

חיי שרה - Chayei Sarah

Holy Homes

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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Zalman dipped his roller back into the paint tray and started rolling it on the living room wall for the thousandth time. "Oy, Totty," said Zalman, "This is so boring! Next time can we just put wallpaper on like Zeidy and Bubby have? Anyways, what's the big deal if we have dirty walls with cracks in the paint?"

"Wow," said Usher, Zalman's older brother, "You seemed so excited about it when we were at Home Depot buying the paint and the brushes and rollers."

"That's always how it is," called Mommy from the kitchen where she was working with Rivky peeling potatoes. "Everything new seems exciting in the beginning. You can ask Rivky here. A few minutes ago she was asking me if she could help peel the potatoes. But I'm sure that by now she already wants to take a break to call her friend."

"But it's true," said Usher. "It's not really so exciting to be stuck in the house all day long painting walls or peeling potatoes. Meanwhile

Shimmy and Yossi
and
Mendel and
all my other
friends are
riding their bikes

outside. Being in a plain old house is pretty boring – even if it's freshly painted."

"Well," said Totty. "Maybe it's important to realize that it's not just a plain old house. Imagine we were painting the Beis Hamikdash for Yomtiv or if Mommy and Rivky were preparing terumah for the kohanim to eat. That would be something, no?!"

"I guess it would be," said Zalman. "But the problem is that it's not true. First of all we're not even kohanim, and second of all we live in Boro Park not Yerushalayim, and third of all this is the Resnick house not the Beis Hamikdash, and fourth of all –"

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“Aha!” Totty exclaimed. “But that’s where your mistake is. Because this **is** the Resnick Beis Hamikdash, not the Resnick house!”

“Very funny, Totty,” said Rivky. “Calling our little apartment a Beis Hamikdash is not going to make it any more fun to peel potatoes.”

“Well,” said Totty, “I didn’t say anything about fun. I didn’t say the Resnick Amusement Park; I said Beis Hamikdash. What you’re doing is very important! Extremely important! It’s not just chores – you’re actually working in a Beis Hamikdash. That’s why in this week’s parsha when Sarah Imeinu passed away Chazal tell us that it was a churban Beis Hamikdash.”

“Beis Hamikdash?” said Usher. “But they lived in a plain tent! There was no mizbeach, no menorah, no shulchan. It was just a house with people in it – like our apartment.”

“Exactly my point,” said Totty. “Rav Avigdor Miller explained that Sarah Imeinu, along with the Avos and other Imahos, lived in regular homes just like we do. But they weren’t regular at all. because they understood that they were building the Am Yisroel in their tents! And so, everything they did in their homes was important – it was all part of serving Hashem.”

Totty continued, “Rav Miller says that even the cooking and the cleaning in the house of the Avos was done to serve Hashem — they did even the most simple things and the most

boring chores with the understanding that it was all part of building a Jewish home and that’s why it was like the Avodah in the Beis Hamikdash!

“And listen to this,” said Totty. “Rav Miller said that **every single** Jewish home is the same! Every home where frum Jews are living is a home where the Am Yisroel is growing up and where mitzvos are being done. There’s nothing more important to Hashem than our homes. Just like Hashem was living in the Beis Hamikdash, He’s living here too! Because it’s the frum Jewish homes that He’s most interested in; more than anything else in the world.”

“So look around! As the Totty, I’m like the Kohein Gadol and you are two Kohanim helping me as we do the Avodah. We don’t need to imagine it - it’s actually happening right now! And Mommy and Rivky are busy in the kitchen preparing dinner - that’s two more Kohanim serving Hashem in his Holy House! And as much as possible, we need to remember while we’re doing these everyday things to have in mind that we’re doing it to serve Hashem - just like in the Beis Hamikdash where the Kohanim had to remember to concentrate while doing the Avodah.”

Usher continued painting, but he no longer found it boring. “Thank you, Totty,” he said. “I never realized how special painting a wall could actually be.”

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