

Parshas Noach

Introduction

The three major themes of this parsha are: The story of the Flood, the story of the Tower of Babel, and the enumeration of the ten generations from Noach to Avraham.

To appreciate Parshat Noach, we really have to take a look at the end of last week's parsha, Bereishit. There we are informed that, during the ten generations leading from Adam to Noach, the world was falling apart. "Hashem saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every product of the thoughts of his heart was but evil always. And Hashem reconsidered having made Man on earth, and He had heartfelt sadness. And Hashem said, 'I will blot out Man whom I created from the face of the ground – from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them.'"

The world is in big trouble. Nevertheless, the ending is very sweet: "**But Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem.**" [Bereishis 6:5-8]

And so, in the middle of this terrible global storm, where we see there is no future for humanity, Noach comes to save the day.

Many commentators look at Noach as a flawed character. Although there does not exist a person, even a person as great as Moshe, who hasn't made mistakes in his life, the fact that the Torah has reasons to criticize Noach does not necessarily have to totally demean his character. The very fact that we say that Noach "found favor in the eyes of G-d" is a remarkable statement. If the Torah wrote these words about us, we would certainly be ecstatic. The mystics, in their commentaries, look at Noach in a favourable light.

Various Interpretations of the Name "Noach"

When Noach's father named him, it is written: "And he called his name Noach, saying, "This one will bring us **comfort** (in Hebrew, "**nechama**") from our work and from the toil of our hands, from the ground which Hashem has cursed." [Bereishis 5:29] Noach's father looked upon his son as a person who would be a source of comfort, a source of consolation for the world. He would be the antidote to the sadness and destruction that would soon be taking place in the world.

The Zohar elaborates on the name "Noach," stating that there is a way to understand Noach based on **Shabbat**. After all, "Noach" means "rest." The Zohar says: "On this day (Shabbat), the Worlds Above are at rest and the World Below are at rest." On a simple level, what is the connection between Noach and Shabbat? The great Seer of Lublin comments: "The Torah describes the terrible state the World is in, the terrible sins that bring the world to the destruction of humanity until its descent to the lowest level of impurity, and suddenly it says: 'And Noach found favor in the eyes of G-d.' There is one pure, unblemished, refined, holy person – Noach – among all the surrounding filth. This is the mystery of Shabbat. Shabbat has the power to lift the Jew out of all that is destructive and ugly that surrounds him.

Shabbat is like Noah's Ark, a haven that can protect a person from all the destruction that surrounds him. The six weekdays are like a storm. When we welcome Shabbat with the Kabbalat Shabbat Psalms, we read (Psalms 93: 4): "More than the roar of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea – You are Mighty on High, Hashem." Shabbat breaks through the tempest of the six days, and, just as Noah's ark saved the remnants of mankind, so too the Ark of Shabbat has the ability to bring the serenity and the beauty that safeguard us from the storms raging in the world; Shabbat saves us from extinction.

There is a deeper understanding of this connection between the "rest" of Noah and Shabbat. If we can understand it, we can be saved from many other floods raging in our lives.

Rashi has a different explanation for the name "Noach." He comments that until Noah came onto the scene, man did not have tools (e.g., a hoe, a spade, a plow). When people planted wheat, the earth would bring forth thorns and thistles, a phenomenon that began when G-d cursed Adam after he sinned. And so, not only did the earth not yield bountiful produce, but also people had to dig into the earth with their hands, as they did not possess tools for agriculture. Life was difficult. And then Noah came into the world and invented tools. And so Rashi explains the word "Noach" to mean "**Menucha**" – rest. People had a rest from all their difficult work. The world was able to rest thanks to Noah's inventions. Even the most primitive inventions were able to bring a certain amount of rest to the world. Nevertheless, Rashi adds that if you consider Noah's name to be based on the word "comfort" – "nechama" – that comparison is not grammatically correct. You would have had to call Noah "Menachem," says Rashi. Rashi does not totally disregard the concept of "comfort" as it applies to Noah, but he says that the word "Menucha" – "rest" – is much more closely related to "Noach," grammatically speaking. Rashi emphasizes that the primary characteristic of Noah is "Menucha," while a minor attribute is "nechama."

