

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT
OF THE
Mesorah
Heritage
Foundation

פרשת נח
ג' חשוון תשפ"ו
5786
OCTOBER 25, 2025
ISSUE #260
RABBI YEHUDA MUNK
EDITOR
DESIGN & LAYOUT:
MRS. AVIVA KOHN

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

PROJECT DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH

THE KEY TO A NEW WORLD

The Power of a Vort by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו

*These are the offspring of Noach — Noach was a righteous man,
perfect in his generations (Bereishis 6:9).*

A Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah*, 30:8) notes that we find the word *hayah*, *was*, describing five people in Tanach: Noach (*Bereishis* 6:9); Yosef (ibid. 37:2); Moshe (*Shemos* 3:1) Iyov (*Iyov* 1:1); and Mordechai (*Megillas Esther* 2:5). All five, the Midrash explains, saw a “new world.”

Noach saw the entire world destroyed, to the extent that even millstones disintegrated, and then he saw it rebuilt. Yosef was enslaved in chains in Egypt and then emerged as the ruler of the country; Moshe had to flee from Pharaoh after nearly being executed, and then witnessed the Egyptian Army drown in the Yam Suf; Iyov was mired in terrible loss and suffering, but was eventually blessed with an even better life than he had before his downturn. Finally, Mordechai HaTzaddik was on the verge of being hanged by Haman, but he ultimately witnessed Haman hanging on the very gallows he prepared for Mordechai.

Obviously, this Midrash is not sharing some coincidental wordplay; there must be some deeper message in the usage of the word *hayah* that explains, in some way, how the people it is used to describe were able to see a “new world.” I would like to suggest an approach inspired by the *sefer Ikvei Erev*.

We see two diverging approaches among those who have endured tragedy. Some overcome their seemingly hopeless situation. They manage to gather the shards of a shattered existence and rebuild—sometimes even creating a life better than the one they had before.

Far be it from us to judge those who have faced such trials, but the reality is that others cannot move

past their era of suffering. They either become fixated on their earlier troubles, reliving them endlessly, or they romanticize the life they had before tragedy and harp on how wonderful it was, even when their present life is not all that bad.

What determines which path a person takes?

The Midrash suggests the key is in the word *hayah*—“was.” Sometimes, confronting a new world requires letting the past become *hayah*, allowing it to fade into twilight, rather than wallowing in it.

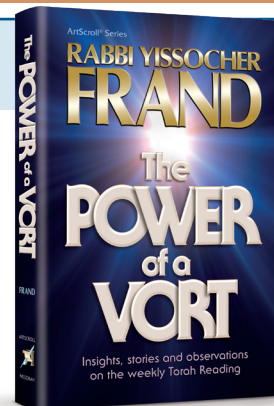
Take Noach as an example. Imagine the world before the Mabul, and then its aftermath. Though spared the fate of his generation, he emerged into a world of devastation. Think of Hiroshima after the atom bomb, or Dresden after the firebombing of World War II. Even these cannot compare to the desolation following the Mabul. Why go on?

Noach could have said, “This is a world? Who needs this?” Yet he survived. How? By embracing *hayah*—it was. He let the past remain in the past and moved forward.

This is not easy. Sometimes, when a person has lived a glorious past, the less-than-glorious present feels unbearable. But Noach teaches us to release what was.

The greatest modern example of this is the survivors of the Holocaust who built new lives. They could have said, “What kind of life is this compared to what I had before the war?” Yet many did not. They adopted the attitude of *hayah*—that was—

continued on page 3



R' Yissocher Frand

In September 1997, during a rabbinic delegation to Lithuania marking the two-hundredth yahrtzeit of the Vilna Gaon, Ronnie began negotiations to gain access to abandoned *sefarim* and *Sifrei Torah*. The group met with Vytautas Landsbergis, former president of the Lithuanian Seimas (parliament), whose mother had been honored as a righteous gentile for sheltering a Jewish teenager. Sympathetic to the Jewish cause, Landsbergis listened as Ronnie explained his connection: he had studied at the Telz Yeshivah in Cleveland, reestablished by Lithuanian survivors. His *rosh yeshivah*, R' Mordechai Gifter—who had studied at the original Telz—had urged him to search for manuscripts or Torah scrolls that might have survived Nazi destruction.

