



The Shabbos following Pesach, there is a custom of some to bake "Schlissel Challah" - challah in the design of a key, alleged to be a *segulah* for *parnassah*.

There is a debate about the origins of this custom, many claiming it is rooted in early Christian practices. Even before we see for the first time, a reference to Yidden baking Schillel Challah, we see a custom by the Christians, where right after Easter they baked a bread in the form of a Tzeylim (cross). The Goyisha Easter comes out about the same time as our Pesach. When looking at the Schlissel Challah you can see, if you just add a piece to the bottom it now becomes a key. Simply, we see the Christian's baking of the bread in the form of a cross before we see Yiden baking it in the shape of a key. Also, both are done at the same time of the year.

There's lots of things in Judaism that originated in foreign cultures, but where something originated is not so important. *Segulahs* are often harmless placebos, it makes people feel good and is also a time-honored tradition. If something eventually became a minhag in Klal Yisroel, we should keep it. On a lighter note, we also see how strong a minhag is. When people borrow money from one another, the DIN is you must return it. But.....what is the minhag? Here we see a minhag is sometimes stronger then din.

What I want to stress here is, we indeed have a "proven method" to getting "**parnassah**", revealed to us none other than by Chazal themselves. Chazal's directive was, a person MUST teach his son a trade (or education, law, accounting, etc.) to be financially self-sufficient. All over the Chardei neighborhoods, here and in Israel, everyone was reminding each other C'V not to forget the *Schlissel Challah*. Why is it that everyone is trying to get *parnassah* via an unproven way of problematic and unclear origins, when we have a clear directive of Chazal? The answer, of course, is that Chazal's way is much more difficult, it uses the Torah's verse "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." Let's be honest, the "key in the challah" is a much easier way and you can still sit in yeshivas for endless years.

We know that even those that got an education or learned a trade aren't all financially secure. However, were you to look at the people as a whole, those that have a trade, (plumber, electrician, accountant, lawyer etc.) compared to all those that used the "segulah" of Schlissel Challah, we would see a great and substantial difference to the amount of people struggling with parnassah. **Our Chazal were not naive people!**