Let's look more deeply into what Rashi is getting at: Why does he emphasize that Noah is a Man of Rest? Why did Noah find favor in the eyes of G-d? Rashi refers to a source in the midrash – Midrash Rabbah 25: 2: "From the time that G-d created the first man, He gave him dominion over everything. The cow listened to the plowman, and the furrows listened to the farmer. Once man sinned, they rebelled against him. The cow did not listen to the plowman and the furrows did not listen to the farmer. Once Noah came, they **rested** from their rebellion. How do we know this? It says over here, 'resting' and it says over there, 'resting.' *[There is a Talmudic principle that states that if you have two different sources that use a common linguistic expression, you can associate the two concepts.]* In Shemot 23, referring to Shabbat, the Torah says, '...so that your donkey and ox will rest.' Just like over there the term 'resting' is referring to the rest of the ox, so too our verse is referring to the resting of the ox." Both the animals and the earth instinctively rebelled against man after he sinned. But when Noah came onto the scene, the animals and the earth rested.

The Jewish Concept of Menucha

Let's define the word "Menucha." The non-Jewish concept has infiltrated into the Jewish concept, and our conception of what Menucha really is has been terribly blemished. The secular definition of "rest" is: relaxation that comes upon concluding your work. It is a feeling of delight and enjoyment upon completion of a task I'd rather not do or a task that perhaps I do enjoy but would like to finish so that I can throw off my jacket, take off my shoes and flop down on the couch. **That is not the Jewish concept of Menucha!**

Once we understand the Torah definition of "Menucha," we will be in a better position to think about and act upon this concept as Jews. The general rule is based on the blessing that Jacob, before his death, gave to his son Yissachar. The interpretation of this blessing is that Yissachar will dedicate his life to the study of Torah, and Jewish wisdom will be disseminated from Yissachar to the rest of the Jewish People. Nevertheless, upon reading the actual blessing, if we apply the secular definition of "rest," we expect an ending different from that which is actually written. "Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey; he **rests** between the boundaries. He saw **rest [Menucha]** that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, yet he bent his shoulder to bear and he became an indentured laborer." [Bereishis 49:14-15] If rest is so good, why isn't Yissachar relaxing on a beach in Miami with a Pina Colada in his hand? Instead, we see in the verse that he works even harder – "bending his shoulder to bear." Obviously, the Torah's definition of Menucha is absolutely different from the secular meaning.

The Torah says that when there is a particular goal you are seeking to fulfill, a goal that gives meaning and purpose to your life, and you see your labor unfolding and finally you see the fruits of your labor – at this point, you experience a feeling of Menucha. The goal of Yissachar's life was to be immersed in the depths of Torah. It is not easy to be a scholar. The Talmud says that the hardest work in the world is learning Torah. I challenge you to sit in a yeshiva for 16 hours daily and study Torah without losing your mind or falling asleep – it's not easy! The Talmud says it: "Torah mateshet kocho shel adam" – studying Torah drains your strength. Yissachar's goal in life was to toil in the field of Torah: He focused his life on that goal, and he could achieve that goal instantly. This meant that there was never a day off for vacations. This meant there was a sense of destiny and purpose during every moment of the day.

Consequently, it appears that "Menucha" does not mean "rest." Rather, it means **Accomplishment of Goals**. (Just like when an arrow hits its target, it comes to a rest in the target.)

People enjoy working at things in which they are successful. They enjoy feeling a sense of accomplishment and feeling they are making a difference.

On the other hand, a person who has a mundane job can't wait for the day to be over. He watches the clock to see when it's time to go home – all this person wants is the money. The rest this person looks forward to is the antithesis of the Jewish concept of rest. A Jew is supposed to be living a life in which there is a clear goal in front of you and every minute you are working at that goal and accomplishing that goal. The sense of satisfaction you experience at accomplishing your goal matches the Jewish definition of "Menucha."

