TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



נח

לעילוי נשמת



אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

ר'יעקב שמואל ב"ר צבי הלוי גרינספעלד ע"ה

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ת*נ*צ*ב*ה

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Vechol Maaminim

The Ikkar of Amen Is the Kavanah

From the words of the Tur (Orach Chaim 224) that expounded on the great obligation of the kavanah in answering amen, the Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah (Shaar Hakorban Chapter 5) learned "that the ikkar of answering amen is in the kavanah of it and not in just answering the word."

It is brought in the name of **Harav Chaim of Volozhin** regarding answering amen without kavanah, that because the word amen doesn't have any meaning when it stands alone, and the whole point of it is only affirming the words of the mevarech, therefore, if a person does not have kavanah when answering it, it is considered as if he said nothing.

Maasei Emunim

A Story About Amen and Tefillah

This story took place decades ago, and it was heard firsthand from an American Yid who witnessed it while he was a youth and a resident of the East Side, the central Jewish neighborhood in Manhattan where the Jews lived at the time:

In those years, an elderly Jew who lived in the East Side devoted his life to strengthening the mitzvha of answering amen. This Yid was known as a walking role model for this mitzvah, and the children

in the neighborhood fondly called him "the amen man." The powerful amen that he uttered whenever he heard a brachah in shul was, for the listeners, a confident declaration that this is how one should answer amen according to halachah: aloud, slowly and with kavanah. With his wonderful ways, this man drew after him the rest of the mispallelim.

By the time he reached the age of 75, he had multitudes of mitzvos and good deeds to his credit. Then, suddenly, he was struck with severe heart ailment. Those where the years when medicine wasn't as advanced as it is today, and patients of his kind didn't have chances of living long.

The specialist he went to with his son did comprehensive tests and then gave the man two choices: one was bad, the second was worse… The first option was to undergo complicated heart surgery where the chances of recovery were slim, while the other option was to give up and wait for the end, which, according to the doctor would be within a short time.

The doctor, who was used to seeing people panic and despair in his office, was absolutely surprised that when he finished speaking, the patient thanked him and turned to leave, appearing very calm. He declared that he would not be doing the surgery no matter what!

Outside the doctor's room, the son could not contain himself, and cried, "Why?! How did you take upon your shoulders this heavy responsibility with life and death consequences? Wouldn't it be wise to get a second opinion before deciding?"

The confident reply of the father was surprising and moving: "My dear son, you know that for all my life, I was very active about the mitzvah of answering amen. Regarding this mitzvah, Chazal promised (Brachcs 47b) that "Anyone who prolongs his amen has his days and years prolonged." We learn from here that the word amen is numerically equivalent to 91, so I can be calm at least until I reach my ninety first year…"

The father then smiled: "Why should I agree to surgery that might shorten my life?!"

The son of that man related: Contrary to the predictions of the doctor, my father recovered miraculously and lived a very long life in good health.

On his ninetieth birthday I asked my father, "Do you remember how you told me that you'd live until at least 91?! You are now entering your ninety first year, so what's next...?" And he jokingly replied that he had begun to make sure to say "amen selah…"

A few months later, while still in his ninety first year, my father passed away peacefully!

The Ribbono Shel Olam gives a person what that person needs to succeed, and success means being able to attain Olam Haba. It might be riches and it might be poverty.

The Chazon Ish says that bitachon doesn't mean that people should have faith that they will get whatever they hope for; rather, they should have faith that they will get that which is best for them. A person can have complete faith that Hashem will send him riches, and never get it, because that's not what bitachon means.

Believe and trust and be sure that Hashem will send you that which is best for you to reach the ultimate goal, and have ultimate success, whether or not you understand it. - At the end, you will. ~ R' Zev Leff

"In every situation, I ask what can be done. If something can be done, I do it. If not, I stop worrying about it." ~ Rabbi Simcha Wasserman.





What do we answer about the rifts that NASA found on Mars?

This question reminds me of a question once asked here by a timid little boy; he thought he was going to turn the world upside down. He said, "What do we answer to the question of the dinosaurs?!"

So I told him, "We don't answer anything. What do you answer to the giraffes?" What is the difference between a dinosaur and a giraffe? There are plenty of animals that went extinct. So the dinosaurs also went extinct.

"Oh, but the fossils; they're so old!"

Who said fossils are old? Don't you know that we have found fossils of modern men, fossils as recent as 300 years old. I explained here already once that in the Museum of Natural History in London, you have a fossil of a Guadalupe Indian that's no more than 300 years old. Fossils are not old; it's only because evolutionists need great time periods – otherwise how could such a fantasy be realized that from a germ should develop a man? – you must have untold eons of time for it to happen. So because they needed so much time, they manufactured a theory of time. But there isn't the slightest indication anywhere that there was such time.

And therefore in Noach's time, before the Mabul, there certainly were dinosaurs and probably none of them survived the Mabul. And

so a dinosaur is just as significant to us as the passenger pigeon which also went into extinction.

Now, what do we say to the rifts on Mars? What do you say to the rifts in the Sahara Desert?

Whatever you'll say there, you'll say here. It could be that the rifts in the Sahara Desert were created in the beginning of the world – Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't make the world as smooth as a billiard ball; He certainly made the world with ups and downs, with hollows and with mountains and so on. It's necessary for the control of climate and for various other reasons. So the same thing on Mars; Hakadosh Baruch Hu made rifts on Mars.

And if you'll say the rift in the Sahara Desert came after Creation by means of some upheaval so there was an upheaval on Mars too.

So what's the problem? Just because someone says "Boo!" without any explanation at all, immediately the person who has no emunah is frightened out of his wits. Say "Boo!" back to him!



Do I have to say that extra prayer of forgiving anyone who sinned against me before *kriyas shema* of bedtime?

You're not *mechuyav,* but if you want to do it, it's good business. It's a good business opportunity. Like the Gemara says: '*For whom will Hashem be? To whom will Hashem forgive his sins? To the one who is willing to forgive others.*' (Rosh Hashanah 17a).

