

תשפ"ד · Bnos 5784

Parshas

Yisro

אחינו כל בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה המקום ירחם עליהם ויציאם מצרה לרוחה ומאפלה לאורה ומשעבוד לגאלה השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ונאמר אמן:



Story

FOUR KNOCKS

Amsterdam, Holland, 1891. Friday night. In the Van Der Voor home, the year is 5651. And the Friday night is Shabbos.

The three Van Der Voor generations were celebrating Shabbos as usual. The wealthy Dutch rug merchants sat around the beautiful table, singing Zemiros so enthusiastically that they did not hear the knock at the door.

Katrina, the maid, shyly poked her rosy-cheeked head in.

"Yes, Katye, what is it?" asked the master of the house.

"Mynheer," she hesitated, "I know how you dislike being disturbed during the Shabbos meal with the family. But a messenger has come from the palace! Ach! Such a lovely blue uniform he is wearing, with gold braid and epaulets."

"Don't get carried away by a uniform, Katye," old Papa smiled. "What does he want?"

"That's the point, mynheer. He refuses to tell me. He says he must speak to you himself.

He is waiting right outside."

"Very well. Show him in."

A tall courier strode in purposefully, clicked his heels, and announced in a stentorian voice:

"His Royal Highness, Prince Hendrik, requests that the following carpets be delivered to the palace tonight: Two 9x12 Persian rugs, three 14x14 Spanish paisley rugs, and three 20x20 tapestries. They are needed to decorate the grand ballroom for a special performance to be held at midnight. Prince Hendrik begs your forgiveness for inconveniencing you, but he requires immediate delivery."

Mr. Van Der Voor rose solemnly. "I am extremely sorry but I cannot possibly fulfill His Highness' request before tomorrow night. The Shabbos has already commenced. Please convey my high regard and deepest regrets to the Prince."

The royal messenger's eyebrows arched as he tried to conceal his surprise at this refusal.

He made no comment, and left the house.

The ensuing silence was broken by the head of the family. "Come, my dear ones, don't look so serious. This is a free country extending civil liberties to all its citizens. And we who keep the Mitzvos of Hashem are surely freer than our Dutch countrymen. Let us continue our zemiros."

His hearty voice was soon joined by the second generation's baritones and tenors, and the third generation's altos and sopranos.

Katrina spilled the soup twice as she served the family, so overcome was she by excitement. The servants' quarters already buzzed with the news of the master's daring refusal. Cook and butler alike ventured guesses as to what would happen next. They did not have long to wait. After the soup, the family sang louder than before, submerging inner speculations in sheer volume. The knock at the door froze them instantly.

Katrina's starched cap peeped from behind the door, as the same courier bowed slightly and declaimed authoritatively:

"His Highness requests that you send the necessary carpets immediately. They are not available at any other merchant. If he cannot obtain them, it will ruin his plans for the evening's entertainment."

"I can only repeat what I have previously stated," the old Papa declared firmly. "Today is the Shabbos, and I am unable to fulfill His Highness' desire. I have no more to say on the matter." The Van Der Voor family had reached the compote, when the third knock came. This time the messenger handed a letter bearing the royal insignia to Mr. Van Der Voor, and stood at attention. Katye, unasked, took the envelop from the old Papa's hand, unsealed it, and handed it back to him. The old Papa read aloud:

"My dear Mr. Van Der Voor,

I must have the carpets and am willing to pay two or three times their value. If you again refuse, you may well imagine what the consequences will be.

(Signed) Hendrik

All eyes were fixed on the old Papa. Drawing a deep breath, he matched the messenger's rod-like posture and replied majestically:

"Due to the holiness of the Shabbos, I am unable to answer His Highness in writing. Please convey to him my respect for him as a gentle yet mighty ruler whose will I am happy to fulfill. But there is a higher power than his – that of the King of kings, Creator of all, and He has commanded us to do no business on the Shabbos. I shall be deeply grieved to lose the patronage of so esteemed a customer as His Highness, but I cannot act otherwise."

Again the eyebrows shot up swiftly. The envoy bowed stiffly from the waist and turned on his heel. He nearly collided with Katrina, whose eyes were glued to his gold braid. The younger Van Der Voors burst out laughing, while the older ones chuckled. The tension broken, they all began speaking at once.

"Father," exclaimed Yochanan, the eldest and already a partner in his father's business.

"Could you not have given the rugs to the Prince as a gift?"

"Papa, will he put us all in jail?" wailed little Micha.

"Oh, Opa, the Prince will be so cross with us!" fretted Benjie the worrier.

The old Momma cleared her throat significantly. “My dear children, we must not confuse Papa, but commend him. Not every Jew is given the opportunity to make this sacrifice – and so nobly done, Hans – for the sake of the holy Shabbos. Our parnosoh, indeed our lives, are in Hashem’s hands. Surely we must trust that all will turn out for the best. Let us thank the Ribono Shel Olam for testing us and for giving us the strength to withstand His test.”