Manifestations of Menucha in Mystical Dimensions

We know that everything in the world is three-dimensional. In the world of mysticism, there are also three dimensions – but these are different from the spatial ones we are used to. They are called **Olam**, **Shana** and **Nefesh**. These are translated as: “World” (meaning the physical world), “Time” (lit. “year”); and “Soul.” These are the three dimensions of the mystical way of life.

Let’s examine the first dimension:

The Spiritual Dimension of Olam – the Physical World [Place]:

How does Menucha manifest itself in the dimension called “Olam”? It is manifested in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple is the quintessential manifestation of Menucha in the spiritual dimension called “Olam.”

In Deuteronomy 12:9, the Torah says: “For you will not yet have come to the resting place [haMenucha] or to the heritage that Hashem, your G-d, gives you. Yonatan’s Targum commentary explains, based on Talmudic tradition, that “Menucha,” in this case, refers to the Temple – the House of Resting. As King David says in Psalm 132: 13-14: “For Hashem has chosen Zion, has desired it for His habitation. This is My **resting** place [Menuchati] forever, Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.” Again, this refers to G-d’s resting place. Now, what did people do all day in the Temple? They did “**avoda**” – **work!** There was no such thing as someone standing around in the Beit Hamikdash doing nothing. There were no chairs on the Temple Mount! All day long, the Cohen slaughtered the animals, sprinkled their blood, separated their limbs, and served the meals. The Levites sang and urged people to do teshuvah. All day long there was hustle and bustle. The Cohanim were the epitome of alacrity in their work. Resting place? This was not the place for resting at all. The Beit Hamikdash was a place where people worked very hard. The common Talmudic phrase used to describe the activities taking place in the Beit Hamikdash was: **Avodat Beit Hamikdash – the Work in the Beit Hamikdash.**

Notwithstanding what appeared to the naked eye, the commentaries refer to this place as the House of Menucha. But it can’t be that this was a house of resting! The same idea as we saw previously in the case of Yissachar applies here! What was the goal of the work done in the Beit Hamikdash? All of mankind labours in this world for one purpose only; namely, to bring G-d’s Presence into this world, so that His Presence fills our lives. This is the final destination of the world. And the place where this goal is felt more than anywhere else is the very Beit Hamikdash in the Holy City of Jerusalem, where Heaven and Earth meet. In that place, the Presence of G-d is palpable. As it is written in Isaiah 66: 1: The Heaven is My throne and the Earth is My footstool; what house could you build for Me, and what place could be My **resting** place [Menuchati]? The answer is Jerusalem – the Holy Temple. When G-d says, This is my Resting Place, He means, this is My Goal. After this goal is reached, the world struggle will come to an end – at that time there will be no more worries about peace vs. war or good vs. evil.

When Mashiach comes, we will have reached our final destination; that is, Menucha. When Hashem comes back to His House, all Jews will be gathered from the four corners of the Earth and will be back in Jerusalem. As King David says: “Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.” Just as Yissachar spends every moment of his life working on his goal of Torah study, as

there is nothing nobler than this, so too, the goal of every Jew is to bring G-d back to his Home. Once the goal is accomplished, one experiences true rest. Contrast this with people who say, "When I retire, I'll have a few days off and I'll be able to rest and maybe I'll take a few classes." Every moment of Yissachar's life is filled with Menucha because he is constantly striving toward his goal. Even though Yissachar bends his shoulder to the yoke of Torah, nevertheless he experiences that sense of rest that only a person who studies Torah can have. The Menucha comes from a constant awareness that one is coming one step closer to the goal every moment.

People go on vacations because they are searching for an escape to what they believe is a better place, albeit for a short time. But often, when speaking to people who have just come back from vacation, you will hear them say, "Well, now I need a vacation to recuperate from my vacation." Especially nowadays, when there is so much anxiety involved in going on a vacation, you can understand the need to rest up after a trip. Think of what's involved as you go through the customs and immigration inspections! Think of having to go on a plane! Think of waiting for your luggage to come off the carousel. This is your dream vacation!