If you forgive those who sinned against you, then Hashem will forgive your sins. So it pays. If you don't want to, you don't have to say it but it's good business because if you forgive others, Hashem will forgive you. So it pays. It pays to say it. But you have to mean it. You have to put thought into it. Just to mumble the words because

it's in the *siddur*, won't do you any good. You have to think about what you're saying. Think about the neighbor or the co-worker or your wife who wronged you and forgive them. But do you *have to* say it? No. You don't *have* to say it.



Should a wealthy father-in-law support his son-in-law in Kollel even if he's not such a serious learner?

You have to know that today, when you leave the yeshiva, it's like going out of the *teivah* of Noach. Suppose somebody wanted to leave the *teivah* in the middle of the *Mabul*, what would you say?

Outside, there is a *Mabul* today. Not a *Mabul* of water, but a *Mabul* of filth, of wickedness. And therefore, the longer he is in the Kollel, the better off he is. Now, if you can teach him a *parnasa* while he's in the Kollel so that gradually he can go into a decent living and then maybe he'll be able to establish himself in a good, *frum* neighborhood with a *parnasa* – even better.

Whatever it is, as long as he can, he should be in the Kollel. He should get married from the yeshiva and stay in the yeshiva so that the first years are Kollel years. And his wife gets accustomed to being a Kollel wife and the children are Kollel children. What happens later, we'll see. But at first keep him in the Kollel as long as you could afford to keep him there.

That scholar with his nose in books, he learns and learns. But does he know his wife doesn't feel well? That his child's heart is broken? ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l



When there are differences between different groups among the Jewish People, how are we to know who is right?

Everyone is right. And everyone is wrong. Nobody is perfect in this world. We have to live with the principle of knowing that we ourselves are not altogether right. And we have to do our best to improve. Although we don't have to adopt what everybody else does, and everyone should follow the customs and manners of his *kehilla* in the very best manner, nevertheless, he should know that there are good things to be learned everywhere.

Instead of going around and saying "Well, I saw in this *shtiebel* that they talk during davening so it's not so bad." Or, "In the other place they daven fast, so I can also daven fast," so this person is going around collecting all the wrong things from all the places. No! Go around collecting all the good things from everybody – that's what they're there for. And that's the person who will succeed. That's what jealousy is for. *Kinah* means to be *koneh*, to acquire; to be jealous of all the *good things* that you find.

"Why is he saying a long *shemonah esrei* and not me?" "Why does he go out to learn at night and I'm still wasting away?" -Everybody should try to steal from everyone else all the good things that they find. Because what Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants of us is *shleimus* – perfection. Perfection in character and self-control and perfection in kindliness to our fellow man.

Every form of perfection that's possible for a person to emulate, to imitate, to steal from all sides, he should do that. Whenever he sees anything good in the world, he should emulate it and decide that he wants to take it for himself. That's one of the great benefits of having so many different *kehillos*.



When I take my child fishing is it better to emphasize the idea of tza'ar ba'alei chayim or to emphasize the concept that it is a zchus for the fish to be eaten by an oived Hashem who will use the energy obtained, to serve Hashem?



First of all, who takes children fishing?! I never did! It doesn't say that Yankev Avinu took his children fishing!

Recreational fishing is only an imitation of the gentiles. Gentiles go fishing so you're also a Gentile who goes fishing too. No, it's not right. There are better things than going fishing. You can take a walk with your child and look at the grass. And say to him, "This is your wool winter coat."

"My coat?" he'll say, "What do you mean?"

Yes, the sheep eats grass and turns it into wool. Can you imagine such a machine? You put in grass, and it produces wool for you. Actually, you are grass. Your mother ate meat which came from animals that grew from eating grass. Yes, a cow is a miracle. You put in grass and it produces meat and milk. All that grass becomes meat on your plate and the milk in your refrigerator. So your mother drank milk and ate meat. And your mother made you!

So if you explain it to your child and explain it again to your child slowly, he begins to hear the nifla'os ha'Boirei. But to go fishing? The whole concept is an imitation of the gentiles. So you'll have to think of a better idea than going fishing.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Mobile Homes



The gemara tells us that when Moshiach comes, the Batei Knaysiyos and Batei Midrashos will be uprooted and transported to Eretz Yisrael. **The Chassam Sofer** adds that a Jewish home that maintained kedusha, where Torah was learned and mitzvos were performed, will also be transplanted to Eretz Yisrael when Moshiach comes.

At the Pesach seder we say **השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל**, this year we are here; next year in Eretz Yisrael. The Chassam Sofer offers a novel explanation. While this year the house we are in is in chutz la'aretz, next year it should be moved to Eretz Yisrael.

This also refers to the home in which the seder is taking place and in which Hashem's miracles are being recited (and not only to the seder participants). As a home of kedusha it too will be moved to Eretz Yisrael.

Everyone has a treasure in his own backyard. Why search elsewhere for it? ~ R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa zt"l

Holy Provider

Safeguarding oneself in matters of kedusha is great for *parnassa*. This is depicted in the following. There were two great people that have in their appellation the word Tzadik. One is Noach and the other is Yosef, who is known as Yosef Hatzadik. Both lived in a generation that was immoral and each overcame the challenges — Noach in the generation that brought the Mabul and Yosef who overcame the test with Potifar's wife in the promiscuous country of Mitzrayim.

Noach and Yosef were the single providers for everyone's sustenance. In the teiva, Noach provided food to the people and the animals while Yosef was the provider in Mitzrayim. They each stood against immorality and they were the distributors of food to the world.

A hint to this is found where it speaks of *parnassa*: The words **פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון**, You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing, (Tehillim 145:16) is followed by the word **צדיק**. This hints - that in the merit of the Tzadik Hashem brings *parnassa*.

Chizuk - Inspiration

There was once a wealthy Hassidic Jew in the town of Yanovitz in Poland. From his youth, however, he had a bad habit of telling tall tales. After a period, he came to regret his behavior and resolved to try and change his ways. He took it upon himself that for every untruth he told, he would give 25 rubles to Tzedakah.

In that Hassid's home, there was a Melamed (a tutor for Torah studies) that earned a meager living through his tutoring. When the Melamed heard the words of the wealthy Hassid, he told him, "In my humble opinion, from this point onward, it is permitted for you to lie. Why is this so? Because through your frequent lying, you will be

giving 25 rubles many times over and take the Mitzvah of Tzedakah to enormous heights!"

