

*challah cover*  
*beautifying the mitzvah*

ON SHABBAT THE VEIL THAT DIVIDES THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE FROM THE HIGHER SPIRITUAL REALMS IS LIFTED AWAY AND OUR WORLD EXPERIENCES A TASTE OF HEAVEN. FOR ONE DAY A WEEK OUR REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES, EATING AND DRINKING, CONVERSING AND LOVING, ARE IMBUED WITH SANCTITY.

THE LOAVES OF CHALLAH ON THE SHABBAT TABLE REPRESENT THE WORK AND TOIL OF THE WEEK GONE BY. WE ELEVATE THE LOAVES BY COVERING THEM WITH AN EMBELLISHED CLOTH. THIS CLOTH IS A SPIRITUAL ADORNMENT, A PRIESTLY ROBE ENVELOPING OUR WEEKDAY EFFORTS. BY ADORNING THE LOAVES WE ARE BOTH BEAUTIFYING THE MITZVAH AND SANCTIFYING OUR WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES, RAISING THEM TO THE LEVEL OF THE DIVINE.

WE KEEP THE LOAVES COVERED AND THEN IMMEDIATELY BEFORE WE ARE READY TO EAT, THE LOAVES SUDDENLY APPEAR, AS IF OUT OF NOWHERE. THIS INSTILLS IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS A SENSE OF WONDER AND FAITHFULNESS AS WE RECOGNISE THE MIRACLE OF SUSTENANCE. IT IS G<sup>o</sup>D WHO HAS PROVIDED US WITH THE BREAD TO EAT, LIKE MANNA FALLING FROM HEAVEN.

WHEN THE LIGHT OF SHABBAT SHINES THE LINES DIVIDING BODY AND SOUL, SPIRIT AND MATTER, ARE BLURRED. THE HOLINESS OF THE DAY TRANSFORMS THE MUNDANE ACT OF BREAKING BREAD INTO A SACRED RITUAL. THIS WORLD OF OURS BLOSSOMS INTO A HAVEN FOR G<sup>o</sup>D.

SHABBAT IS A TASTE OF THE WORLD TO COME.