The point is that **if you are a person who has no destination in life, wherever you go you will be miserable. On the other hand, if you are a person with a destination in life, you will be happy to work every day of your life – because you have a goal.** If you lead a life of doing things you don't want to do, the French Riviera won't make you happy – because you know you have to come back to reality in two weeks' time. (You're already unhappy even on the first day of your "vacation," because you know it will soon be over.)

It is recorded that the Lubavitcher Rebbe who became Rebbe in the 1950's never took a day's vacation in his life. It is not that he was a workaholic, but that he had Menucha every day of his life and therefore felt no need to take a "vacation."

The story is told of a Chassidic Rebbe in a little town. In the thirty years he had served his community, he had never taken a vacation. The congregants felt sorry for him. They got together and decided to give their Rebbe a vacation. The board of directors approached him with this offer, and he said, "You're right. I was also thinking about that. Do you know what I'm going to do?" And, as he spoke, he took up a gemarah, walked to another corner of the room and said, "I'm going to sit here and learn now. This is what I'm going to do for my vacation."

The Spiritual Dimension of Shana – Time

How does Menucha manifest itself in the realm of "Shana"? The answer is Shabbat. On Friday night, you come to shul and sing Lecha Dodi, welcoming in the Shabbat Bride. In this poem, we sing, "To welcome the Sabbath, come let us go, for it is the source of blessing." This means that during the weekdays, a person moves toward Shabbat. Shabbat is our destination in time. And every moment we spend in time must be one step we take to get closer to Shabbat. And as we say further on in the Shabbat prayers, "You [G-d] called it the most coveted of days." In other words, you live Sunday for Shabbat, you live Monday for Shabbat, etc. In Hebrew, the weekdays are called First Day, Second Day, etc., as they have no other purpose but to lead up to the goal of the week; namely, Shabbat. As it says in Bereishit, "G-d completed, on the seventh day, His work that He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work that He had done." [Bereishis 2:2] It is interesting to note

that the Hebrew word “Vay’chal” – which means “He completed” can also be translated as “longing or desiring” (e.g., Kal’ta nafshi’.) Shabbat is the day one longs for.

Rashi asks what was there left for G-d to do after he finished all his work on the seventh day. What was the world lacking, asks Rashi. And he answers, “**Rest [Menucha]. Shabbat came, rest came.**” Menucha does not mean falling asleep on the couch with the newspaper over your face! **Menucha means that the world now has a goal and destination.** Rashi concludes, “The work was completed and finished.” How do we define Shabbat Menucha? How should you manifest the Menucha of Shabbat in your life? You review the Torah you have learned all week, you speak about Torah and Torah values to your children. You discuss Torah topics with guests. When we say the kiddush, we begin with the words, “Vay’chulu Hashamayim v’ha’aretz” – “The Heaven and the Earth were completed.” But remember that the root of the verb “vaychulu” (to finish or complete) can also mean “to long for.” We long for this time of completion called Shabbat.

Now we can understand why the Torah is so harsh in its treatment of Shabbat violators – people who intentionally and knowingly desecrate the Shabbat.

By “intentionally,” we mean the person knows what Shabbat is and purposely wants to desecrate it. Now, 99% of Jews who do not keep Shabbat do not fit into this category. Most Jews don’t really know what it means to keep Shabbat; they know only that it is a Day of Rest. But a person who learned in yeshiva and knows full well all the details of Shabbat observance and chooses to desecrate it deserves the harshest punishment. What is the punishment for this deliberate Shabbat violator? Death. Nowadays, we do not sentence such a person to death. But in times of the Temple, when G-d’s Presence hovered over the Temple, that person was sentenced to death.

Why do we kill the Shabbat violator? The Talmud says that if someone who does not keep the Shabbat, it is akin to his denying the existence of the entire Torah.

Now, if all a person knows about Shabbat is that it is a day of rest, how can he understand the severity of violating the Shabbat? According to the mindset of the secular person, if Shabbat is a day of rest, then he can choose how he wants to rest. He wants to choose how he wants to relax, because he equates Menucha with lying on the beach, playing golf or watching TV or any other forms of “rest.”