A while later, the Melamed entered the Hasidic court of **Reb Shmuel, the son of the Tzemach Tzedek**. He confidently related to Reb Shmuel what he had told the wealthy Hassid who was trying to change his ways.

When Reb Shmuel heard what the Melamed said, he cried out, "Even if a person would fulfil many Mitzvos and acts of Chessed – there is no Heter to allow a lie to come out of one's mouth!"

Is There Something That We Can Do? – R' Gavriel Friedman



What can we do? – Is there something that we can do? I don't live in Eretz Yisrael. I'm not a soldier. I don't have a weapon. –

What can You do? You don't have a weapon? – ***You have the greatest weapon that was ever given to mankind***! That's your mouth.

You know, the word for rocket in Hebrew is '*til*'. *And the plural- rockets is 'tillim.*' Well, if we just add the Sheim Hashem - a letter Hei - Hashem ה׳ in there, we get Tehillim – **תהילים**! We get to say Tehillim.

What happens when you say Tehillim? We can change the outcome of the war. It impacts the world in a very powerful way. When we go and say Tehillim, and they are shooting their '*tilim*', we can shoot right back – with Tehillim! - **הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב** – the yedayim will not be able to be the **יְדֵי עֵשָׂו**, because we're going to knock out every aspect of their missiles with our Tehillim with our power – our **כח התפילה**.



קנים תעשה את התבה *Make the Ark with compartments*. (6:14)

The simple explanation of this *pasuk* is that the Ark was built with various compartments to house its many "travelers." *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 31:9) interpret *kinnim* as being derived from *ken*, a nest, referring to the birds which are offered by the *metzora*, spiritual leper, as penance for the sins that catalyzed the contraction of his disease. They comment, "As the *ken metzora* purifies the leper, so, too, does the *Teivah*, Ark, purify its passengers." This is a reference to its human cargo, Noach and his family.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, explains that the purification of the *Teivah* refers to its serving as a place of refuge for its passengers. Noach and his family were spared from harm as a result of the protection provided by the *Teivah*. Ostensibly, it was not the actual Ark that saved them, but the merit of their being there and what they did during their entire trip that served as a *z'chus*, merit, on their behalf. What was this *z'chus*?

The *Midrash* teaches that Avraham *Avinu* asked Malki Tzedek (Shem) what merit did his family have to survive the raging waters of the Flood? Malki Tzedek replied that it was the result of their considerable acts of *chesed* in feeding the many animals. They could not sleep, because the feeding schedule of each individual animal varied. They suffered greatly in order to carry out their wonderful acts of *chesed*. *Chazal* conclude that when Avraham heard of the wonderful reward one garners for carrying out acts of *chesed*, kindness, he conjectured to himself, "If this is the reward that one receives from performing *chesed* with animals, how much more so

will one receive for acts of human kindness?" This inspired him to open up his famous *eishal*, rest stop, to provide sustenance to travelers.

Horav Dov Yoffe, zl (spoken during his *hesped*, eulogy, for the Slabodka *Rosh Yeshivah*, ***Horav Mordechai Shulman, zl***), observed that *Klal Yisrael* is noted for its commitment to the *middah* of *chesed*, attribute of loving-kindness. We exemplify the performance of acts of kindness. It is part of our DNA, heralding back to our Patriarch, Avraham *Avinu*, the *Amud HaChesed*, Pillar of Kindness. Avraham derived its importance from Noach, who, together with his family, devoted themselves 24/7 to the care and maintenance of all the creatures traveling on the Ark. In other words, Avraham reached the pinnacle of human perfection due to his outstanding performance of – and commitment to – each and every *middah*, attribute/character trait.

Every succeeding generation looks to him as the symbol of greatness, whom we should emulate and follow. The absolute crown of his work in *middos tovos*, positive character traits, was *middas hachesed*, performance of acts of kindness, which he inferred from Noach's devotion to the animals. That is where it all comes from – understanding that kindness is not simply something that we do; it is a part of our psyche. <u>We</u> are inherently kind. [Thus, there is no difference between human being and creature.] <u>We</u> are kind. We do not distinguish between creations.

A well-known incident that took place during the Holocaust demonstrates the innate sense of kindness possessed by Jews – towards all creatures. As the Slovakian farmer, victim of the Nazi terror, Yitzchak Rosenberg, was being herded into the cattle cars enroute to Auschwitz, he cried out to his neighbors, "But who will attend to my chickens?" Kindness courses through Jewish veins, the result of the Patriarchal bequest from Avraham.

We should, however, never forget that as critical as the *middah* of *chesed* is, it begins at home. A person who is constantly reaching out to others at the expense of his home/family is not a *baal chesed* – he is an *achzar*, cruel person!

Horav Simchah Cohen, Shlita, spoke before a traditional/modern audience in a secular *kibbutz,* extolling to them the outstanding acts of *chesed* performed by the *chareidi* Jews of Bnei Brak. He related the many *gmachs* that are run by devoted men and women who leave their comfort zones to help the Jews of their community.

The *Rav* went on to describe the extraordinary acts of *chesed* performed by a specific couple. The man is far from rich, but he is deeply committed to, and generous in, responding to the needs of a certain family. It has been going on twelve years that he apportions <u>most</u> of his weekly paycheck to sustain them. The story does not end there. The man's wife is not to be overlooked in her acts of *chesed*. Her acts of *chesed* are not monetary, but physical. She also helps out in that man's home. Apparently, the mother in that family is very weak and sickly.

Our heroine rises early every day, wakes up the woman's children and sees to it that they are properly dressed for school. She then provides them with sandwiches and drives them to school. At the end of the school day, she is there to pick them up, take them home, where she has snacks waiting for them. She does homework with them before giving them supper and getting them ready for bed. During the day, she even cleans up the house, so that at night they will come home to a clean home. This is carried out day in and day out.

As soon as *Rav* Cohen concluded his speech, one of the listeners rose up and said, "*Kavod Horav*, I do not believe this story. I understand that you want to demonstrate the wonderful acts of kindness performed by the religious community of Bnei Brak, but this is ludicrous! Nobody acts in this manner. They have to have a life!"

