

In a small village not far from Berditchev lived Mendel, an upright but simple innkeeper, who made a modest living from the small inn he managed at the side of a country road.

With time, Mendel became pensive and pondered his life's trajectory.

"For most of my life I've lived in this tiny village managing the inn," he reflected. "I've fed many hungry and exhausted passersby. I've poured drinks for the rough peasants and wild noblemen. Because I was burdened by managing the inn, I could neither study nor pray properly. Now that my hair is grey, the time has come to separate myself from the world's futility and begin to prepare for my ultimate journey."

He summoned his son Shia who was young, jovial, and energetic, and handed over the keys to the inn, saying: "I've managed the inn for decades. The time has come for you to take over."

Mendel left the village and moved to Berditchev. He divided his time between his modest town home and the synagogue. He did not become a noted scholar and was not well versed in the small letters of the commentators, but he could pray and learn the basic texts, Chumash and Mishnah.

The inn, meanwhile, had undergone a drastic reformation. With his son in charge, it was no longer a quiet and sleepy roadside tavern. The local nobility began to frequent the inn and held their meetings, parties, and events there. From a business perspective, the transformation was a success.

But the simple passersby, who longed for the warm reception Mendel had always extended, stopped coming. They yearned for the modest warm meal he'd offer, the homey ambiance, and the listening ear they'd grown to rely on. Now the place felt foreign and empty. They no longer belonged.

When Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev caught wind of this, he was saddened. He was sad for Shia, whose thirst for money had driven him to such lows. He was sad for the place which had morphed from a wholesome inn into a party house. And he was sad for the weary travelers who could no longer find a comfortable place to rest and enjoy a kosher meal.

Reb Levi Yitzchak summoned Mendel and asked, "Why did you abandon your inn and hand it over to your son?"

"I am not getting any younger," explained Mendel. "My hair is grey; who knows how many more years I will be granted? With what will I meet my Maker? Shall I remain without any Torah or prayer to accompany me?"

"Now that my son is taking care of the inn, I feel better. I rise in the morning, wrap myself in my tallit and tefillin, and pray slowly with concentration. Then I study. I feel I am accumulating at least a small amount of prayer and study that I can take to the Heavenly Court when my time comes."

Reb Levi Yitzchak sank into thought and after a short while, offered: "Our sages say: 'A wise man is someone who knows his place.' A person ought to know the place that Divine providence has destined for them. When one knows one's place, he or she ought to stay there and not try to take the place destined for someone else."

"Another thing our sages have taught: 'Royalty on earth is like royalty in the heavens.' Royalty in heaven and on earth operate similarly. Woe is to a kingdom that has a plethora of generals but lacks simple foot soldiers. In fact, a soldier who escapes battle to become a general is considered a deserter and a rebel."

Reb Levi Yitzchak waited a moment, looked softly at Mendel, and put his hand on his shoulder. "Know, my dear son Mendel, G-d has enough generals—those who are learned and pedigreed. On the other hand, G-d needs simple and loyal foot soldiers who, precisely in their simplicity, prove their infinite loyalty."

"G-d places each person at their post. He has placed one person in the study hall

and another in a small and remote village. You, Mendel, were selected by G-d to be posted at an inn at a crossroads, so that you could serve up some warm kosher soup to weary travelers on a cold winter night and a cold cup of water on a sweltering summer day.

"No, Mendel, you will not stand before the Heavenly Court like a poor man. With no shame will you greet the angels. With you will be all the kosher meals you served to the travelers and all the warm beds you prepared. All the smiles and good words you exchanged will advocate for you. Return to the inn and fulfill the position that G-d assigned specifically to you."

Mendel followed the rebbe's instruction and returned to the village. Shortly afterward, the inn returned to serving travelers and the revelers found other places for their parties.

Mendel returned to his old work, this time filled with the satisfaction of knowing he was a loyal soldier standing guard where he was most needed

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

*on the weekly Torah portion*

**A window shall you make for the ark (Gen. 6:16)**  
The Hebrew word for "ark" is "tayva," which also has the meaning of "word." A Jew's job is to make a "window," as it were, for the words he utters in prayer or in the study of Torah, and to let them illuminate, as the sun shines at midday. (Baal Shem Tov)

**I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh (6:17)**  
Why did G-d choose a flood with which to punish mankind? Could he not have chosen another method to destroy the wicked?  
Another purpose of the flood, however, was to purify the world which had become unclean and defiled by its inhabitants. This is alluded to in the duration of the flood, forty days, and the requirement that a purifying mikva contain at least forty sa'a [a measure] of water. (Rabbi Shneur Zalman)

**And only Noah was left (7:23)**  
Despite the fact that Noah was a righteous person, he was still required to tend to all the animals in the ark and take care of their needs. This was a physically demanding and sometimes dangerous job. Similarly, no matter how high a spiritual level one reaches, he is still obligated to take care of those around him who may need his guidance. (Likutei Sichot)

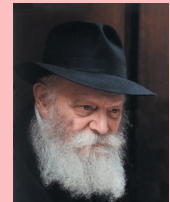
**5:50 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**5 Cheshvan/Oct 20**  
Torah Portion *Noach*  
Shabbat ends **6:48 pm**

# L'Chaim

בסי"ח  
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The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person  
יוסף תורה ומי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
*"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)*



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion*

This week's Haftora is read twice during the year. Once with parshas Noach and again as the fifth Haftora of consolation, with parshas Ki Seitzei.