The Chassidic masters explained this lack of appreciation for the true Shabbat with the following parable: A king built a new palace and told the artisans exactly how he want the palace built. They worked for months and months until the palace was completed. The king came to inspect the palace – everything was perfect, down to the last detail. The royal movers came and moved in all the king’s furniture and personal belongings. One morning, the king woke up to a sound of loud banging. He ran into the hallway to see what the commotion was all about, and he saw one of the carpenters chiselling away at one of the beautiful marble pillars. The king was enraged. How could this man dare touch something so perfect?

Here is another example: Imagine you are in the Louvre looking at the painting of the Mona Lisa. You see a man walk up to the painting with a little palette in his hand and he starts to add some touches of paint to the picture. As the police drag him away and the paparazzi try

to get a good picture of him, he says, “I felt that this picture needed something done to it, something Da Vinci never got around to doing.”

If something is the perfect goal, there is no need to do anything to perfect it. When the Holy Temple stands in Jerusalem, it will not need added touches. It will not need an “entertainment centre” or a “family room.” The measurements of the Beit Hamikdash are perfect to the minutest detail. If you try to change any detail, it is tantamount to saying that the original is not perfect.

If a person works on Shabbat, it is tantamount to saying that the person does not accept the fact that Shabbat is the destination of the week. It is like saying that there is no destination. As it says in the Siddur, Shabbat is the goal (in the dimension of Time) of Heaven and Earth.

The Spiritual Dimension of Nefesh – Soul

How does Menucha manifest itself in this dimension? It manifests itself in the Tzaddik – the righteous person. As King David says in Psalm 10: 25, “The Tzaddik is the foundation of the world.” King David, as much as he wanted to, was not fortunate enough to be able to build the Temple. The Rabbis tell us that he did not merit building the Temple because he wasn’t a man of peace. The Talmud tells us that he never had a good dream in his life; he never slept more than 60 winks. His life was a continuous struggle. And he never reached the destination he hoped for. But he had a son named Shlomo.

The name “Shlomo” means “peace. This is closely related to the word “Shelemut” – perfection. In Chronicles I 22: 9-10, G-d tells David: “Behold a son will be born to you; he will be a man of **rest** [Menucha], and I shall grant him rest from all his enemies all around. His name will be Shlomo, and I will bestow peace and tranquility upon Israel in his days. He will build a Temple for My name’s sake; he will be a Son to Me and I will be a Father to him. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.”

We see from this that the only one who can build the place of Menucha is the Man of Menucha. Only the man who reaches his life’s goals in the realm of Nefesh can have Menucha in the realm of Olam.

There is a certain type of Jew whom we call a Shabbos Jew. This does not mean simply that he observes the laws of Shabbat, but rather it refers to this person’s being a man of Menucha. His whole life is filled with dedication to his spiritual goal and working toward his destination. Our Rabbis tell us that Shlomo Hamelech never had a bad dream. He never lost a night’s sleep. Our Rabbis tell us that there were fifteen generations from Avraham to Shlomo. The number 15 is symbolic. In the lunar cycle, the moon is at its fullest on the 15th of the month. And therefore, this is a spiritually auspicious time. Our major holidays occur at the full moon. The Zohar tells us that during the days of King Shlomo, the moon was always full. What does this mean? It means that there was always a mission being accomplished. Moreover, when Mashiach comes, we are told that the moon will always be full. In this case, it means that the blemish of the moon will be corrected; namely, its deficiency in reflecting the light will be corrected. In King Shlomo’s time, we had a taste of what would occur at the end of the world. His Temple could have been everlasting were it not for the mistakes he committed. Nevertheless, he was the embodiment of the Tzaddik, the Man of Menucha.

