



The Weekly Parsha Shiur of Maran, Rosh HaYeshiva, the righteous Kabbalist,

Our Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli, Shlit"a

An excerpt for Noah 5787 (2026)

"I do not want to see you crying".

This week is the passing of our teacher and rabbi Chacham Ovadia, on the third of Cheshvan, **the glory of the generation and its splendor**, whose like there is none. **In Musayoff there was Rabbi Yaakov Dweck HaKohen**, a great sage from Aleppo, whom the head of the yeshiva Chacham Ezra Attia loved very much; he was his soul-friend and confidant. He was responsible for all the properties of Porat Yosef, he possessed a memory like a computer, and he was a Torah scholar.

Rabbi Yaakov loved Chacham Ovadia immensely, like his own soul, and set up all of his classes for him. He passed away perhaps twenty years ago. Every night, he and Chacham Ovadia would study together. Chacham Ovadia would study the entire night, and before midnight they would study the book *Reshit Chochmah*. He would relate how much weeping, and mussar was there! Afterwards, at midnight, all night long they would do Tikkun Chatzot [midnight lamentations], with weeping!

Chacham Ovadia, when he married, after the seven days of the chupah, every night would sit at midnight, make confession, and weep in Tikkun Chatzot over the exile of the Shechinah [Divine Presence]. And the Rabbanit – the bride, saw a young man who all the time studies Torah, thus weeping, what is this weeping, and it bothered her and she would say to him: '**Dhilak [please], I do not want to see you crying.**' And he would say to her: 'This is the exile of the Shechinah, the Shechinah is in pain, what do you want me to do?!'

In her distress she went to the Beit Din [Rabbinical Court]: 'This person, I married him, every night he cries and I cannot, I too am crying, I do not know what to do.' The Beit Din said to Chacham Ovadia: **That he should do Tikkun Chatzot only two days a week, not every night, only Monday and Thursday.**"

And so it was.

He Would Read This with Enthusiasm

At our Porat Yosef Yeshiva, the Rosh Yeshiva would bring a book that came out at that time—the book "*Korban Isheh*" by Rabbi Eliyahu Shama. He would read from this book that Rabbi Eliyahu Shama testifies that in his city, Aram Zovah (Aleppo), everyone used to wake up every night to perform *Tikkun Chatzot* (the midnight lamentation prayer). The synagogues were full at midnight, and he testifies that "no tragedy occurred there, nor did anyone pass away before their time, and they all lived long lives." This is what Rabbi Eliyahu Shama wrote, which he saw with his own eyes.

And the Rosh Yeshiva would read this with enthusiasm. He would tell us: "What will become of us? Can't we do it every day? At least once a week let us do it!" And ever since, **every night of the sixth day of the week**, all of Porat Yosef, to this day, comes at midnight and performs *Tikkun Chatzot*. When we were young students, the Rosh Yeshiva started this. What a *Tikkun Chatzot* it was, what crying!

The **Chatam Sofer** also had a custom to conduct *Tikkun Chatzot* every night of the sixth day of the week all year long with his yeshiva students. His son, the Ketav Sofer, and his grandson, the Shevet Sofer, followed in his footsteps. When the Shevet Sofer grew weak in his old age, he could not join the young men, and thus the practice of *Tikkun Chatzot* weakened. **Then the Chatam Sofer came in a dream to his righteous daughter** and said to her: "Ask my grandson why he stopped holding *Tikkun Chatzot* in our holy yeshiva." From then on, the Shevet Sofer strengthened himself and restored the former glory.

This is the matter of rising for *Chatzot* (midnight) which can be spelled by the initials, Nun, Chet—the point of midnight—and one must try with all one's strength to strive for this with all our power. How can a person not weep for the destruction of the Holy Temple?! And this nullifies all harsh decrees.

