

תשפ"ד · Bnos 5784

Parshas

Devarim

אָחינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּתְּוֹנִים בַּצָּרָה וּבִשְׁבִּיָּה הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בִּיבְשָׁה הַמָּקוֹם יָרַחם עֲלֵיהֶם וְיֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרוּחָה וּמֵאֲפֶלֶה לְאוֹרָה וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגֵאֻלָּה הַשְׁתָּא בַּעֲגָלָא וּבְזִמְנָא קָרִיב וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:



Story

THE BEST FISH FOR SHABBOS

In a little village some miles from Neschitz lived Berel Nudnik. While most of the villagers in this kehillah earned their livelihood from the local poritz – renting his mills, farms, or village inns – Berel could find no parnosoh for himself. Although this poritz had vast estates, every position was already taken, and if not for the generosity of the other Jews, Berel and his family would have starved.

Finally, Berel was persuaded to travel to the Rebbe, Reb Yitzchok Neschitz and beg for a brachah. By the time Berel arrived in Neschitz, he was so upset that he burst into tears and insisted he would not leave until the Rebbe promised him an immediate yeshuah!

“But how can I help you?” the Rebbe asked gently. “You do not have any job, are not engaged in any business. There is nothing on what to bless you with hatzlachah, there is nowhere for success to grow. If only you had some position at your local squire”

“Rebbe-leben!” Berel rejoined, weeping. “All the positions are already taken. I cannot snatch the parnosoh of another Jew. There is nothing left besides one stinking marsh with a pool of stagnant water that nobody wants, since it is fit for nothing.”

“A pool of water, you say?” replied Reb Yitzchok Neschitz, his eyes brightening. “Perhaps there are some fish there? Perhaps some fish for Shabbos?”

Berel sorrowfully shook his head. “Nothing has ever grown there,” he declared emphatically, “since the Six Days of Creation!”

“Nonetheless,” insisted the Neschitz Rebbe, just as emphatically, “I suggest you rent that marsh and pool from the poritz for the next ten years, and I will bless you with great hatzlocho!” Berel was so dumbfounded, he left Neschitz without a word. But when he came home, he let his wife and family know his thoughts in no uncertain terms. “What a silly idea – sending me to Neschitz,” he raged. “I’ll look like such a fool, renting the poritz’s useless, stinking marsh for ten years! What should I do with all that fly-bitten water? Set up my own navy?”

Eventually his wife calmed him down and persuaded him that he had nothing much to lose by trying out the Neschitzer Rebbe’s plan. Sheepishly, Berel presented himself at the poritz’s palace and announced he would like to rent the barren marshlands for the next ten years. The squire raised his eyebrows and looked at Berel in astonishment. Privately, he thought that Berel’s deep poverty and many problems must have finally pushed him over the edge, but he solemnly drew up an official contract.

Even though the total rent only amounted to a few rubles, the poritz grandly agreed to wait for the money until the end of the term. No sooner had Berel left the palace and slunk home, than the poritz burst into loud guffaws.

“Haw! Haw! Haw!” he chortled in his merriment. “That poor no-hoper Berel Nudnik has finally lost his reason, he’s out of his tiny mind! Fancy paying good money for that useless old marsh! What’s he going to do with it? Organize a mosquito hunt?”

Berel himself could not agree more. If not for the insistence of his family and friends, he would never have agreed to this mad business deal. It made him look such a fool. Reluctantly, he borrowed a large fishing net and dropped it into the green waters of the marsh, while he sat down to dream sad thoughts of despair and hopelessness. When the sun began to set towards evening, Berel shook himself awake and tried to pull the borrowed net out of the still waters. But he could not shift it, so he thought it must be caught on something.

“Gevalt!” he cried out in exasperation. “Now I’ll lose the net and have to pay for that as well, just to add to my troubles and embarrassment.”

Finally with the help of some neighbors, they managed to lift the fishing net. To their great surprise, the net was not caught – it was full of wriggling, large, fat, succulent fish! They were so shocked that they almost dropped the whole lot back into the bog! Within hours, the news was all round the village. The squire’s marshlands were in fact brimming with kosher fish, fit for the most resplendent Shabbos meal. The poritz’s merriment abruptly turned to grief as he realized he had given away these valuable fisheries for a few paltry rubles. He would have liked to change his mind, but a contract is a contract. Although Berel had only paid a few rubles for all the marshlands, he was easily able to hire out the fishing rights of the small pools for thousands of rubles. It was not long before Berel was a rich man, soon known to all as “Reb Berel Fisher.”

Reb Berel Fisher never forgot the Neschitzer Rebbe, whose blessing had brought all this amazing success. He dammed up a small pool where he would keep his best fish. Before every Shabbos he would personally deliver the pick of the bunch to Rebbe Yitzchok in Neschitz, as a small token of his appreciation.

