

# תשפ"ג · 5783 Bnos

Parshas

Ha'azinu



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# Story

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# THE CHOICE

In a village near Zanz, in Galicia, there once lived an innkeeper. His name was Nochum. He made a good living from his inn, where passing merchants stopped for good food, comfortable lodging, and excellent service.

Reb Nochum also had an equally good name among the peasants of the neighborhood. When they had a few coins to spend they would come in for a drink and a bite.

Reb Nochum was an upright, G-d-fearing Jew, whose door was always open for any poor traveler. In addition to a free meal, sometimes also lodging, he would always give the needy a nice donation on the way. And all this with a friendly smile and a kind word.

One day a weary traveler came to the inn. He was wearing tattered clothes and torn shoes, a sorry sight indeed!

The innkeeper greeted him in his usual friendly fashion. He immediately served the man a fine meal, after which he offered him a place to rest for the night. But the man picked up his shabby bag and said he could not accept the innkeeper's kind offer. However, he felt that he owed the kind host an explanation, so he added:

"You would not wish me to thank you for the mitzvah of hachnosas orchim, but an explanation is surely the least I owe you. It is a story I often tell, for it can serve as a lesson for everyone."

And this is the story the stranger told Reb Nochum:

"I am a well-to-do businessman from a big city far from here. It happened that once a fairly large sum of money was missing from a drawer in my private study. My suspicion fell on a young Jewish girl who was employed by my wife as a helper in the house. I knew her to be an honest girl, coming from a poor but respectable family. She was of marriageable age, but as her parents were very poor and unable to provide her with a dowry, she took on the job. It occurred to me that when she was cleaning my study she came across the money and the temptation must have been too much for her. Maybe she only meant to 'borrow' it.

"Be it as it may, I was certain she had taken the money, and I told her so privately. She denied the accusation vigorously and began to weep and shout indignantly. Somehow her excessive denial made me think she was putting on an act. It made me angry and I threatened her that if she continued to deny that she had taken the money I would drive her out of my house in disgrace. On the other hand, if she returned the money to me I would tell no one, and she would be permitted to keep her job.

"The girl became hysterical and could barely speak clearly because of her sobbing. But I was unmoved by her hysterics. I told my wife what happened, and we dragged the girl to the Rav. She continued to insist on her honesty and protested her innocence. The Rav ruled that we had brought no real proof of her guilt, but it was up to us to decide if we wished to keep her or not.

"The result was that we sent her back to her parents, where she became very ill and died soon afterwards. People said that her early death was a punishment for her wrongdoing, and my wife and I chose to believe the same thing.

"A few weeks later I happened to pull out an adjoining drawer in my desk which had become stuck, and out fell the missing wallet with the money!

"My heart stood still! 'My G-d, what have I done to that poor innocent girl!' I said to myself.

"The thought gave me no rest. I immediately began to make inquiries as to the whereabouts of the girl's parents, who had, in the meantime, moved out of town because of shame at what had happened to their daughter. When I found out where they lived I took a substantial amount of money, several times the amount of the money that I thought was stolen, and went to see her parents. I told them how terrible I felt about the dreadful thing I had done. I knew that no amount of money could compensate them for the loss of their precious fine daughter, but I begged them to accept the money I had brought them as some compensation, however inadequate, for the grief I had unwittingly caused them.

"The grieving parents said nothing, except, 'May Hashem forgive you.' I put the money on the table and left.

"Then I traveled to Premishlan to see my Rebbe, Rabbi Meir, and ask him what I could possibly do to atone for my grievous sin.

"When I told the Rebbe all that had happened, he became engrossed in thought for quite some time. Finally he sighed and said, 'Our Sages have assured us that the Gates of Teshuvah are always open, and the All-Merciful One is ever ready to stretch out His hand to the true repentant. Your sin is truly great, so your teshuvah must also be a very harsh one. You have three choices: You may choose to die within a year, a life for a life; or you may choose to be afflicted with a severe and painful illness for three years; or, you can choose to go into exile for three years. If you choose the latter, you would have to wander about as a poor beggar, and be on the go constantly. Where you spend the day, you could not stay for the night, and where you spend the night, you could not spend the day. You would eat only once a day, whatever good people would offer you, and at no time would you be allowed to beg or accept any charity.'

"I was very much shaken by the saintly Rebbe's words and said that I could not come to a decision without consulting my wife.

"I returned home and found no minute's peace. I could neither eat nor sleep and soon became so ill that I thought I would surely die within the year. Yet, I wished to go on living, and saw that I must decide quickly which of the two other forms of repentance I was to choose. After consultation with my wife, we decided that I should choose exile. No sooner had I made up my mind, then I began to get well very rapidly.

"I told my wife how she should carry on my business in my absence, and instructed her to distribute half of my wealth for worthy causes and needy Jews, especially poor brides, and to do it in strict secrecy.

"I then put on ragged clothes, bade my dear wife a sad farewell, took my tallis and tefillin, and set out on my long journey. My first stop was to see my Rebbe and tell him of my decision. The Rebbe blessed me that I should succeed in achieving a complete repentance, and that at the end of my three years' exile I should come to him, even before returning home.

"Now," the stranger concluded his extraordinary story, "you will understand why I could not accept your kind offer of hospitality for the night, nor accept your kind donation. As a matter of fact, I am at a loss what to do, for I have heard that my saintly Rebbe had passed away, and it's only two years since I have started my exile and I still have a year to go. So I'm on my way to Zanz, to ask the saintly Zanz Rebbe what I should do ..."

