

## Noach had begotten three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yafes. (6:10)

*Rav Daniel Yoffe, zl*, was a distinguished layman who lived in Berlin (circa 1760). He contributed to the support of Torah and its disseminators. Despite his total devotion to Orthodoxy, he suffered greatly from the indignity and shame brought on him by his son-in-law, David Friedlander. Originally from Konigsberg, his son-in-law had moved to Berlin and established the Jewish Free School so that Jewish children could be schooled in secular Jewish studies as well as traditional studies. His lack of faith in the continuity of the Jewish nation, coupled with an ever-increasing attraction to Christianity and the lifestyle it inspired, led him to gravitate closer to the baptismal font and total apostasy.

*Rav Daniel* asked the *Rav* of Berlin, *Rav Tzvi Hersh Levin*, to reach out to his son-in-law to include him in the milieu of Torah scholars. Perhaps, their sanctity and devotion to Torah would somehow rub off on him and encourage his return to the fold. *Rav Tzvi Hirsch* attempted to dissuade *Rav Daniel*, asserting that Friedlander was beyond help. He was aggressively involved with the secular movement, and he did everything with malicious intent to harm and ultimately destroy Orthodoxy as a way of life.

“I wish I could help you,” *Rav Levin* said. “The *pasuk* in *Parashas Noach*, however, prevents me from being hopeful. We all know that Cham was Noach’s youngest son. Yet, the Torah lists him second, between Shem and Yafes. Why? Quite possibly, Shem and Yafes thought that, if they supported Cham from both sides, they would influence him to change his evil ways. Thus, Shem was on his right, and Yafes on his left. We all know what happened. Cham continued being Cham. I am sorry. I feel that your son-in-law is so far removed and so antagonistic to Torah that he will be like Cham – unapproachable.” While we should never give up hope on anyone, we must be realistic in our goals. At times, the challenge is beyond our capability to succeed. This, of course, does not preclude making a sincere attempt. Who knows what the future will bring?