One week, the poritz decided to throw a party and he sent his servants down to Reb Berel Fisher’s fish ponds for some fish. They happened to notice Reb Berel’s private pool with the best fish and, naturally, demanded that these be delivered for the party. When the poritz heard that Reb Berel had refused, claiming that these were already chosen for the Neschitzer Rebbe, he was absolutely furious. The squire ranted and raved and swore he would tear up the contract if he was not to receive first choice of fish from his own estates.

To Reb Berel’s growing dismay, his fish ponds produced no other large fish that week, and he was terrified that he would lose his ten-year contract – he had never seen the poritz so angry. Reluctantly, against his wife’s advice, he gave the poritz the best fish that week, in the vain hope that he would still find something for the Rebbe. The next day, none of his pools produced any fish at all – the marsh was as lifeless as it had been before Reb Yitzchok Neschitzer’s brocho! As soon as the word of the fish’s disappearance got round, all the expensive fishing rights were canceled, and Reb Berel could clearly see complete ruin staring him in the face. Shamefacedly, he made his way to Neschitz to apologize for his behavior and beg for another brocho.

“Why did you fall into the Soton’s trap?” asked Reb Yitzchok. “Couldn’t you see it was a nisoyon?”

Reb Berel shrugged uncomfortably. “What was I to do?” he replied weakly. “The poritz was furious and threatening to tear up the contract”

“So what?” interrupted the Rebbe. “Parnosoh comes from Hashem – not the poritz! Who did you think put fish in that lifeless bog?”

Berel burst into tears. “I promise I’ll never do it again,” he wept. “I’ll never give away the Shabbos fish to those who don’t deserve it.” From that day on, the fish returned to Reb Berel Fisher’s marshlands, and the first fish he caught he immediately brought to the Rebbe as an atonement.

Parsha Quiz

**See how much
you know!**

1. What is Sefer Devarim known as and why?
2. Which words were Moshe speaking?
3. On which date did Moshe speak to Bnei Yisroel?
4. In how many languages did Moshe Rabbeinu explain the Torah?
5. Which mountain was in Choreiv?
6. Look Shlishi and Revii- which episode is Moshe Rabbeinu rebuking Bnei Yisroel for?
7. For how long were Bnei Yisroel in קדש?
8. Which land did Eisav inherit?
9. From whom did he inherit it?
10. What were Bnei Yisroel commanded regarding Eisav?
11. For which other countries did the same rule apply?
12. which land did the children of Lot inherit?
13. How long did it take Bnei Yisroel to get from נחל זרד to קדש ברנע?
14. What happened to the sun when Moshe fought against Og?
15. For which other person did Hashem perform the same nes?
16. Why was Moshe scared to attack Og and not scared to attack Sichon?
17. Which Shevatim used to lead the others in battle and why?
18. Look in Perek Gimmel, Passuk Chaf Alef- what had Moshe commanded Yehoshua?
19. Why should Bnei Yisroel not be scared of the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel?

Recipe

Cookies and Cream Cheesecake Muffins

Crumb Topping:

2/3 cup all-purpose flour, such as Glicks

1/3 cup light brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup unsalted butter or margarine, melted

Glaze:

3/4 cup Gefen Confectioners' Sugar

2 to 3 teaspoons milk or soy milk

Cheesecake Filling

6 ounces cream cheese or pareve cream cheese, softened

3 tablespoons granulated sugar

1 teaspoon Gefen Cornstarch

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Muffins:

1 and 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, such as Glicks

3/4 cup granulated sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/3 cup neutral oil, such as Manischewitz Grapeseed Oil

1 egg

1/3 cup + 1 tablespoon milk or soy milk

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

10 Oreo-style cookies, crushed (about 1 cup)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a standard 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners.
2. To make the crumb topping, mix together flour, sugar and salt. Add melted butter and mix with a fork until coarse crumbs form. Set aside.
3. To make the muffin batter, combine flour, sugar, salt and baking powder. Add oil, egg, milk and vanilla extract and mix to combine. Fold in crushed cookies.
4. To make the cream cheese filling, mix softened cream cheese, sugar, cornstarch and vanilla until incorporated.
5. Place one tablespoon of muffin batter into each muffin cup. Drop one scant tablespoon of cheesecake mixture in the center of each muffin. Cover with additional muffin batter.
6. Generously top each muffin with crumb topping.
7. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the center has set and crumbs are golden.
8. While muffins are baking, prepare the glaze. Whisk powdered sugar with two teaspoons milk until smooth. Add more milk, a few drops at a time, until desired consistency. Drizzle over cooled muffins.

Middah of the Week

Shabbos

We want to hear from you!!

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