

# Flowers for Shavuos

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Illustrated by Mordechai Zeffren

“Mommy, can we have Miriam Chasy again for Shavuos?” asked Baila. “She hardly knows anything about Yom Tov. Last time when she came for Shabbos, she brought us a new music tape and told us to play it while we eat the seudah. There’s so much she can learn when she comes to our house. Can we invite her?”

“After we washed for hamotzi, while everyone was coming into the dining room,” added Sara’leh, “she kept asking us questions like: ‘What grade are you in school?’, ‘Do you like school?’, and ‘What’s your favorite subject?’ We kept saying, ‘m-m-m-m.’ She probably thought we all had sore throats and couldn’t talk! But then we explained to her about washing our hands before eating bread and not being able to talk until we eat the bread and she understood.”

“And remember while we were bentching?” said Yehudis. “She kept asking me ‘What are you reading? Is it a Hebrew book? Why do you read it out loud? Is it a good story?’ When we finished bentching, we told her that we were saying thank you to Hashem. Remember she wanted us to help her say it also?”

“Girls,” said Mommy, “Miriam Chasy’s neshamah was at Har Sinai together with ours. She never went to a Jewish school so she never learned anything about halachah, but she likes our family. It’s a very good idea to invite her for Shavuos, the day every Jew has an opportunity to come closer to the Torah.”

Mommy thought for a moment.

“Baila, you’re good at art. How about making a sign for the dining room saying ‘Welcome Miriam Chasy’, and Sara’leh and Yehudis, you can bake that jelly roll that she likes so much.”

The girls got busy with their preparations. “Mommy, we’re done,” said Yehudis, “Whose turn is it to buy flowers this year?”

“Sara’leh, you may go this year, and would you take Rochel Leah in the stroller, please? When you come back, Baila can arrange the flowers artistically. Here’s ten dollars. Get the nicest flowers you can find.”

Sara’leh felt very responsible choosing the family flowers. There were many stands with all different types of flowers and different prices. The carnations were nice. So were the lilies. But her favorites were the tulips. To get at least two dozen would be much too expensive. Should she get just a few? But the vases would look so empty.

“Young lady, how about tulip buds?” said a nice man behind one of the stands. “What are tulip buds?” asked Sara’leh, trying to keep Rochel Leah’s hands from grabbing the flowers.

“These are really tulips, but they’re still closed. By tomorrow they will open up, and they’ll look perfect for your holiday. And they are much cheaper. You can have three dozen for ten dollars. You can’t choose the colors, though. The colors will be a surprise when they open up.”

“Three dozen,” smiled Sara’leh, “I’ll take them. Thank you so much.”

Sara’leh held the flowers carefully with one hand as she pushed Rochel Leah with the other. “Here, Baila,” she said when she arrived home, “I got three dozen.”

“Three dozen what?” answered Baila as she unwrapped the buds, “These aren’t flowers.”

“They look like onions on a stem,” said Yehudis. “Maybe they’re onion lollipops.”

“They’re buds,” said Sara’leh in a small voice. “The man said they’ll open up to flowers tomorrow.”

“I don’t believe it,” answered Baila, “I’ll put them in vases but I think we’re going to have onion lollipops this Shavuos.”

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Everything was prepared for the Yom Tov meal. The last of the blintzes were sizzling in the frying pan when the bell rang. “It must be Miriam Chasy. She doesn’t realize that you are not allowed to ring a bell on Yom Tov.”

The family gathered in the dining room. As Mommy was serving the blintzes, Abba told the story of the giving of the Torah. “The neshamah of each and every Jew heard Hashem speak to us. . .”

Miriam Chasy burst into tears. “Mr. Goldberg, was my neshamah there also? How come I don’t know how to do all these mitzvahs like your family does?”

Mrs. Goldberg hugged Miriam Chasy. “You have a Jewish spark inside you just waiting to flower. Would you like us to teach you?”

“I’ll teach you about Shabbos,” Yehudis whispered shyly.

“You can come over to our house any time.” suggested Baila.

“And you can share my room,” added Sara’leh.

“Look Sara’leh,” shouted Baila suddenly. “The buds opened up. The tulips are beautiful – all different colors!”

“The tulips aren’t the only buds that have opened up,” whispered Mrs. Goldberg to her husband as she watched Miriam Chasy, he face beaming with joy, eagerly reading a Shabbos story to little Rochel Leah.

