



י"ז חשוון - כ"ז חשוון Heavenly Haven

THE MABUL WAS SENT BY HASHEM ON 17 CHESHVAN, 1656 (א'תרנ"ו), TO CLEANSE THE EARTH OF MANKIND'S CORRUPT WAYS. THE ONLY SURVIVORS WERE NOACH, HIS FAMILY, AND MEMBERS OF EVERY LIVING SPECIES, WHO FOUND REFUGE IN A SPECIALLY DESIGNED TEIVAH.

A YEAR LATER, ON 27 CHESHVAN, 1657 (א'תרנ"ז), THE GROUND FULLY DRIED AND HASHEM INSTRUCTED NOACH TO LEAVE THE TEIVAH.

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The word “*teivah*,” the Baal Shem Tov explains, also means “word.” To navigate life’s challenges and avoid being overwhelmed by the floodwaters of material concerns that threaten to engulf us, one must enter the “*teivah*” and immerse oneself in the words of Torah and *tefillah*.

The *teivah* also symbolizes the revelation of *Elokus* we will experience with the coming of Moshiach. Wild and tame animals, predator and prey, coexisted peacefully in the *teivah*. In the days to come we will see a similar harmony, as the *navi* foretells, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb” (Yeshayahu 11:6).

Based on the above, it would seem that the scenario of “בא אתה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה” (“Come into the *teivah*, you and your entire household” (Bereishis 7:1)) is the most ideal in terms of spiritual growth. The truth is, however, that the ultimate purpose of entering the *teivah* is for the subsequent

directive “צא מן־הַתֵּבָה”—to “**Leave** the *teivah*” (Bereishis 8:16):

While the *teivah* represents a safe haven for spiritual growth, its ultimate purpose is not just to provide refuge, but to allow one to emerge empowered. Just as Noach was instructed to enter the *teivah* for protection and preservation, he was later commanded to leave it, signifying a new beginning and a mission to rebuild and impact the world. Similarly, our spiritual growth and refuge in Torah and *tefillah* should lead us to emerge stronger and more committed to achieving the goal of making a *dira b’tachtonim*—a dwelling place for Hashem in this material world.

In order for the entry into the world to be a safe and successful one, it is imperative to begin with the directive “בא אל התיבה”—to immerse oneself in the words of Torah and *tefillah*. Once a person has properly fulfilled this directive, he must then fulfill the directive “צא מן התיבה.”



This profound dynamic is highlighted in the contrast between Tishrei and Cheshvan: Tishrei is a time when the world is elevated from its natural state of being—it is, so to speak, “within the *teivah*”—and it is in this setting that the *avoda* of Tishrei happens. The ultimate goal, however, is the *avoda* of Cheshvan, when the world reverts to its natural state as “*tachton*.” This is where the work of making a *dira b’tachtonim* happens.

The sequence is crucial, however. For the *avoda* of Cheshvan to be productive, one must first perform the *avoda* of Tishrei. This ensures that even after leaving the Tishrei “*teivah*” and entering the day-to-day of the material world (“Cheshvan life”), one will be able to influence and bring light into the world, including even the light and *giluyim* that—having already been experienced in the *teivah*, as mentioned above—will be seen and felt in the era of Moshiach.



In the story of Noach and the *mabul*, it's notable that Noach simply had to fulfill what Hashem instructed him—build the *teivah*; feed the animals in the *teivah*—and everything else was taken care of. Those who tried to prevent Noach from entering the *teivah* were unable to do so, all the animals entered the *teivah* on their own, and they all coexisted peacefully within.

Chazal say, “*Ani nivreisi l’shamesh es koni*”—I was created to serve Hashem: When a Yid does what Hashem instructs him to do, everything else that needs to happen will fall into place on its own.

There is a story about the Baal Shem Tov that illustrates this idea: The Baal Shem Tov once needed financial help and

went to a potential donor’s home. He knocked on the door but left before it was answered. The homeowner chased after him, learned of his need, and offered assistance. When asked why he didn’t wait for an answer, the Baal Shem Tov explained that sustenance comes from Hashem, but the Torah says, “Hashem will bless you in all that you *do*.” To fulfill “in all that you do,” he needed to take action, like knocking on the door. Having done his part, he trusted Hashem would do His.

Given that countless stories about the Baal Shem Tov have not reached us, the fact that this one has been preserved and shared with us is itself a testament to its value and the valuable lessons it contains for our own lives.

The lesson is that a Yid can reach a state in which his entire being is focused solely on fulfilling Hashem’s will. If he dedicates himself to this purpose, Hashem takes care of everything else without requiring any additional effort.

Takeaway:

Just as Noach’s *teivah* sheltered not only himself but also his family and representatives of every living creature, the protection and guidance we find in the words of Torah and *tefillah* should extend beyond ourselves. We have a responsibility to bring our families into this spiritual “*teivah*” as well, and, ultimately, to elevate the entire world, which will culminate with the arrival of Moshiach, *b’karov mamash!*

(Adapted from Sichas Motzei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5740; Shabbos Parshas Noach 5745)