The effort might have ended there, but another meeting changed everything. In Russia, most of Ronnie's meetings ended by lunchtime because of the heavy vodka consumption. He was usually the only sober man in the room, sipping water in place of vodka. At one such meeting, officials asked how Jews had survived centuries of persecution. Ronnie replied: *"You can burn our Torah scrolls, but the letters will float in the air. And you can burn our bodies, but our souls will still float in the air"* (Avodah Zarah 18a). The officials erupted in applause. One embraced him and whispered privately: *"I would have starved if not for my Jewish neighbors. I am going to help you."* That man became pivotal to Ronnie's quest.

On a later trip, locals brought him scraps of parchment from a *Sefer Torah*. Fearing they might try to sell or cut up more, Ronnie told them the fragments had no monetary value but were very precious and must be preserved. Soon after, the sympathetic official called: "Come to Lithuania. I found something."

At a large monastery, Ronnie was stunned to see *sefarim* and charred, tattered *Sifrei Torah* piled high across the basement floor. *"I could barely walk,"* he recalled. *"I opened one sefer at random. Inside was stamped, 'From the library of Eliyahu Meir Bloch.'"* Shaken, Ronnie told the

ambassador, *"This is my rabbi!"* He began negotiations, explaining that burial was the proper protocol for desecrated Torah scrolls.

On his next trip, Ronnie brought R' Aaron Kotler, then CEO of Beth Medrash Govoha. Again, he was moved when he recognized the name of a former *chavrusa* on a flyleaf. The government insisted the materials were national archives, even as they left them in a damp cellar. Claiming burial was sacrilegious, they resisted—until Ronnie asked his son, Chananya, to fax sources from *Shulchan Aruch* proving burial was required. His novel argument: burial in Lithuania sidestepped ownership disputes and created a dignified public ceremony. The government agreed, recognizing an opportunity for publicity. Intact scrolls would be preserved; ruined ones could be buried.

Ronnie also persuaded them to release ten *Sifrei Torah* to institutions with Lithuanian heritage. Some went to Lakewood, others to Israel and Jewish communities worldwide. When he returned, he was invited to address parliament. During that session, lawmakers ratified an exception to their statute prohibiting burial of artifacts. Naming it after Ronnie, it was called the *"Grinvaldis Law."*

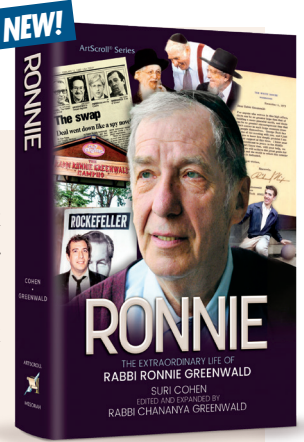
But when Ronnie came back for the burial, the scrolls had vanished. An unscrupulous fellow used Ronnie's name to take possession of several of the manuscripts and sold them for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Only fragments remained. Determined, Ronnie gathered the pieces into an *aron* and continued. At the Ministry of Culture, he peeked into the *aron*, and the first words he saw were: *"Nekom nikmas bnei Yisrael — Avenge the vengeance of the Jewish people"* (Bamidbar 31:2).