Rav Cohen countered, "If I give you their names and the address of their home, will you then believe me? You want to know who this wonderful generous man is, and the name of his extraordinary wife? It is you and your wife! Do you not spend your paycheck for the needs of your family? Does your wife not do all of these wonderful acts of kindness for your children? Do you think that this is not *chesed*? My dear friend – *chesed* begins at home! Everything that you do is a *mitzvah*. It is *chesed*!"

I would like to add that the husband and wife who do not take their familial responsibilities seriously – or worse, those who unintentionally, due to their many other obligations, neglect their families – are transgressing *mitzvos*. Their children are no less important than the children of others – whom they claim to be helping. The following story underscores this idea.

One of the *avreichim*, *kollel* fellows, in Yerushalayim was rushing one early morning to *kollel*. His *chavrusa*, study partner, was waiting for him, and he did not want to be late. As he hurried down the street, he noticed a woman in front of him walking very slowly, because she was carrying two heavy shopping bags filled with groceries. The poor woman was trudging along, weighed down by the weight of these bags. He was behind her, so he was unable to see her face. It was also not yet light outside.

He felt bad for this woman, but what should he do? He did not want to be late for *kollel*. On the other hand, what kind of person allows a woman to *shlep* such heavy bags without offering his assistance? But then, he is a G-d-fearing *ben Torah;* there is the idea of *tznius*, moral modesty. After all, this is a strange woman. He really should not be looking at or conversing with her. But to walk by her and not help is pure cruelty. So, as a true *ben Torah*, he bent down his head and offered to carry the bags.

The woman was just as devout as he. She said *todah*, thank you, placed the bags on the ground for him. He asked, "Where shall I

take them?" (He was not prepared to walk down the street with her.) She did not reply. He asked again, "*Giveret*, where should I deliver these bags?" The woman looked up at him and asked, "Moshe, what is with you? Do you no longer recognize your wife?" He took one look, realized that it was his wife, and said, "Malkah, I did not know it was you. Listen, I am late for *kollel*. I must rush. I will see you later." He left the bags on the ground and departed!

I will allow the reading audience to digest the story (which is true) and to ask themselves: "Have I ever been guilty of such insensitive, narcissistic behavior?" We are quick to help others but often forget that *chesed* begins at home. The child you save might be your own; the family you assist might be your own; the marriage you save might be your own.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה "*They said to one another, 'Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire.'*" (11:3)



The *Torah* begins the narrative discussing the sin of the *Dor Haflagah*, generation of the dispersion. Everyone assembled under the leadership of the evil Nimrod, self-proclaimed king of the world, to build a tower ascending to Heaven.

From this vantage point they planned to wage war against the Almighty. It seems, therefore, superfluous to mention their comments of, "*Let us make bricks.*" Do the technicalities of the development of the tower carry any significance with regard to the sin?

It is clear that Bavel/Iraq is — as *Rashi* notes — situated on a plain, where there are no stones available for bricks. Is it necessary, however, to mention this in the *Torah*?

Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, z.l. commented that one should always view whatever success he merits as being the result of Hashem's benevolence. He constantly warned against viewing success as the product of one's own talents.

Indeed, *Rav* Yosef Chaim declared that mankind's ethical and moral regression in the aftermath of World War I was attributed to their amazing technological breakthroughs. Their "ability" to accomplish what previously had been thought of as impossible served to stoke the flames of their reprehensible arrogance.

Rav Yosef Chaim developed his point and applied it to the *Dor Haflagah* whose prime sin was their faith in their own power. If so, why does the *Torah* mention their declaration, "Let us make bricks"? What is the connection between this statement and their sin? In addition, what difference does it make whether they used stones or bricks to make the tower?

The answer to this question, explained *Rav* Yosef Chaim, was the root of their sin. The goal of that generation was to remove their yoke of dependency upon Hashem. Their desire to make "their own" bricks was their way of indicating that they could do it themselves. They had no need for Hashem's support. "We do not need His stones; we will make our own bricks," they said.

It was such a treasonous statement that led to their blatant rebellion against the Almighty.

"I have not come to this world merely to fulfil my obligations." ~ The Kopischnitzer Rebbe.

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֶּךְ־נֹחַ

***"Noach walked (served) with Hashem."* (6:9)**

Regarding Avraham *Avinu*, the *Torah* states, "*Walk before me.*" *Rashi* distinguishes between Noach's and Avraham's spiritual plateaus. Avraham was strong enough to walk alone, whereas Noach needed the support of the Almighty. The *Midrash* presents a parable from which we can gain a better insight into understanding Noach's spiritual essence. A father who walks with his little child, while the youngster is still unsteady and learning to walk, must lend his total support to prevent his son from falling. As the child grows older, he is weaned from his father's support.

Noach, ostensibly, did not have the spiritual stamina to become an Avraham *Avinu*. He could not battle the immorality of his times. He did, however, reprove, warn and attempt to reach out to the people during the 120 years in which he built the Ark. He suffered ridicule, cynicism, and even threats of physical violence as a result of his loyalty and conviction. Nonetheless, he remained in his insular environment. He feared to tread beyond a certain point at which he might come under the harmful influence of his corrupt contemporaries. He refrained from fathering children until he was 500-years-old because he feared that he could not raise his children in a pristine, wholesome environment. He was a *tzaddik*, a righteous man, but he needed the support of the Almighty to maintain his status.

Horav Ze'ev Weinberger, Shlita, draws a parallel between Noach's *frumkeit*, religious observance, and observant Jews who feel they can only make their home in an environment which has all the necessary observant amenities such as *shul*, school, *mikveh*, kosher food and — of course — other observant Jews. This is not to say that we must all escape the large *Torah* communities and move into the spiritual wasteland. It only decries those who feel they cannot "make it" unless they are rooted firmly in

a *frum* environment. We must truly be ever grateful to those "Avrahams" who years ago had the spiritual fortitude to move away from the mainstream *Torah* centers to build *Torah* communities for other Jews.



In 1929, during the *Knesiah Gedolah* held in Vienna, ***Horav Meir Shapiro, z.l.***, arose before all those assembled and denounced those who refused to empathize with the pitiful spiritual state of many Jews of that time. He criticized those who were turning away with folded hands, sympathizing but doing nothing to reach out to the alienated Jew. He supported his words with the *pasuk* in our *parsha* "*And Noach was left alone*" (7:23).

