

Make Room for One More

A Yiddish Folk Tale from Poland



Once upon a time very poor man lived with his wife and nine children in a small, one-room shack. The shack was so noisy that the man could barely think. The shack was so crowded that he could barely move. The man was miserable.

Mendel was the town's wise man. He was well-known for solving difficult problems. The man was sure Mendel could help him, too. The man went to Mendel and described his problem.

"Do you have any animals?" asked Mendel.

"Yes," said the man. "I have one cow, two goats, and five chickens."

"Here is what you must do," said Mendel. "Bring the cow into your house to live with you. Then come see in a week."

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The man did as he was told and returned the following week. “I did exactly what you told me to do,” he said. “But now my house is noisier and even more crowded than before.”



This time, Mendel told the man to bring his goats into his house as well.

The man did as he was told and returned the following week. “I did exactly what you told me to do,” he said. “But now my house is much noisier and much more crowded than before.”

This time, Mendel told the man to bring his chickens into his house as well.

The man did as he was told and returned the following week. “I did everything you told me to do. Now there is noise day and night and no space to move.”

“I see,” said Mendel. “Let’s try one last thing. Remove all the animals from your home and come see me in a week.”

The man did as he was told and returned the following week. This time, the man looked very happy and well-rested. “You’re a miracle worker,” cried the man. “I did just what you said. Suddenly my house is so quiet that I can finally get some sleep. Now we have more space than we need.”

