

THE DIN OF THE DIN

by Rabbi Label Lam

And HASHEM saw that the evil of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil all the time. And HASHEM regretted that He had made man upon the earth, and He became grieved in His heart. And HASHEM said, "I will blot out man, whom I created, from upon the face of the earth, from man to cattle to creeping thing, to the fowl of the heavens, for I regret that I made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of HASHEM. These are the generations of Noah, Noah was a righteous man he was perfect in his generations; Noah walked with G-d. (Breishis 6:5-9)

What was the Noach's secret? How was it that he was the one in a corrupt world who found favor in the eyes of HASHEM? We have just few threads of information with which to weave a portrait of his character. Our sages tell us he was called an "Ish Menucha" - a man of leisure, so to speak. Actually his name, Noach, means restfulness or calmness of spirit. What had he done to earn himself that title? It seems he had invented the plow which increased the yield of farm production and as a byproduct partially lifted the curse of "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat" gifting mankind with relaxation and plentitude. With this gift of time and abundance the large part of humanity fell into the trap of self-indulging to a nasty and brutish degree. They actually found no "Menucha", only an insatiable and addictive appetite for more. Yet Noach remained an "Ish Menucha".

Noach was like Shabbos in persona. He was an Ish Menucha. Shabbos is a Yom Menucha- a day of relaxation. The purpose of life is not to work but the purpose of working is to be able to live. This is never made so clear than on the day of Shabbos. Noach lived, in a certain way, a life of Shabbos. How so? Didn't he work hard building an Ark!? He did not sit idle a whole day! In what way, then, was he an "Ish Menucha"?

Pardon the crude sports analogy but I do believe it works. Imagine, pick the sport, it's the NBA-basketball final game. It's the 7th and final contest. You have worked your whole life for this moment. Your team is down by one point with seconds to go. In moments you and your dreams will be sent to the locker room. You manage to get your hands on the ball and you have a clear lane to the hoop. As the clock expires and as you are rising to the basket an opposing defender fouls you. The referee blows the whistle and you are now granted two free foul shots.

There is no time on the clock. All the players have left the court. It is you alone on the foul line fifteen feet away from the basket. The game is in the other team's arena. The crowd is rowdy and ultra-obnoxious, and they are doing everything in their group power to distract, disturb, and destabilize

your abilities. If you hit both shots, you are a hero, forever! If you hit one, the game is tied and your team has a second chance in overtime. If you miss both, you will be portrayed and remembered as a failure in every sports column around the world. How do you retain your composure? How do you keep your focus and do with skill that which you have practiced millions of times? Not so easy! To be successful you must be and remain and have practiced being an "Ish Menucha".

We sing on Friday Night, a Shabbos Song that promises, "Anyone who rejoices in Shabbos will be spared of the birth pangs of Moshiach..." If in a dizzying paced, distracting, and even dangerous world a person can take a giant step back and now from the eye of the storm, delight with HASHEM on Shabbos, unaffected, even for a period of time, it produces a -certain sanity and a calmness of spirit that can ultimately rescue him. Like that little ark in a swirling ocean of destructive waters, Noach, and all who delight in the spiritual respite that Shabbos affords, can with a boundary of silence, drown out the **din of the din**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).