"Let us examine the difference between Noach and Avraham," said *Horav* Shapiro. "Avraham lived in a generation that was corrupt. The people were ideologically enslaved to idol worship. Yet, he did not rest complacently. He did not isolate himself in his four cubits of *halacha* and ignore the raging fires of heresy that were consuming mankind. He went out and proclaimed the Name of Hashem. He taught the concept of monotheism to a pagan society. He defied the priest and risked his life to fight relentlessly for the sake of truth. He suffered agonizing pain and underwent tremendous hardship, fought against his own father, was sentenced to death by Nimrod, and was alienated from a whole world of infidels. He did all this in order to sanctify the Name of Hashem. For his dedication, for his supreme conviction, Avraham merited a son such as Yitzchak who was prepared to be sacrificed. Yitzchak inspired the characteristic of *mesiras nefesh*, self- sacrifice, into the heart and soul of all Jews, his descendants.

"Noach, on the other hand, was a *tzaddik* who walked with Hashem. His virtue was expressed specifically in his relationship with the Almighty. He witnessed the moral decline of his generation. He rebuked and admonished — all from the shelter of his own home. When he was told the people would be destroyed and he would be saved, he acquiesced, secure that he and his family would be spared to rebuild the world community." *Chazal* seem to imply that Noach should have done more, perhaps spoken out on behalf of the condemned.

"We see this from the *pasuk*," continued *Horav* Shapiro, "*And Noach was left alone."* In the beginning the *Torah* lauds him as a *tzaddik tamim*, a righteous and perfect man. Two appellations enhanced the name of "Noach." Now, however, after the world had become deluged and everyone had perished, he no longer carried the titles of *tzaddik* and *tamim*.

"In our own generation," summed up *Horav* Shapiro, "one cannot be a *tzaddik* and *tamim* when he just sits complacently watching Jews become alienated from their own heritage. We are responsible for our brethren! If we do not fight the winds of heresy, then we will have to answer for the destruction they bring upon *Klal Yisrael*!" These powerful words, which set the tone for that august gathering then, still speak commandingly to us today.



וַיִּקַּח תֶּרַח אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ ... וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם ***And Terach took Avram his son . . . and they went forth with them from Uhr Casdim to go into the land of Canaan and they came into Charan and dwelt there*. (11:31)**

The *Arugas Ha'Bosem* makes an interesting observation based upon this *pasuk*. Often one becomes inspired to change his ways to expiate his sins. Along the way, however, the *yetzer hora,* evil inclination, confronts him with various obstacles which block his path

to success. Those individuals whose resolve is as weak as their moral character fall prey to their impuissance. Terach was such a person.



He was inspired to journey to Canaan and change his past. He traveled to Charan, however, and halted. He could not extricate himself from the clutches of his *yetzer hora*. Avraham, on the other hand, did not stop to smell the roses. He continued along the way, never allowing the fire of his inspiration to cool.

How often does one listen to an exceptionally good lecture, attend an inspirational *Shabbos*, gathering, or simply get "turned on" by an emotional experience, only to let it "cool off" due to a lack of follow up?

We should remember that half-way is not far enough. Terach traveled part of the distance, but he still remained the same Terach.

וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו הַיּוֹנָה לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְהִנֵּה עֲלֵה־זַיִת טָרָף בְּפִיהָ ***And the dove came to him in the evening and behold an olive leaf, freshly plucked, was in her mouth*. (8:11)**

Rashi cites *Eruvin 18b* which notes that the bitter tasting leaf was unnatural for a dove, to eat. By bringing it, the dove was essentially saying, "I would rather eat bitter food from the hand of Hashem than something as sweet as honey from the hand of flesh and blood."

It seems puzzling that the dove would "talk" this way to Noach. *Chazal* laud Noach's exemplary display of *chesed*, kindness, in feeding all of the animals. He wasn't satisfied to give them all the same food simultaneously. Instead, he fed each animal its preferred

food at its accustomed time. This around the clock responsibility deprived Noach of his sleep for a full year. Yet, the dove preferred bitter leaves, rather than rely upon this kindly gentle man.

Rabbi A.H. Lebowitz, Shlita, suggests a profound rationale for the dove's behavior. By nature it is problematic to turn to another human being for help. It becomes even more difficult when our request for a favour is either denied or granted grudgingly. Why is this so?

Rabbi Lebowitz explains that man, as a creation of Hashem, possesses a *neshamah*, soul, which is bound up within Hashem. It feels pain when it must turn to a human being for sustenance, rather than receiving it from its original source, Hashem. Regardless of the graciousness and benevolence of the giver, it remains difficult to accept a favour, even from a close friend. The image of Hashem which is inherent in everyone aspires to reach out to its source.

Among Hashem's creations, man is undoubtedly the most sensitive. This is not a human failing, but rather a part of his spiritual composition. How careful should we be, when granting our fellow man a favour, to do so in an amiable manner, expediently and compassionately.



וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יְבֹשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ *And he sent out the raven, and it kept going and returning*. (8:7)

The *Midrash* makes an amazing statement concerning Noach's behavior, which can serve as an important directive for us all. When his whole generation was condemned to extinction, he built an ark for himself, into which he brought the male and female of every species. He took seven pairs of each of the clean animals, while he took only a male and a female from among the unclean animals. Undoubtedly, after the flood, the demand for clean animals would be greater than that for their unclean counterpart.

At the end of the deluge, Noach wanted to ascertain the situation outside of the boat. Therefore, he sent out the raven, an unclean bird, to assess the situation. The raven refused its mission. Instead, it flew around outside, constantly returning to the ark. Each time it returned; it peered through the window to check upon the welfare of its female mate.



Chazal say that the raven argued with Noach, "Why don't you send out one of the clean birds, since you have so many? If I go out and do not return the female raven will be left alone, and the world will lose an entire species of bird."

It immediately pointed an accusing finger at Noach, as if to imply that he suspected Noach of desiring his mate. This was the height of ingratitude to the man who had saved his life and provided him with a home and comfort when all else was destroyed. Nonetheless, Noach stood up to this dreadful challenge. He preferred to be accused of the most heinous crime, rather than chance losing one clean animal.