A Tzaddik in His Fur Coat

"'Noah was a righteous, blameless man in his generations' — Chacham Ovadia would say that Noah was 'a tzaddik in his fur coat.' What is the meaning? For example, if a person is cold, he can bring a stove or heating and warm the room, and thus it is good for him, and good for the whole room as well; but he can also wrap himself in a fur coat and warm only himself."

"The same thing applies to Noah: instead of warming himself and warming his entire generation for the service of Hashem, he was a tzaddik in his fur coat, warming only himself, but he did not teach his generation the ways of Hashem."

"And **the Gaon Chida says in the name of the Kabbalists** that therefore Noah had to return in reincarnation. **Manoah**, the father of Shimshon (Samson), was a reincarnation of Noah, and therefore he was called Manoah — Mem (besides being a letter, also denotes from) from Noah. And Shimshon was a reincarnation of **Shem the son of Noah**; Shimshon, from the expression 'Shem Sheini', (that is to say) a second Shem, for the first 'Shem' was the son of Noah, and Shimshon is the second (a reincarnation) of Shem. Therefore it says, "These are the generations of Noah" — Noah was also present in the generations of Noah; Manoah was this reincarnation.

Moshe our Teacher also came to rectify the soul of Noah. Moshe our Teacher would go from place to place, bringing merit to the public! And Chacham Ovadia, too, **his great principle was to bring merit to the public**. I will tell you what things occurred with Chacham Ovadia, something incredible that will be told.

Hitched a Ride on a Garbage Truck

Chacham Ovadia used to wear out his feet to bring merit to the public. He would say: Not to be a righteous man in his fur coat. And one must understand that it was difficult for him to leave his home, because he had an immense passion to study. Sometimes he would cry, **and I saw it with my own eyes**. He would say: **"I have a great passion for Torah, but I know that this is the right thing—that I must go and bring merit to the public."**

He loved Torah in an unusual way; **just as a person loves money, so he loved Torah**. You invite him to a wedding, to an event, he would say: "Leave me alone, it doesn't matter who it is, what is this, I don't want to come. I want to learn Torah." But bringing merit to the public? On that, he could not give up. For the sake of bringing merit to the public, he would leave everything behind.

Our master, the Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka, used to wear out his feet together with Chacham Ovadia. They would go to the transit camps (*ma'abarot*), to save the immigrants. Chacham Ovadia they would take in cars, but the Rosh Yeshiva would travel by buses, and Chacham Ovadia would honor him and say to him: "To me, since I am a Chief Rabbi, I am recognized, they take me. You come by buses, **your virtue is greater than mine**."

But do not think that Chacham Ovadia would wait for them to take him. Once he had no way to travel, and there was a garbage truck there. He said to the driver: "Listen, I'm in a hurry to get to a place to deliver a sermon, take me with your truck." And the driver said to him: "It's not fitting, Honorable Rabbi." But the Rabbi did not give up: **"What difference does it make to you?! Take me!"** He brought him aboard and drove with him...

I sat with Chacham Ovadia about 25 years ago, and what did he tell me? "Look, after 120 years there is the Great and Awesome Day of Judgment, I don't know what will be. At first I thought I would merit through my book, *Yabi'a Omer*, that it would be an advocate for my uprightness. But afterwards I realized no! I have a notebook in which I wrote down all the places where I go to bring merit to the public, it hurt me very much to walk, but bringing merit to the public surpasses everything. By virtue of this, I want them to place me for the World to Come."

Shem, Cham, and Yefet — These Are the Three Meals

Our Rabbis further said: "Noah" (ש"נח) — Shem, Cham, and Yefet (שם חם ויפת) hints at the observance of Shabbat, for "No'ach (the more precise pronunciation of Noah)" this is Shabbat Menucha (rest), and one who keeps Shabbat properly is saved from three things: subjugation to kingdoms, the birth pangs of the Messiah, and the war of Gog and Magog.