After bentsching, the little ones were sent to bed, while the rest of the family remained at the Shabbos table to sip their after-dinner tea and await the fourth knock.

The rest of the Shabbos passed uneventfully. After Havdoloh, the fourth knock came.

With impassive face, the Prince’s messenger handed Mr. Van Der Voor a letter bearing the royal seal. It was an invitation from the Prince to come to the palace – if it was not inconvenient – one hour hence.

With a prayer on his lips and in his heart, Mr. Van Der Voor presented himself at the Prince’s palace. The Prince greeted him at the door to his study.

“My dear Mr. Van Der Voor,” said the Prince cordially, “please be seated. Forgive me for the unpleasantness I caused you last night. My friend, Baron von Schultz of Austria, is visiting with me. Our discussion yesterday turned to Jews, and the Baron claimed that Jews were the most materialistic of people, willing to compromise everything for money. I vehemently disagreed with him, for my experience with Jews has taught me otherwise. He offered to give a substantial sum of money to any charity I chose if I could prove my case. I took the liberty of putting you to a test that satisfied the baron. I never doubted the results, and it is my pleasure to compensate you for your suffering by signing over the Baron’s bank draft to any charity you name. My favorable opinion of the Jews has been strengthened. We, the Royal House of Holland, have long considered the Jews among our best citizens. You need never doubt my continued patronage of your establishment. In addition, I shall do my best to convince His Majesty, the King, to deal with you.”

Mr. Van Der Voor’s relief was apparent. He thanked the prince profusely and returned home with a light heart, and a bank draft signed over to the communal yeshiva. Several weeks later, Mr. Van Der Voor received an official certificate stating that he had been appointed by His Majesty as a supplier to the Royal Court. He had the certificate framed and hung it – not in his store – but in his dining room, over the silver Shabbos candlesticks.

(Adapted from a story by Rav Meir Lehmann zt”l

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Parsha Quiz

**See how much
you know!**

1. Who was the father-in-law of Moshe?
2. How many names did Yisro have?
3. What was the name of Moshe's wife?
4. What were the names of Moshe's two sons?
5. What did Yisro advise Moshe Rabbeinu to do?
6. In what month did the Bnai Yisroel come to Har Sinai?
7. Did Hashem offer the Torah to non-Jews?
8. For how many days did the Bnai Yisroel prepare themselves to receive the Torah?
9. Who was the only one who went up the mountain?
10. How many commandments were given?
11. How many commandments were spoken directly by Hashem?
12. Which two?
13. What is the first commandment?
14. What is the second commandment?
15. What is the third commandment?
16. What is the fourth commandment?
17. What is the fifth commandment?
18. What is the sixth commandment?
19. What is the seventh commandment?
20. What is the eighth commandment?
21. What is the ninth commandment?
22. What is the tenth commandment?

Recipe

Peanut Butter Ice Cream Bars

Ingredients:

Peanut Butter Cookies:

1 and 1/4 cups oat flour (gluten-free available)

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup Gefen Chunky Peanut Butter

slightly less than 1/2 cup Gefen Honey

1/4 cup Gefen Olive Oil

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Ice Cream Bars Crust:

2 cookies from above recipe

1/2 teaspoon Gefen Peanut Butter

Peanut Butter Banana "Nice Cream":

6 large ripe bananas

2 tablespoons Gefen Creamy Peanut Butter

Topping:

shaved dark chocolate

crushed peanuts

Directions:

Prepare the Cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a Gefen Parchment Paper-lined sheet pan.
2. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt.
3. In another bowl, combine the peanut butter (it should be soft, room temperature), honey, oil and vanilla.
4. Combine the flour mixture with the peanut butter mixture. Let batter sit for 10 minutes to thicken.
5. Using a small ice cream scooper, line the pan with scoops of batter, leaving room for them to expand.
6. Bake for 10 minutes and let cool. Freezes well.

Prepare the Crust

1. For two bars, crush two cookies at room temperature in a food processor. Add half a teaspoon peanut butter to hold the crumbs together.
2. Line a bar pan with parchment paper, cut to fit, leaving flaps hanging over the sides for easy removal after frozen.
3. Evenly divide the crumbs and push down until it forms a crust.

Prepare the Ice Cream

1. Peel and slice the bananas. Freeze in an airtight container for a few hours or overnight.
2. In a food processor, blend the bananas until creamy. It will take a few minutes to achieve the creamy texture.
3. Add the peanut butter and pulse a few times to combine.
4. Transfer to an airtight container and freeze.

Assembly

1. Spoon ice cream (may need to let ice cream defrost until creamy but not too soft) over crumbs, about three-fourths full, and smooth down with the back of the spoon.
2. Sprinkle with crushed peanuts or shaved chocolate, cover loosely with foil, and freeze. Serve frozen.

Middah of the Week

Shabbos

We want to hear from you!!

Questions, comments, or suggestions?
Email us at bnos@agudah.org.