Rabbi M. Swift z.t.l applies the lesson of this *Midrash* to *Torah* leadership. Those who are responsible for the spiritual well-being of our people are often confronted with similar challenges. They must remain resolute in the face of mounting criticism, while they are striving to maintain the pristine traditions of the *Torah*. They find themselves adrift like the ark on a turbulent sea of indifference, fighting off the onslaught from the waves of confusion and apathy.

They cannot and may not compromise even momentarily, lest this deluge of ignorance and charlatanism overcome their communities. How much more piercing is the pain when those for whom they have devoted their lives turn against their own leadership, demonstrating their true impurity! Yet, this is the challenge of *Torah* leadership, who must fight with heart and soul until the waters of ignorance subside and the banner of *Torah* is embraced by all.

נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו *Noach was a man righteous and wholehearted in his generations*. (6:9)



Rashi cites *Chazal*, who differ in opinion regarding Noach's level of righteousness as compared to Avraham. Some Rabbis explain the phrase "*in his generations*" to Noach's credit i.e.; his righteousness would be noteworthy all the more so had he lived in a generation of righteous people. Others feel that had Noach lived in Avraham's era, in contrast he would not have been notable at all. *Rashi's* statement, which presents Noach as having had no relative importance, seems to be a bit critical. True, he would not be as great as Avraham, but he was nonetheless still a great *tzaddik*!

Rabbi M.Z. Bergman, Shlita, offers the following response. He cites the *Midrash* in *Shir Ha'Shirim*, which quotes the following parable. A king once lost a precious diamond in the dirt. He took a sieve and sifted through the dirt until he finally succeeded in locating his diamond. Likewise, Hashem sifted through the early generations of leaders which preceded Avraham and cast them away until He found Avraham.

This happened once again in His search for Dovid *Ha'Melech*. From Peretz through Nachshon until Dovid, all were viewed as relatively insignificant until Dovid was located. This analogy is puzzling. Are we to relegate such *tzaddikim* as Shem, Ever, Nachshon, Boaz, Yeshai, to nothing? Just because they did not attain the sublime level of Avraham or Dovid are they to be discarded?

Rabbi Bergman explains that we are identifying various levels of spirituality. Every rung represents another level of eternity. One cannot compare spiritual accomplishments which effect a reward of an unlimited eternal nature.

This is an amazing statement. Imagine if one were to study one more *blatt*, folio, of *Talmud* or even one more *pasuk* in *Chumash*. He is not just a greater scholar; he has actually attained a much greater level of eternity. The individual is no longer the same.

Undoubtedly, Noach was a great man. Had he lived in Avraham's generation, however, his spiritual accomplishments would have paled in contrast to those of Avraham *Avinu*.



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה 'Then Hashem said to Noach, "Come to the Ark, you and all your household.' (7:1)

The Zohar HaKadosh asks, "Could Hashem not have secured Noach in a corner of the world, safe from the raging waters of the mabul, flood?" He could have transported Noach to Eretz Yisrael, which was left unscathed, and have him remain there throughout the deluge.

Rabbi Shimon explains that Hashem wanted Noach to experience the flood, to see its massive destruction. Why did Hashem want Noach to be in the Ark, within the floodwaters, surrounded by death?

Horav Chaim Zaitchick, zl, explains that it was important for Noach to see and feel, to see the dead and dying, to feel their pain, to experience their fear and agony, so that he would: A.) remember the punishment meted out to those who mutiny against Hashem, who

eschew His word; B) be forever grateful for being spared from death. This could only occur if Noach were spared from within the waters of the flood. Had he been tucked away in some distant island or ensconced in Eretz Yisrael, the suffering and death would not be real; thus, his gratitude would be missing an element of authenticity. Veritably, even after Noach left the Ark, we find that he was rebuked for caring too late.

The Zohar writes that when Noach exited the Teivah and saw firsthand the terrible destruction from which he had been spared, he began to weep bitterly, "Ribbono Shel Olam, You are called Rachum, Compassionate. You should have shown mercy towards Your creations."

Hashem countered, "Foolish shepherd! Now you plead on their behalf? Where were you earlier when I informed you that I was going to send a flood to destroy your generation? The tears that you shed now are too late."

There is a time and place for prayer. How many of us have been guilty of noticing someone's pain – too late in the game, when our assistance is neither effective nor desired? Noach was clearly a sensitive person, but he required a trigger to jumpstart his empathy and sensitivity. That trigger was the Teivah. Sadly, it was too late for the victims of the flood.

"Too little – too late" is not an uncommon rejoinder. What makes a person wait and not do what is obviously necessary – immediately – when it is most opportune? I think it is because we do not acknowledge the greatest gift that Hashem grants us: time.

Time is life. Unless we appreciate this verity, we will squander time. When we frivol away time – we fritter away life. It is that simple. Sadly, most people fail to think about it this way.

I recently read a story concerning **Horav Betzalel Zolti, zl**, who was a Torah giant without peer. The story demonstrates the attitude we

must maintain with regard to time and the gifts of life and health that Hashem grants us.

When young Betzalel Zolti was a lad of ten years old, an epidemic of serious eye disease overran Yerushalayim. Most victims who became infected with this eye virus tragically lost their eyesight, because there was no medicine to combat it. Betzalel was a brilliant student whose thirst for Torah was unquenchable. He studied every minute of the day. Orphaned of his father as a young child, Betzalel was cared for by his mother, who had high expectations for her young son and felt that one day he would rise to Torah leadership in the Jewish community.



Betzalel's mother always davened for her son's continued health, but especially so during the raging epidemic. When one day Betzalel came home from cheder complaining that his eyes hurt, she became extremely anxious and immediately turned Heavenward in fervent prayer, hoping that it was nothing more than a mere infection. The next day, when Betzalel came home from school, his eyes swollen and painful and his vision beginning to blur, she knew that something was terribly wrong with her precious child.

A trip to the doctor confirmed her worst fear: Betzalel was, tragically going blind. The diagnosis proved correct, when, a few days later, Betzalel's vision weakened considerably, and then he went blind. How could her beloved son study Torah if he were unable to read the text?