All of this was hinted at in the verse: "And Noah begot three sons" — one who observes Shabbat rest properly "begets" three merits: **Shem** (שם) — initial letters of: Subjugation to Kingdoms (שעבוד מלכויות); **Cham** (חם) — initial letters of: Birth pangs of the Messiah (חבלי משיח); **Yefet** (יפת) — war of Gog and Magog, because the sons of Yefet were Gog and Magog). The first meal saves from subjugation to kingdoms, the second meal from the birth pangs of the Messiah, and the third meal from the war of Gog and Magog, who are the descendants of Yefet.

Why Interpret It As Disapproval?

"A righteous man, blameless in his generations" — What is the meaning of the word "in his generations"? Rashi says that there are among our Rabbis those who interpret this to his praise: that if he was like this in his generation, in other generations he would have been even more righteous; **and there are those who interpret it as disapproval:** that only in his generation was he considered righteous, but if he had been in other generations he would not have been considered righteous.

It is asked upon this: Why interpret it as disapproval? After all, it is difficult to say such things about Noah! **The Ben Ish Chai has a beautiful explanation for this:** **The Gemara relates in Tractate Shabbat** (page 53b) about a man whose wife passed away in childbirth and left him an infant. Poor man, Hashem save us! There was no one to nurse the infant, and as much as he searched for a wet nurse, he could not find one. He cried out to the Holy One, Blessed be He, **and a miracle occurred for him**, and he himself was able to nurse the infant.

And there is a dispute in the Gemara there: One says, **how great a person is this, that such a miracle was performed for him!** And one says, how degraded a person is this, that the order of creation was altered for him!

The Ben Ish Chai brings from the Maggid of Dubno that the two approaches do not disagree. "How great a person this is" — this is true, and certainly he is great to merit that the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave him such power to raise a child and save him. **And the second [opinion] is also correct:** it is true that a miracle was performed for him, but his merits were deducted. **As the Gemara says:** Whoever has a miracle performed for him, his merits are deducted.

So whoever interprets Noah to his praise says: What merit he has! And there are those who say: Listen, after all, since a miracle was performed for him, his merits were deducted. **Thus says the Ben Ish Chai.**

One Date from Each Market Stall...

There is another thing that needs to be known. How is it written there? "And the earth was corrupt before the L-rd, and the earth was filled with *chamas* (a form of violence)," "for the earth is filled with *chamas* (violence) because of them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth". Our Rabbis said: Their verdict was sealed only because of robbery (*gezel*). The prohibition of robbery is no simple matter!

The Midrash says: What is violence (*chamas*)? **Less than the value of a perutah (a small coin). They would pass by a market stall** and take from the fruit to taste. A person wanted a few dates, so he would pass by the first stall and take one date and say "no, this isn't it...". He goes to the second stall, takes another date, "no, this isn't it..." All this just because he wants to eat without money... do you understand? This is called *chamas*, less than the value of a *perutah*.

"The earth was filled with violence (*chamas*)" — the initial letters of **Male'ah Ha'aretz Chamas** (מלאה הארץ חמס) numerical value (*gematria*) equals (the Gematria value of) "this is robbery" (the first term is 53 and the second is 52, but Ba'al HaTurim to Gen. 48:5 allows for a difference of one in Gematria). **Our Rabbis say:** If there is a basket of creeping creatures (a parable for unfavorable actions), **who jumps to the front? Robbery.** One needs to know that if, Heaven forbid, someone has robbery in his hand, prayers are not heard, and this brings troubles, Heaven forbid.