It says in Talmud Sanhedrin 113b: “When a Tzaddik comes to the world, goodness comes to the world, as it is written, ‘This one will bring us **comfort/rest** from our work and from the toil of our hands.’” Whenever there is real rest, there must also be comfort or consolation – and vice versa. The tzaddik is the Man of Menucha. Last week we mentioned that the tzaddik can put the physical and spiritual worlds together. He is not an extremist. The job of the tzaddik is to take the world that is full of impurity and perdition and rectify these negative forces and bring the world back to its goal. **The tzaddik reminds the world that Menucha is a good thing. He teaches the world that to be goal oriented is a good thing and can allow the world to “rest above and rest below,” as the Zohar says. The tzaddik gives you a sense of purpose.**

Whereas Shabbos is the goal for time and the Beit Hamikdash is the goal for space, the tzaddik is the goal for humanity. Noach was that tzaddik. He brought the Waters of Consolation, the waters of tranquillity, to a corrupt world. **He taught the world that one must have a goal in life.** He taught the world that living without a goal – without a focus – was the curse of humanity. The source of all sadness in life is toiling all your life for nothing. If your life is a series of meaningless goals, whatever you do gives you no sense of accomplishment. A meaningful goal, on the other hand, brings comfort and tranquillity. The curse of the first man was, “In sadness you will eat your food.” After Adam sinned, the whole world rebelled against his plans, because there was no sense of purpose.

Now, G-d loves the Jewish People and He didn’t want them to fade into oblivion. And so He sent the world three gifts of hope and destination to rescue us from a life of emptiness: Shabbat, the Beit Hamikdash, and the Tzaddik. These three gifts are the source of our joy. As we sing in the Shabbat zemirot, “Rest and happiness, a light unto the Jews, the day of rest, the day of delight.” When you have Menucha, you have Simcha. When you have a goal and an accomplishment, you experience joy. A person without a real goal is never going to experience joy.

The word “Olam” (“world”) comes from the word “ne’elam” – “hidden.” This means that the real point of life is concealed. It is hard to see beyond the physical layers. It is hard to find the right goals; it is hard to find spirituality. The heretics and the atheists say that there is no Creator; that everything happens by accident; and that therefore there is no goal of creation. And so they recommend enjoying everything now, while you still have it. There is no goal, say the atheists. What does this mean? It means there is also no Menucha. **The atheists brought the greatest evil to the world by robbing the world of a sense of Menucha. They robbed the world of a sense of what’s right.** The atheists have taken away the peacefulness from man, and have substituted real goals with make-believe, phoney goals that are as fickle as the wind.

But when the Man of Menucha comes along, no one can take away his tranquillity. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein z”l, was a classic example of a person who experienced Menucha. He was a relaxed Jew, yet he never rested for one minute. He was busy all day long, from 3 or 4 in the morning until late at night. He never had to take a vacation on the French Riviera! He enjoyed Menucha every minute. This great tzaddik suffered in his life. He had to run away from the communist Russians, and when he came to America, he lived on the Lower East Side, far from a life of monetary affluence. After he passed away, people asked his wife, “How was it being married to Rav Moshe Feinstein?” And she said, “Living with Rav Moishe was like Purim every day.” All the external turmoil did not invade his inner peacefulness.

A Jew has Shabbat; a Jew has Yerushalayim; a Jew strives to be a tzaddik. A Jew has Torah; a Jew has mitzvot; and the Almighty has guaranteed we will reach our goal. We believe that G-d is guiding us toward the final goal of the world. We don't believe the world is a lost spaceship that has spun out of control. That is why a Jew can be much happier than a non-Jew.

Ultimate Menucha vs Temporal Menucha

The culmination of Menucha in terms of Olam [the physical world] is the Temple. The ultimate Menucha in terms of Shana (time) is The Messianic Era – in the days of Mashiach, there will be no jealousy, and there will be peace on Earth. And the ultimate destination of Nefesh [the soul] is The Messianic King – he will be the Ultimate Tzaddik.

But until we reach that final time, all we can experience right now is but a taste of what will be.