In her deep pain, Betzalel's mother did what any responsible Jewish mother would do: prepared to take her son to the kever, gravesite,

of Rachel Imeinu, our Matriarch, and pour out her heart to her. She packed up Betzalel in a baby carriage for the two-hour trek. Since a carriage was not the most efficient mode of transportation, she could hardly walk with him for two hours without stumbling.

When they arrived at the gravesite, mother and son broke down sobbing that the Momma Rachel intercede on their behalf before Hashem, that He rescind the decree against Betzalel. Betzalel cried out, "Hashem, I ask You one request, which I want our Matriarch Rachel to also hear: I am prepared to give up my vision and never see my loving mother ever again, my friends, the food that I eat – I am ready to accept never seeing the world again, but one thing I am not prepared to give up is seeing Your holy Torah! I cannot live without learning Your Torah! "I am a young boy who has not learned enough of Your Torah. It is so vast, so great; I want to know it all!"

With heartrending cries that split the Heavens, Betzalel pleaded with Hashem to grant him back his vision, so that he could continue learning Torah. His tears flowed freely in a small rivulet to the grave of Rachel. Exhausted from the journey, the prayers, the tears, and emotionally spent from the ordeal, Betzalel fell asleep. His mother picked him up, placed him in the carriage and pushed him home.

The next morning, Betzalel woke and asked his mother to please allow him to return to school. "How can you go? You are unable to see. How can you learn – you are blind" she said, as tears welled up in her eyes.

He answered, "Mommy, I can see now, and I want to run to school to learn Torah!" Betzalel's mother understood what had transpired. They were the beneficiaries of an overt miracle. They had prayed to Hashem, and He had answered. Nonetheless, his mother felt it prudent to take her son to the doctor to confirm that his sight had returned – and would remain that way.

Betzalel was adamant; he was not taking off time to return to the doctor. "I must return immediately to the cheder, so that I may

continue my Torah learning!" he declared. "I received a gift from Hashem. I can now see again. I have no idea how long this gift will last. Therefore, I must use every spare minute to learn the holy Torah. Who knows how long I will be able to see?" - Betzalel returned to school, refusing to go to the doctor.

The story is obviously incredible. What impressed me most was Rav Zolti's attitude to regaining his sight. It was a gift. How can one squander such a gift? This is how we should live. Every moment of life, every ability to move, speak, think, see, etc. is a gift. It is something we must appreciate; we must value. The greatest expression of our appreciation is not to waste it. –

"Too little – too late." Are we prepared to stand before the Heavenly Tribunal and explain to Hashem why we were guilty of doing too little – too late?" Noach cried for the victims of the flood. Too little – too late.

In the following vignette, the **Chafetz Chaim, zl**, reiterates this idea. The Chafetz Chaim was once asked by the Rav in Lida (a neighboring town to Radin) to visit his community and exhort its citizens to open their wallets to invest in a new mikvah for the town. For decades, the Chafetz Chaim had traveled all over for the purpose of strengthening Judaism. Lida would be no different.

Despite his advanced age and feeble health, he agreed to come. He came to the town and spoke passionately of the importance of supporting the mikvah, but, while most people were respectful of the sage, he was unable to reach the required goal. They did not accumulate sufficient funds to build a mikvah.

A few weeks later, on a snowy Friday morning, the Chafetz Chaim announced that he was traveling to Lida to complete the mission that he had commenced on behalf of the mikvah.

His family argued that he never traveled on a Friday, for fear of arriving late for Shabbos. Furthermore, it was snowy outside;

anything could go wrong, it was dangerous and foolhardy to make the trip. They tried to convince him to change his mind.

The Chafetz Chaim was adamant. He had begun something. He would complete it. He explained, "When I come to the World of Truth, they will surely ask me, 'Why did you not go to Lida?' What should I tell them – that I was cold; I was old and weak; the roads were snow-covered; it was frigid outside? Will they accept such excuses?"

The Chafetz Chaim went to Lida and was successful in reaching the people. He raised the necessary funds to build the mikvah – and (by the way) he made it home in time for Shabbos. He could have waited until after Shabbos, but that might have been "too late."

בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התבה *Come to the Ark, you and all your household*. (7:1)

A teivah is an Ark, a container, a box which holds an object within its confines. *Teivah* is also a word. The *Chassidic* Masters, notably the ***Baal Shem Tov, zl***, render Hashem's command to Noach to "Come into the *Teivah*" homiletically. Hashem is also saying: "Enter into the words of prayer and Torah study; there you will find a sanctuary of wisdom, meaning and holiness amidst the raging flood waters of life."

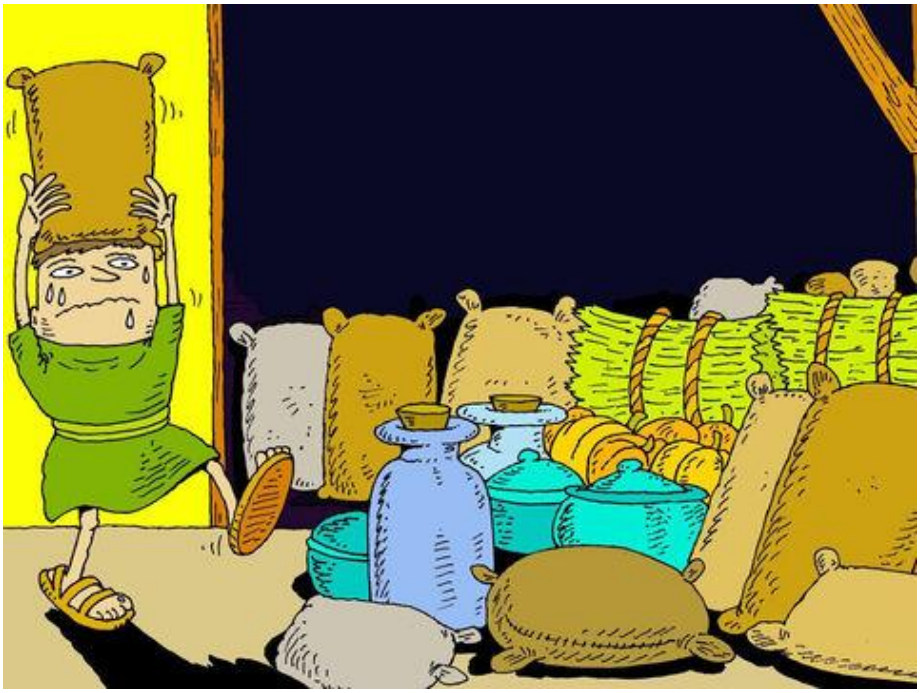
The various commentators expound on this play-on-word translation. Perhaps we can focus on the meaning of *teivah*/word as the reason for the disaster that befell that generation, and then attempt to suggest how the *teivah* was an opportunity for penance.