The baal teshuvah, having concluded his story, picked up his bag, kissed the mezuzah, and went on his way.

A long time passed, and Reb Nochum had almost forgotten the whole strange episode when, one day, a fine looking drozhke stopped at the inn.

Out stepped a well-dressed man who greeted the innkeeper with a cheerful, "Sholom Aleichem, Reb Nochum!"

At first Reb Nochum was puzzled, for the visitor seemed a total stranger to him. Then suddenly he realized that this was none other than the sad-looking wanderer with the tragic story who had stopped at the inn some time back.

Reb Nochum served his guest some liquor and refreshments, and after exchanging l'chayim the visitor told his host the end of his story.

"When I came to the Zanz he greeted me heartily, and before I had a chance to say a word, he said to me: 'Tzaddikim are greater in the after-life than during their lifetime on earth. They do not desert their flock. The Premishlaner, of blessed memory, interceded on your behalf in Heaven that you should now be regarded as having completed your repentance, which you had carried out so faithfully during the past two years. You are now free to go home and resume your normal life. But on your way home, stop at the holy resting place of the saintly Rabbi Meir, recite some Tehillim there, and ask him to continue to pray for your well-being, spiritually and materially.'

"I'm now on my way home. As you see, I have been able to borrow money from business friends and get back to my normal life, though my life can never be the same again, for I have truly learned my lesson. I cannot tell you how happy I am, and I wish such happiness for all true repentants."





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# Parsha Quiz

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**See how much  
you know!**

1. M S this S of Parshas H, on the L D of his L
2. M told the H and E to be W's to what he was about to S to B Y
3. M C's the T to R. the W cannot S without R, and we cannot S without T
4. H is C'ed a R to show His S
5. All of H's W's are F and J even if we don't U them
6. The S speaks about H's L for us and for the 3 A's
7. The S speaks about the G of E Y
8. The other N's will P BY, how we S'ed with H throughout all the D T's
9. H will P B the N's that tried to H BY
10. H told M to go up to H N, so that he can S the L of EY, because he wont be E'ing into it
11. M is T that he will D on top of H N



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# Recipe

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# Classic Kreplach

## Ingredients:

Dough:

2 and 1/2 cups flour, preferably unbleached

pinch salt

1 large egg, plus 1 large egg yolk

1/2 cup water

Filling:

1 cup ground beef

1 small onion, grated raw or sautéed (optional)

pinch of black pepper

salt, for cooking

## Instructions:

Make the Dough:

1. Combine flour and salt in a large bowl. Add egg, egg yolk, and water and work into a soft, smooth dough using a wooden spoon (you can also use a food processor fitted with the metal blade). Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes or up to overnight.

Make the Kreplach:

1. When ready to make kreplach, bring a large pot of salted water to boil.

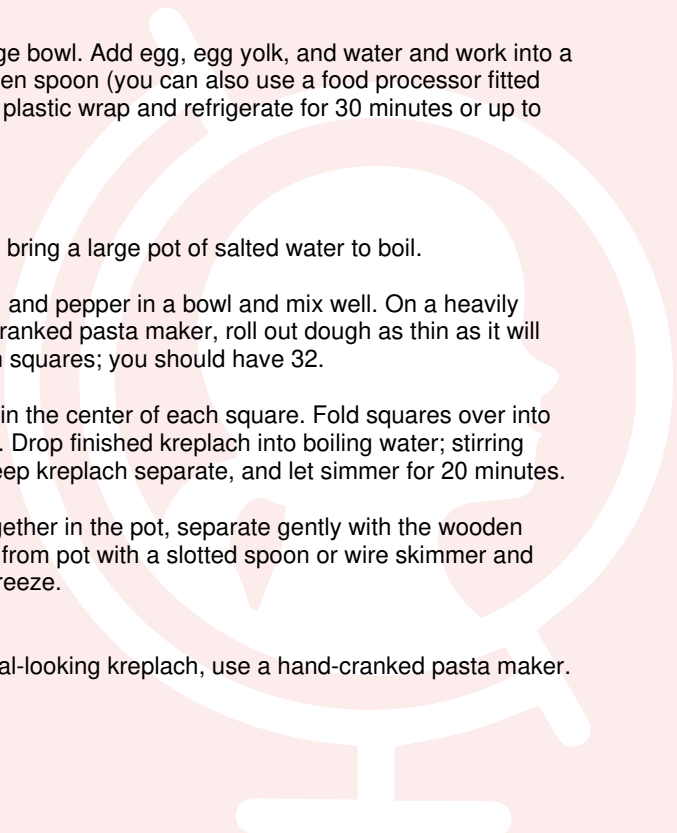
2. Combine beef, onion (if using), and pepper in a bowl and mix well. On a heavily floured surface or using a hand-cranked pasta maker, roll out dough as thin as it will stretch. Cut dough into three-inch squares; you should have 32.

3. Place half a teaspoon of filling in the center of each square. Fold squares over into triangles and pinch edges closed. Drop finished kreplach into boiling water; stirring gently with a wooden spoon to keep kreplach separate, and let simmer for 20 minutes.

4. If you see kreplach sticking together in the pot, separate gently with the wooden spoon. After 20 minutes, remove from pot with a slotted spoon or wire skimmer and serve right away in hot soup, or freeze.

Tips:

For the thinnest, most professional-looking kreplach, use a hand-cranked pasta maker.



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# Middah of the Week

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Yom Kippur