



**RABBI JUDAH
MISCHEL**

Executive Director, Camp HASC
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of
Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Noach: L'chaim...Ul'vracha

Professor Elie Wiesel wrote about his lonely and difficult years after arriving in New York as a broken, exhausted refugee. Born and raised in Sighet in the tradition of Viznitzer chasidim, a turning point in his life came when he met the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Wiesel attributed his gaining hope, and redemptive strength to move forward and rebuild his life after the War, to this relationship.

In his memoir, *All the Rivers Run to the Sea*, Wiesel describes one of his meaningful visits to 770 Eastern Parkway for *yechidus*, a private audience with the Rebbe on Simchas Torah. He was welcomed into to Rebbe's room and was offered to 'say L'chayim':

The Rebbe handed me a glass filled to the brim with vodka.

"Rebbe," I said, "in Viznitz, a Chossid does not drink alone."

"Nor in Lubavitch," the Rebbe replied.

The Rebbe emptied his glass in one gulp. I followed suit.

"Is one enough in Viznitz?" the Rebbe asked.

"In Vishnitz," I said bravely, "one is but a drop in the sea."

The Rebbe smiled; "In Lubavitch as well."

He handed me a second glass and refilled his own. He said L'chaim, I replied L'chaim, and we emptied our glasses.

"Let me bless you so you can begin again...."

Our sedra chronicles the story of the destruction and rebuilding of the world during the generations that precede and follow the *mabul*. Alighting from the *teivah* to find the world completely wiped out,

וַיְחַל נֹחַ...וַיֵּטֶע כְּרָם...וַיִּשֶׂה מִרְהִי"ן וַיִּשְׁכַּר וַיִּתְגַּל
בְּתוֹךְ אֲהֵלָהּ

"And Noach began...he planted a vineyard...And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself inside his tent (9:20-21).

Rashi comments: in "beginning" by planting a vineyard, *וַיֵּטֶע עֵצְמוֹ חֵלֶץ*, "he profaned himself (as in *chol*)," as he ought to have started rebuilding society by planting something else. The 'new world' should have begun with something that would lead to goodness in life, and peace.

After the murder of his family (including his great father and teacher, Rav Elchonon hy"d), Rav Simcha Wasserman and his wife spent their lives spreading Torah and rebuilding Yeshivos and Kollelim in the United States and Eretz Yisrael with incredible sacrifice and dedication. In shiurim, Rav Simcha often referred to the demise of Noach and the tragic conditions which Noach faced. 'Can we even begin to understand the despair and loneliness he must have felt in stepping out of the ark and viewing the world in total destruction?

How can we judge him for seeking out a bit of comfort in a glass of wine? The Torah has numerous references to the uplifting qualities of wine: *וַיֵּן יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ*, “Wine brings joy to the heart of man” (*Tehillim*, 104:15). The wisest of all men, Shlomo Hamelech, himself suggested that we “give wine to those who are bitter of soul” (*Mishlei*, 31:6).

Reb Simcha answered with self-revelatory insight, reflecting on his own life’s mission. Chazal’s indictment against Noah was in fact justified. Hashem had entrusted Noah with a mission to rebuild the world after the devastating Flood. Instead of wallowing in his own personal misery and seeking an escape from his sorrows, Noah was to have planted wheat, to sustain the new world emerging from the ruins.

Another great builder who emerged from the ruins, is Rav Yisrael Meir Lau, shlit’a. In “Out of the Depths”, the former Chief Rabbi recounts the harrowing episode of the last conversation he had with the tormented survivor, Yiddish poet, Itzik Manger in the hospital. Suffering from alcoholism and depression, the bedridden and emaciated poet poured out his heart to Rav Lau, struggling to reconcile the Torah’s description first of Noah as a *tzadik* (6:9) and then later as an *ish ha’adamah*, “a man of the earth” and a lowly drunkard.

“I have reached the stage where I understand Noah,” sighed Manger. “When he went back home after the *Mabul* and began to look for his hometown, his *shtetl*, he found nothing. He wanted to visit his neighborhood *shtiebel*, his *beis medrash*, but found no trace! Where was the postman he knew, the wagon driver? No one was left. No house or street, no

neighborhood or friends — not a living soul.... In order to forget his solitude, he drank the wine and became drunk.”

Manger continued his lament by naming family members, communities and yeshivos throughout Europe — all gone. It seemed to him that “all existence on earth had perished” (7:23): “No one is left. I remained alone in the world. So you will excuse me... if sometimes, in order to forget the horrors, I drink a little, like Noah after the flood.”

.....
HaYom Yom is a collection of daily aphorisms and sources compiled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, with the instruction to “live with each day.” In it, the Rebbe shares two versions of how one might respond to the blessing of *L’chaim*.

Citing the downfall of Noah in our Parsha, we are advised to respond, *L’chaim tovim u-l’shalom*, “For good life and for peace!” A second response, recommended by the Maggid of Mezritch, is *L’chayim v’livracha*, “For life and blessing!” *Livracha* may also be read as *leiv racha*, ‘sensitive heart’, reflecting the true *avodah* and goal of sharing a drink with another Jew — opening our hearts to feel and connect with the other, to begin life again together, acknowledging the Source of life and goodness and blessing.

Having spent years of solitude and hard labor in Siberia, Reb Mendel Futerfas, zy’a, had tasted the bitterness of Soviet persecution, yet maintained his faith and joy. He was known for his lengthy *farbrengens* and for embracing the *avodah* of ‘making a *l’chaim*’. After all, the problem was not that Noah planted a vine and prepared a drink; it was that Noah drank alone, and

did not bless another with 'L'chaim.'

Whatever flood, challenge, or difficulty we may face, may we be healthy, happy and well; may we be blessed to open our hearts and share with friends, and to 'begin again' with revealed good: *L'chaim, l'chaim U-livricha!*

לע"נ הרב אלעזר שמחה בן הרב אלחנן בונים ז"ע

In memory of Rav Simcha Wasserman, zt'l, whose yahrtzeit is this week. ■



Be'er Tziporah a"h - Bottled Water Gemach



Walking down King George St. in Jerusalem and want a cold bottle of water?

Come help yourself to a bottle at
52 King George.

In loving memory of Yoni's wife **Tziporah a"h**, a true Eishes Chayil, always full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and brought life and strength to so many people, that she touched! She was like Aron, who loved peace and pursued peace.



Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

To help refill the supply -
send tax deductible donations for
Be'er Tziporah a"h Bottled Water Gemach
to Chabad of Rechavia -
Rabbi Yisroel Goldberg email

Rabbi@JerusalemChabad.org
02 800-1717

www.JerusalemChabad.org/DonateShekels

הודו לה' כי טוב

AIR CONDITIONING ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND INSTALLATIONS

“Tzvi Air is a pleasure to work with and did an amazing job!”

Jamie Geller, Celebrity Chef

**100%
SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED**

Nothing matters to us more than a satisfied and happy customer. **We guarantee that you will be 100% thrilled.**

**BEST PRICE
GUARANTEED**

If you find the same level of quality and service for a lower price, **we'll match it.**

**NEW
DESIGNERS
AND ARCHITECTS**



Send your plans for free design today.

**Call / Whatsapp 02-628-8282
or email us at info@tzviar.com**