Where do we feel a taste of what it's like to be in the Beit Hamikdash – the definitive place in the world? In our synagogues, our yeshivas, our Hebrew schools. Even our home can be elevated to a place of sanctity. How do we know this? The Talmud tells us that a shul is a "mikdash me'at" – a miniature Temple. When you go to shul every day, you are hitting the goal. When you go to a Torah class, you are hitting the goal. When you send your child to a Jewish Day School, you are hitting the goal. One day we will get to the Beit Hamikdash; but in the meantime, we try our best within our present possibilities.

Where do we experience the goal of time? Shabbat. Shabbat is the taste of the Everlasting Shabbat.

And, even though we don't have the Messianic King, we see a taste of his essence in every tzaddik.

Even though we don't have the Temple and we don't have the Messianic king, Hashem consoles us by enabling us to have a glimpse of what the future has in store. Even though the goal of the world is hidden, we can be comforted by the taste of Menucha G-d has provided for us. This constitutes the joy of being Jewish.

Toward the end of Shabbat, as we sit around the table during Seudah Shelishit and sing zemirot, let us remember the words of King David in the 23rd Psalm: "Hashem is my shepherd, I shall not lack. In lush meadows He lays me down, beside tranquil waters [**Mai Menuchot**].... Your rod, and your staff, they comfort me [**Yenachamuni**]." If we live Shabbat correctly, we feel the sense of having accomplished part of our goal "beside the tranquil waters" and we feel the sense of comfort that stems from knowing that we have been successful in getting a glimpse of what it will be like in the Messianic Era.

In our daily prayers, we thank G-d for not making us a non-Jew. The non-Jew has no goals (except for those who keep the Seven Noahide Laws). The non-Jew says, Weekends are made for Michelob. The Jew says, Weekends are made for Menucha. That's the difference.

A Concluding Parable

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin instituted a strange custom. He would come into the yeshiva where the boys were learning, stop the learning, and tell the boys a story of wisdom. Once he told the following story:

*There was once a Jew who spent his whole life in a village. In this village there were, at most, another two Jews. There was no shul in the village, and this Jew did not even know how to daven. This Jew decided to visit the city so that he could go to a shul and daven with a minyan. He saved his money, and, just before Rosh Hashanah, traveled to the city, and went to shul. He walked in and saw everyone “shokeling.” And so he shokeled too. When the congregation reached the Avinu Malkeinu prayer, all of a sudden this Jew saw hundreds of people screaming and crying, begging Hashem to save them. This Jew didn’t understand the reason for this outpouring of emotion. He came to the conclusion that there must be a pogrom. He walked over to someone to ask what was going on, but everyone hushed him up. He kept thinking to himself, Why are they crying? Since people are in Shul a long time, perhaps they are hungry. Feeling hungry himself, he began to cry too. Then suddenly it was very quiet. He wanted to know why it was so quiet, but when he tried to ask, everyone hushed him up. Suddenly he remembered that, on his way to the shul, he had smelled the kugels the wives were preparing for the noon meal. He came to the conclusion that now it was quiet because everyone was comforted by the thought of the kugels they would soon eat. But then, at the Unetaneh Tokef prayer, again there was crying and screaming. Now the Jew was totally bewildered. He thought and thought, and then reached this conclusion: **Even though everyone knows there’s a kugel waiting, they can’t bear waiting for it any longer – that’s why they’re crying.***

The Ruzhiner Rebbe then looked up to the Heavens and said, “Do you hear that, Hashem? They can’t wait any more and, Hashem, we also can’t wait any more.”

Shabbat is the smell. Yeshiva is the taste. You can hear the tzaddik. You can feel the Menucha. But all this is merely a whiff of the Temple, the Messianic Era, and the Messianic King. That’s what we’re waiting for. And we’re so tired of waiting. We beg Hashem: Please don’t let us wait anymore.

May we all merit to see with our own eyes the arrival of the Ish [Man of] Menucha in the Makom [place of] Menucha with the coming of Mashiach quickly in our times.