Made Fun of Them

What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, say to Noah? **"Behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth; make yourself an ark of gopher wood, make the ark with compartments."** The Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded him: Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. **For 120 years** he was building it, and everyone was laughing at him: "What are you building?!" And he would say: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, is going to bring a flood and destroy everything". They said to him, "In your dreams at night... You, you have such thoughts? We know how to stop whatever comes! We are experts in all the Holy Names, we know what every angel rules over, we know everything." **What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do?** It is

true that they knew, but he **switched the angels**, he changed them, and made fun of them. "

And amazingly, how did Noah not despair? Everyone was laughing at him; he was building the ark and everyone was mocking him. **Rabbi Shach would say:** Noah had no doubt in what the Holy One, Blessed be He, told him, and therefore he was able to stand firm against them and not despair. From here, says the Rabbi, we learn **a great fundamental principle for life:** If a person wants to maintain their standing, they must be certain, without doubts, knowing that what they are doing **is the truth.**

200 Kilos Per Meal

Do you know what it means just to bring food for all the animals? It is not simple. How does the Holy One, Blessed be He, say to him? "**And you, take for yourself all of the food that is to be eaten, and gather it unto you, and it shall be for you and for them to eat.**"

(Genesis 6:21). And there are difficulties in this verse, two questions:

1. The word "for yourself" (*lecha*) seems redundant; it should have simply said "And as for you, take of all food."
2. That which it said, "and it shall be for you and for them to eat", seems redundant and obvious.

Rather, our Rabbis answer that if Noah had indeed needed to prepare food for all the wild beasts and animals that were with him in the ark for a full year, **even a hundred arks filled with food would not have been enough for all of them.** For were there not all kinds of strange and very large creatures there—*re'emim* and elephants, lions, leopards, and many species of beasts and birds. **The Ramban says,** there are 120 species of impure birds in the East and they are all in the category of Aya (some translate as falcon, some as vulture), and as for clean birds, they are beyond count.

Experts say that the elephant and the hippopotamus each eat 2 meals a day, and each meal is 200 kg. Go and calculate how much they eat for a full year, and that is just for these two animals... **For a full year, you would need to bring four hundred kilos of food every day, just for these two?! Where would you put it?...** And Noah's ark, according to the beasts and animals that were there, was small! It was all a miracle. How could they all be inside? Everything is the wonder of the Creator, blessed be He.

Rather, Hashem performed a great miracle for him, **and commanded him to prepare food only for himself alone**, and upon that little bit, a blessing would rest so that it would suffice for him and all the creatures for a full year by way of miracle. And the reason for the matter is that a blessing from Above does not rest upon an empty thing, as the Zohar wrote regarding Elisha the Prophet and the widowed

woman, whom he asked what she had in the house, since as long as there were vessels, the blessing rested.

And this is what the verse meant by "And you, take **for yourself**"—only for yourself alone—"all food that is to be eaten, and gather it **to yourself**," and I promise you that "it shall be for food for you and for them to eat"—that it will suffice for everyone by way of miracle; **thus the little contained the much**. That's how it is when living with faith.

The Price "Jumped" to \$5,000

There was a young girl who became newly observant (*chozeret biteshuva*). They lived abroad, and she was walking on the right path, doing everything modestly so her parents wouldn't notice—because if they did, they would kick her out, and she would have great troubles. One Shabbat, her parents decided they were traveling somewhere, and told her: "Listen, you stay here on Shabbat and open the store."

How could she open a store? What did she do? She opened the store before Shabbat, on Friday, prepared everything, left the lights on, everything needed in the store, so that everything would be ready. Shabbat morning, when the stores were opening, the store was already open, and she sat there praying, reading Psalms, and waiting.

Towards evening someone came in, wanting to buy a vessel. She did not want him to buy it. He asked her: "How much is this?" The item cost five dollars, but she told him: "It is five thousand dollars." "A vessel like this?" "Yes, that's how it is." He paces back and forth, walking around: "Okay, I want it, I must have it. This is something extraordinary in the world." And she says: "Look, it's impossible now. Let my parents come, you need to talk to them, it's an expensive item." "I'll give you double, ten thousand dollars. Give me the vessel."

With all her delaying tactics, another half hour passed, and a little more, and at the end Shabbat ended. She says, "listen, take it for the first price ... I was just raised the price without meaning it, because I observe Shabbat and I didn't want to sell on Shabbat." And he says: "No, no, that's not going to work. I'm giving you, as I said, **take ten thousand dollars**."