An announcement went out at Vilna's Choral Synagogue, and seventeen elderly Jews joined the procession. Locals carried the *aron* with reverence. *"We said Kaddish, Kel Malei, Tehillim, and we cried like babies."* His cousin, R' Gershon Gewirtz, spoke, and Ronnie delivered

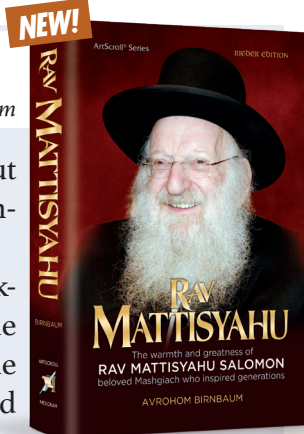
continued on page 3



Ronnie, carrying the aron holding the fragments of Sifrei Torah



	SHABBOS OCTOBER 25 ג חשוון	SUNDAY OCTOBER 26 ד חשוון	MONDAY OCTOBER 27 ה חשוון	TUESDAY OCTOBER 28 ו חשוון	WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 29 ז חשוון	THURSDAY OCTOBER 30 ח חשוון	FRIDAY OCTOBER 31 ט חשוון
BAVLI	Zevachim 41	Zevachim 42	Zevachim 43	Zevachim 44	Zevachim 45	Zevachim 46	Zevachim 47
YERUSHALMI	Yoma 2	Yoma 3	Yoma 4	Yoma 5	Yoma 6	Yoma 7	Yoma 8
MISHNAH	Chullin 2:1-2	Chullin 2:3-4	Chullin 2:5-6	Chullin 2:7-8	Chullin 2:9-10	Chullin 3:1-2	Chullin 3:3-4
KITZUR	6:10-7:End	8:1-5	8:6-9:3	9:4-9	9:10-13	9:14-End	10:1-3



R' Ezriel Munk's cell phone rang. A look at the caller ID, and he quickly answered.

"Reb Ezriel," the Mashgiach's warm voice greeted him, "I need your help."

"My help? Sure!" R' Ezriel was all ears.

"Do you by any chance know Senator Joseph Lieberman?"

The Mashgiach, who knew that R' Ezriel was involved in *kiruv* and was thus well connected, continued, "I happen to know a *bachur* whom I think the senator can help.

This *bachur*, a tenth grader and an orphan, is struggling. He keeps on adamantly insisting that he wants to leave yeshivah. Knowing that we could lose him if, *chas v'shalom*, he leaves



Rav Mattisyahu
with R' Ezriel Munk

the yeshivah, I asked him what it would take to get him to stay in yeshivah. He told me that he loves politics, and if he were able to meet and talk with Senator Joseph Lieberman, and the senator would advise him to remain in yeshivah, he would listen to him.

"I would love to help," R' Ezriel answered apologetically, "but I don't know Senator Lieberman."

The Mashgiach's retort stopped R' Ezriel in his tracks, "So get to know him. We need to save the life of this *bachur*!"

Two days passed.

The conversation was at the forefront of R' Ezriel's mind, but he had still not come up with a way to

meet Senator Lieberman.

It was late in the day when R' Ezriel was circulating at an upscale dinner in Manhattan. Suddenly, who walked right in front of him? None other than Senator Lieberman and his whole entourage!

With the Mashgiach's words fresh in his mind, he thought, *I need to act now. I will never have another chance to meet him casually like this.*

Running over to the senator, R' Ezriel pushed his way through the outer circle until he was standing directly in front of him.

"Senator!" R' Ezriel exclaimed. "Please, I need three minutes of your time."

When the senator saw R' Ezriel's serious demeanor, he said, "Okay, hold on."

A few minutes later, he gave R' Ezriel his full attention. R' Ezriel described the young orphan's situation, how just by speaking to him, the senator would ensure that the boy would have a future in *Yiddishkeit*.

"Really," the senator replied, "I would love to speak to him. But I am not in charge of my time. I have a very tight schedule, and my aides make sure I function on schedule and get from one place to the next."

"But, Mr. Lieberman!" R' Ezriel pressed, "just think: You could change the entire trajectory of his life. You could make a difference to whether or not he stays in yeshivah!"

