece] and *nesachim* [libations] are found in today's *parsha*. **“For Hashem has already been pleased with your deeds”** - Hashem is delighted to lead you into the Promised Land of Israel. Such an idea is also stated in *Shlach* (15:2): “When you come into the land in which you will dwell...” In this manner, the *Midrash Rabba* expounds the verse in *Koheles* to be alluding to *Parshas Shlach*. What does it all mean?

Rav Boruch Halevi Epstein clarifies the matter. Immediately after the incident of the spies, when *Bnai Yisroel* accepted their negative report about *Eretz Yisroel* and rejected the land, the Torah discusses drink offerings and *challah*. Why this order of topics? The *meraglim* [spies] angered Hashem by persuading the Jews to feel displeasure about going into Israel. Consequently, that entire generation was denied entry into the land. Instead, their children would go in - nearly forty years later. Perhaps the message is that through proper observance of these two *mitzvos* [commandments], the second generation would deserve *Eretz Yisroel*. Maybe these particular *mitzvos* would help bring about a reconciliation between Hashem and His nation. Thereby, He would forgive the iniquities of the parents, ushering their sons and daughters into Israel. (True, the *mitzvos* of *challah* and libations were not to be performed until we entered the land, as the verses indicate. Even so, Hashem rewards people for their determination and WILLINGNESS to carry out His will even before the deeds are performed, as demonstrated many times in the Torah.)

That is the connection the *pasuk* in *Koheles* has with today's *parsha*. It should remind us to be meticulous in separating *challah* properly, as outlined in the *halacha sefarim* [books on Jewish law]. These sources need to be learned thoroughly. *Chazal* [our Sages] tell us that it is a precious *mitzvah*, which rests mainly on women.

“Go... in joy, for Hashem has already been pleased with your deeds.” Wishing each of you a pleasant summer, in whatever location you find yourself.

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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