Her parents arrived, and she said to them: "Look, because I kept Shabbat, look at what you received for a single item." When they saw this, **they agreed to leave everything**, and they all repented (*started to be observant of Jewish Law*).

Maybe Aharon the Priest Saved the Airplane

Today one must know: We have destructive technology. Our Noah's Ark today—Noah's Ark is the yeshivas, synagogues, study halls (*batei midrash*). It is detached from the shocking impurity that passes over the earth. But today they

bring cell phones inside, iPhones, problems, troubles—this is no simple matter. Mighty things are happening in the world, and you don't know what to do, how to be saved from these troubles. All of this happens because of advanced technologies, because a person follows after falsehood.

Today our Noah's Ark is the Holy Zohar—so writes Rabbi Shimon in the Zohar. And one must be immersed in the Torah in order to be saved. A person who looks at what is happening in the world, these are no simple matters. You saw what happened these days **with the airplane on the holiday**. And it didn't just happen by chance on **the day of Ushpizin of Aharon**—for the Clouds of Glory came in his merit, and he made sure we would have joy on the holiday of Sukkot, which corresponds to the Clouds of Glory. And see a wonderful thing: Where is Aharon buried? At **Mount Hor**! And there in that area was this entire great miracle. **And everything is by virtue of the Sukkah and the waving (*na'anuyim*)** of the nation of Israel—**that is what saves!** There were about **150 Israelis** there, and one must know: This is a sign from Heaven, the Holy One, Blessed be He, saved them. But this is a hint to us that we need to be saved from everything happening in the overwhelming flood (of daily life).

What Is the Meaning of "Avraham ben Noah"?

"And the L-rd remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark." How does the Holy One, Blessed be He, remember us, how does the Holy One, Blessed be He, help us, how does the Holy One, Blessed be He, save His nation Israel!

Our Rabbis say that Noah merited to perform acts of loving-kindness (*chesed*), and by virtue of this loving-kindness, the Holy One, Blessed be He, remembered him. And what was this loving-kindness? With all the cattle, all the beasts [in the ark]. Did not Avraham our father ask Noah and the sons of Noah: "What saved you?" They said to him: **"The loving-kindness."** Because of this, Avraham our father chose to perform loving-kindness.

Rabbi Avraham Raphul Chida would tell us: "Avraham ben Noah — when Noah died", Abraham was 58 years old (*ben Noah, could be understood to mean, the age of 58 and it is also the exact Gematria value of the Hebrew name for Noah*) when Noah died. Then did he speak with Noah and asked him what saved him, and Noah said: Loving-kindness!

From Inside the Stolen Coat, Cries Were Heard

I want to tell you something that I am always amazed by. During the Holocaust, how many troubles and afflictions the nation of Israel went through—may trouble not rise up twice, let it not happen. One must cry to the Holy One, Blessed be He, all the time. Here, all the Palestine [referring to adversaries] and the whole world around the nation of Israel, they are waiting moment by moment to rise up from everywhere. To rise up from the Territories, from where they are found, woe is us.

From **Shomron** (Samaria), everything around, Jaffa, in Afula, everything around is full of them—may Hashem save us. **This Hamas** there in Gaza, it is not over, they let them live. Hezbollah, all the places, woe is us. The Holy One, Blessed be He, loves us, every moment He saves us, **every moment He saves**. It is something wondrous.

Look, when a person **performs an act of loving-kindness (*chesed*)**, see how the Holy One, Blessed be He, helps. What were the Germans doing? Taking them to camps; they didn't know they were taking them to extermination, **they still didn't know**. They would take the people, go to some camp, lock them in. People would go **with their jewelry** and put it outside, hide it somewhere, and say: "**When we leave at the end of the day**—one can never know how long it will be—they will take it back". How could they take it back? Poor things, poor things. **Women would walk with their gold**.