Parshas Noach: A Definition of Menucha

1. Bereishis 6; 5-8: Hashem saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every product of the thoughts of his heart was but evil always. And Hashem reconsidered having made Man on earth, and He had **heartfelt sadness**. And Hashem said, “ I will blot out Man whom I created from the face of the ground – from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them. **But Noah found grace in the eyes of Hashem.**
2. Bereishis 5; 29: And he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will bring us **comfort** from our work and from the toil of our hands, from the ground which Hashem has cursed.”
3. Zohar: On this day (Shabbat), there is rest above and rest below.
4. Psalms 93; 4: More than the roars of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea- You are mighty on high, Hashem.
5. Rashi, Loc cit 5; 29: **This one will bring us ease**. Until Noah appeared they did not have implements for plowing, and he devised such implements for them. And the earth would produce thorns and thistles, when they would sow wheat as a result of the curse of Adam, the first man. And in the days of Noah it **rested** from producing the undesired crop. This is the meaning of ‘*yinachameinu*’. But if you do not explain it thus [but rather ‘**to comfort**’], the reason of the language does not fall upon the name, but you should rather have named him ‘*Menachem*’.
6. Midrash Rabbah 25; 2: From the time that G-d created the first man, he gave him dominion over everything. The cow listened to the plowman, and the furrows listened to the farmer. Once man sinned, they rebelled against him. The cow did not listen to the plowman and the furrows did not listen to the farmer. Once Noah came, they **rested** from their rebellion. How do we know this? It says over here ‘resting’ and it says over there ‘resting’. In Shmos 23 it says ‘so that your donkey and ox will rest’. Just like over there the term resting is referring to the rest of the ox, so too our verse is referring to the resting of the ox.
7. Bereishis 49; 14-15: Yisacher is a strong-boned donkey; he rests between the boundaries. He saw **rest [Menucha]** that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, yet he bent his shoulder to bear and he became an indentured laborer.
8. Devarim 12; 9: For you will not yet have come to the resting place [hamenucha] or to the heritage that Hashem, your G-d, gives you.
9. Targum Yonasan, Ibid: To the Temple, which is the house of resting.
10. Psalms 132; 13-14: For Hashem has chosen Zion, has desired it for His habitation. This is My **resting** place [Menuchasi] forever, Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
11. Isaiah 66; 1: The Heaven is My throne and the earth is my footstool; what house could you build for me, and what place could be My **resting** place [Menuchasi]?
12. Shabbat Siddur: To welcome the Sabbath, come let us go, for it is the source of blessing.
13. Shabbat Siddur: “Most coveted of days,” You called it.
14. Bereishis 2; 2: G-d completed, on the seventh day, His work that He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. **Rashi**: What was the world lacking? **Rest [Menucha]**. Sabbath came, **rest** came. The work was completed and finished.
15. Shabbat Siddur: The purpose of the creation of the heaven and earth.
16. Psalms 10; 25: and the Tzaddik is the foundation of the world.
17. Chronicles I 22; 9-10: Behold a son will be born to you; he will be a man of **rest [Menucha]**, and I shall grant him rest from all his enemies all around. His name will be Shlomo, and I will bestow peace and tranquility upon Israel in his days. He will build a Temple for My name’s sake; he will be a Son to me and I will be a father to him. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.
18. Talmud Sanhedrin 113b: When a Tzaddik comes to the world, goodness comes to the world, as it is written, “This one will bring us **comfort/rest** from our work and from the toil of our hands.”
19. Shabbat Zemiroth: Rest and happiness, a light unto the Jews, the day of rest, the day of delight.
20. Psalms 23: A psalm of David: Hashem is my shepherd, I shall not lack. In lush meadows He lays me down, beside tranquil waters [Mai Menuchos]... Your rod, and your staff, they comfort me [Yenachamuni].

PARSHAS NOACH: The Mystical View of Menucha:

Working towards a real goal; taking satisfaction in achieving real, worthwhile goals

3 Dimensions	Present Menucha	Final Menucha
OLAM (Physical world)	SHUL, BEIS MEDRASH, YESHIVA, SCHOOL	BEIS HAMIKDASH (THIRD TEMPLE)
SHANA (Time)	SHABBAT	MESSIANIC ERA
NEFESH (Soul)	TZADDIK	MESSIANIC KING