The Haftora has a double theme. First, how when Moshiach comes, things will be so good and second, that the redemption will be final, never to be followed by another exile.

The Haftora begins, "Sing, barren one, who hasn't given birth." Who is the barren one?

The simple explanation is that Hashem is talking to the city of Jerusalem. Because she is desolate during this long exile. Hashem tells her to sing, as now that Moshiach is here, her streets are once again filled with her children, the Jewish people.

On a deeper level, Hashem is talking to the Jewish person who claims that the Jewish people are barren and have not given birth to him. Meaning, he has totally dissociated himself from the Jewish nation. Hashem is saying that even he will even sing the "Shir Chadash," the New Song, when Moshiach comes.

The exile will then seem as a fleeting dream as the Haftora says, "For a brief moment I forsook you." And as it says in Tehillim, when Hashem returns the exiles of Zion, "Hayinu K'cholmim, we will have been as dreamers." like a dream it feels real, but when you wake up it fades away. This will be because, as the verse continues, "with great compassion I will gather you."

The Haftora continues. Hashem says that when Moshiach comes, "I will make your windows from kodkod (a kind of gemstone)."

What kind of gemstone is a kodkod? The Talmud tells us (Bava Basra 75a), "Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachmeini said, 'it is a dispute between two angels in heaven, Michael and

Gavriel... one says it is a shoham and the other says it is a yashfei. Hashem says to them, "let it be kidayn u'kidayn, like this one and like that one (together)."

We need to know, what is a shoham and what is a yashfei? There are precious stones that produce their own light from within. Then there are others that if you cut and polish them well, they will reflect light in the most beautiful way. The shoham gives its own light, while the yashfei reflects light.

The debate between the angels is about the reward we will receive when Moshiach will come. One says yashfei, it will be based on our work, effort and accomplishments. Just like a yashfei reflects light, based on how well it is polished. The other says shoham, which gives its own light. Meaning, that the reward will not be based on our accomplishments, rather, it will be Hashem's infinite revelation as a gift from above. Hashem says that we will get both, the reward for our efforts, and He will also bestow upon us his infinite revelation as a gift.

Perhaps it is your effort, your mitzvah, that will finally tip the scale and bring Moshiach.

May he come soon.  
*Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.*

## Forever Relevant

In every generation there are those who ask whether the Torah is still relevant. This question is especially relevant in our times when modern technology is growing at such a rapid pace, faster than most people can keep up with.

The youngsters no longer wonder if the older generation is out of touch, it's just a matter of varied degrees. The Torah seems to be outdated with old fashioned laws many of which are no longer practiced and or applicable. It's almost like the ancient word of G-d has "TikToked" away making room for the 2023 TikTok that has captured the world by storm.

In truth, this question was asked by many Jews over the course of our history, from the Jews under Greek rule in the story of Channuka, to factions of the Jews of Spain. Likewise by the Jews of the Yevseksiya of communist Russia at the turn of the century, to the enlightened Jews of Germany. The difference between then and now, often [although not always] expressed itself in the living conditions of the times, i.e., being under the threat of physical persecution, while today we live under the threat of spiritual assimilation, but the question is the same nonetheless.

While it's fashionable to go along with the latest fads and trends, it's just not who we are.

Our struggle and in a sense our destiny was so clearly spelled out by the non-Jewish prophet Bilam who said (Numbers 23:9) "Hen Am Levadad Yishkon" [it is a nation [the Jews] that will dwell alone].

Having said that, as Jews we have a paradoxical existence. On the one hand we were put on this earth to engage with society, yet on the other hand we are expected to influence it not be influenced by it. In short; G-d gave each and every one of us the task of being an influencer way before it became a thing! The only power we have to accomplish this task is being connected to the Torah.

The Torah is a book like no other. It tells us stories, but isn't a story book, it details a thorough account of our history, yet isn't a history book. In truth the Torah cannot be read like any other book for it is G-d's wisdom, thereby consisting of infinite levels of depth. There isn't a word in the Torah outdated; as G-d is above time, and so is His wisdom. It is just that different levels become more relevant at different times. While some laws of the Torah are no longer applied literally, their mystical and deeper meanings are still as relevant today as ever.

Learn it, internalize it, practice it, live it and this will no doubt lead to loving it!

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