What did **the wicked Polish women** do? They would pounce on them in the middle of the road and take their gold from them. There were **two women** who were good friends, and two wicked Polish women came, pounced on them, saw what was there: "**What furs**, what gold, what a gold necklace," they said, "this one is probably rich". "What a coat she is wearing," they pounced on her, beat her like that, and she wouldn't give them the coat. In the end, they took the coat; they saw that **the coat was heavy**, and then they heard that **inside it there was a baby**. They opened the coat and saw, wow, wow, wow, a baby girl, **two months old**. How beautiful! They said: "This baby is Polish-Jewish". She says to her friend: "**Kill her immediately**". [The other] says: "No, she has no children; take her, **raise her**". That is what she did—she took her to raise her.

You Are Not Polish!

This mother (the true mother)—immediately, they crushed her and went to her eternal home [passed away].

Her friend also passed away. This girl grew up in a **Polish household**, knowing nothing of her origin. My goodness, she became **a prominent professor** and doctor. And what a doctor she was—she treated everyone.

One day, that wicked adoptive mother of hers passed away, and she went to the funeral, etc. A friend of her mother's came up to her and said: "Listen, **I want to reveal a secret to you**." What secret? "**You are Jewish**. Your mother adopted you." "What nonsense are you talking about? I am Polish just like everyone else; don't confuse me with this." She was about to hang up on her. She told her: "**I don't want to see you**; don't speak to me about me being Jewish." The friend said: "**Listen, I was your mother's best friend**, I was with her—let me tell you." She asked her: "Do you have any proof to show me?" The woman began to stutter. She told her: "**It's hard for you**, but listen to me. Such and such was the story: I told your mother that she should kill you, and she didn't want to; she wanted to raise you. She had no children; you are **an only child**, right? Yes. She raised you. Do you have proof?"

Yes, **you have a necklace** from your real mother, something is written on it, we don't know what is written, ask. It's a pretty necklace; because of it, we grabbed her."

She actually searched through **her mother's jewelry** and found a necklace. She didn't know what it was. She took a leave of absence and traveled to New York. She saw Jews and asked them: "What is this?" They told her: "Listen, it says '**Sarah**' here." She said: "So I'm Jewish? This is my necklace." In short, **she cleared things up there**, and they told her: "Look, it's impossible to know who you are, **but it seems you are Jewish**. Why? She says **she truly feels compassion** for everyone, and she's a compassionate nurse, while they are cruel. She thought it was perhaps because she had good character traits, but no, they told her: **You are of Jewish seed**. Look, your name is Sarah." She took her estate, and there they converted her LeChumra (to be strict) out of doubt, because they didn't know exactly. They found her a good young man, **she married him**, had children, and they came to Israel.

The Matching Necklace

There was a terror attack here. She told her husband: "Listen, you go home slowly, I will enter here and save people from this terrible attack." And that is what she did—she went in, began saving people, and went to the hospital helped there as well. And behold, she sees a Polish man who came, **speaking Polish**, an elderly grandfather, crying: "My granddaughter, my granddaughter!" Then her mother arrived and was caring for [people], saying: "**What happened to your daughter?** No one knows how to speak to him, and she knows the language." He said: "**She flew up above, came down**, and she is here in the hospital." She went to check, and found his granddaughter...

Everything is okay, **she was suffering from shock**. She stroked her, spoke to her in Polish, and slowly brought her back.

And suddenly, she sees on her mother **a necklace just like hers**. She says to the grandfather: "What is this necklace? I also want to buy one like it." He says: "**There is no other one like this**. I was a silversmith during the Holocaust, and I made a necklace **for my two daughters**. One was **killed in the Holocaust**, and one is the mother of this girl who lives with me, and this is her daughter." When she heard this, **she fainted**. They revived her, and she pulled out her necklace, saying to him: "**You are my father**, I also have a necklace like this." She found her father! By virtue of what? **Because she went to perform loving-kindness (chesed)**. The wonders of what happens in the world are unbelievable—how things unfold. The main thing is that now we will know **how we can elevate ourselves**.