Just then, someone walked past,

handing out ArtScroll commemorative *bentchers*. Taking one of the *bentchers*, the senator opened it and asked for the boy's name.

"Dovid,"* R' Ezriel answered, "his name is Dovid."

"Dovid," the senator wrote inside the *bentcher*, "With thanks for all the Torah learning and mitzvot you are doing, and every good wish." Signed, Joseph Lieberman, senator from Connecticut.

Needless to say, Dovid remained in yeshivah and today is the father of a wonderful family.

R' Munk concludes, "What amazed me more than anything was the Mashgiach's *bitachon* and *siyata d'Shmaya*. He knew that this was what he needed to do, and he was certain that once he had done his *hishtadlus*, Hashem would take care of the rest. And He did! When you care about every *yachid*, Hashem enables you to help them!"

Indeed, the Mashgiach's home was the address for anyone who needed a guiding hand and warm encouragement. It served as a place of refuge, *chizuk*, and succor throughout the week as well as on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

The Salomon home became a beacon of light, hope, and care for so many people — men, women, and children from all walks of life. 📖

LOST TREASURE continued from page 2

a hesped: "The Nazis thought they would destroy us. They burned our Torahs, but the letters flew to Ponevezh, Mir, Slabodka, to Brooklyn, Lakewood, Baltimore, England, and Eretz Yisrael — to every place Jewish children learn Torah. That is our vengeance." 📖

THE KEY TO A NEW WORLD continued from page 1

and built anew.

The lesson is clear: the ability to let the past remain *hayah*—to acknowledge it without being chained to it—is the secret to transcending tragedy and moving forward into life. 📖



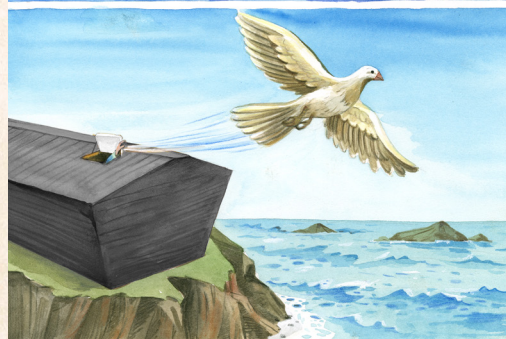
Parashah for Children

פרשת נח

Feeding the Animals

Noach and his family did not have an easy time in the Teivah. It wasn't a luxury cruise. They had to feed and care for all the thousands and thousands of birds and animals in the Teivah. Hard work.

The family never slept! By day they fed the animals that sleep at night. At night they fed the ones, like bats, that sleep by day! They were feeding animals both day and night!



Awesome Chessed

Hashem saw how hard Noach was working. Feeding the animals was an awesome act of kindness. Noach deserved to be released from being imprisoned in the Teivah, so he could once again walk the surface of the earth and bring the world back to life.

Noach deserved to be released only because he fed the animals? Wait a minute! The Chumash says he was a tzaddik! Wasn't that enough of a reason for him to be allowed to leave the Teivah?

Not exactly.

Though Noach was a tzaddik, there was something missing in his kindness. After all, when Hashem told him He was going to destroy the world, Noach said nothing! He should have prayed and begged Hashem not to bring the Mabul. He should have been like Avraham, who we will meet in the next parashah. Avraham begged Hashem not to destroy S'dom, even though they were very bad, very cruel people.

By staying up day and night feeding the animals, Noach proved that he had learned to be kind. Now, he could leave the Teivah.

**WIN A \$36
ARTSCROLL
GIFT CARD!**

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Noach:

List Noach's sons in age order.

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.



© ARTSCROLL MESORAH PUBLICATIONS • 1-800-MESORAH • WWW.MESORAHHERITAGE.ORG

To download At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table, visit www.mesorahheritage.org/shabbosnewsletter

Monthly and weekly dedication opportunities available. To sponsor, contact newsletter@artscroll.com