People communicate largely by word of mouth. They speak to one another. What they say and how they express themselves distinguishes between a good word, a kind word, a complimentary word, a bad word, a slanderous word. We all have an idea of the value and significance of the correct word, well-placed and expressed with

care and sensitivity. A good word can save someone's life – or destroy him – if the word is evil and demeaning.

I think it is all reflected in the manner of expression. Does one just release the word and forget about it, not caring if it hurts someone, or does he "enter into his word," remain a part of it? Are our words just "talk" without substance? Do we stand behind our words, or do we throw them out – and run, separating ourselves from the damage they have wrought?

Words can be soothing, invigorating, encouraging, enlivening. They can be transmitters of joy; they can make a person feel that someone cares about them, that they are not alone. It all depends on whether the words are real or are simply words spoken, but not really reflecting the personality and character of the author, because he has already divorced himself from them and escaped. One must be part of the words that he articulates, because how one expresses himself is as important as what he says.



The *teivah* was one large floating container that housed the future of the world in an area which could best be described as "close." There was nowhere to go. Whatever was said had to be supported.

Noach fed all the animals and fowl 24/7, with no rest. How he brought the food, what he said, and how he said it were all as important as the actual food. The smile that accompanied his acts of kindness could be a game-changer that made a huge difference in

the attitude of the recipient. The *teivah* was an enormous floating *chesed* operation.

The generation of the Flood was destroyed due to a lack of morality, reflected in their interpersonal relationships. People did whatever they wanted without respect for, or sensitivity towards, their fellow. The Torah states that they were guilty of *chamas*, theft. *Chamas* is a form of theft whereby the "buyer" takes and pays, even though the seller is not interested in selling. There is no conversation between them. The seller plunks down the cash and leaves: no respect; no sensitivity; no conversation.

Chesed performed without respect for the recipient is not much different, because it reflects the benefactor's lack of respect. It is all in what we say, how we say it, and the smile that accompanies the communication.

Words? What are mere words? Plenty. They define our actions. They represent who we are. Words properly spoken and presented can save. Misplaced words can be devastating. The *teivah* taught its travelers the significance of properly tooled speech.



וַיְחִי־שֵׁם אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־אַרְפַּכְשַׁד חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת ***"And Shem lived five hundred years after begetting Arpachshad, and he begot sons and daughters."*** **(11:11)**

Interestingly, in recounting the ten generations from Adam until Noach, the *Torah* writes the word, "*va'yamos*", "and he died," after each person that is mentioned. Upon mentioning the ten generations from Noach until Avraham however, the *Torah* uses the word, "*ve'yechi*," and he lived," referring to how long the individual lived.

Why does the *Torah* make this distinction between the generations?

Horav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, z.l., cites the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos* 5:2, wherein it is stated: "*There were ten generations from*

Adam to Noach which informs (us) how great is His (Hashem's) patience, for all these generations continued to anger Him, until He finally brought upon them the waters of the flood." In the following *Mishnah* the *Tanna* says, *"There were ten generations from Noach to Avraham, which informs (us) how great is His patience, for all those generations continued to anger Him, until Avraham Avinu came and received the reward that was due them all."*

While these *Mishnayos* are apparently similar, each demonstrating Hashem's patience, the ending is glaringly different. Avraham *Avinu* received the reward for all of his predecessors, after which no cosmic destruction had occurred. Noach, however, was himself saved, while the rest of the world was obliterated. The generations preceding Noach apparently had no *zechusim*, not even one that they might have been able to combine with those of another generation. They were thoroughly wicked. Hence, the *Torah* writes, "*va'yamos*," - and they died." They did nothing but sin; they left nothing but destruction. They died, gone forever from this world.

The generations from Noach to Avraham had some merit. There was something to salvage. Avraham inherited their *zechusim*, in effect, giving them life. They lived on through Avraham *Avinu*. They did not die; they were not gone forever.

Wherein lay the difference between these two sets of generations?

Horav Charlap explains that the generations preceding Noach sought to drive out *tov*, "good," altogether. They grasped the evil way of life, and it became their lifestyle. Not good – only evil! Since there was nothing positive about their existence, there was no area in which Noach could give them *mussar*, reproach.

For rebuke to be effective, some established relationship must exist between the sinner and the individual who is rebuking. Noach was a righteous, perfect individual while the others in his generation represented evil incarnate. There was no area of common ground. Consequently, Noach was compelled to leave by himself in the Ark.

In the generations preceding Avraham, however, the people were different. Their intentions were not to act totally evil. If they were able to do the right thing, if they could act correctly, they would. They had no qualms about evil, but it was not their first course of action. They had some merit. Avraham had people with whom to speak. They did not die; they lived on in Avraham.



***And Cham saw…his father's nakedness and told his two brothers. And Shem and Yafes took a garment…and covered the nakedness of their father and their faces were backward*. (9:22,23)**

We have here before us a distinction between the two reactions among Noach's sons, the reaction of Cham as opposed to that of his brothers, Shem and Yafes.

Cham observes an indiscretion on the part of his father, and he immediately exploits it. Not only does Cham jest about his father's failing, but he also goes out of his way to publicize it. He shows no filial respect whatsoever. His two brothers, on the other hand, throw the mantle of love over their father's weakness; they turn their heads away, so even they would not view their father's shame.

We can derive an important lesson from this narrative. Children cannot help but detect fault in their parents. It may be something in their physical appearance, their demeanor, or in some cases, religious orientation.

The *Torah* teaches us the attitude one must display towards a parent's shortcomings. One must never mock or belittle a parent! Moreover, one should turn his head and ignore what might be apparent to others. Shem and Yafes walked backwards. They refused to take note of their father's inebriated state. They did not want to be cognizant of his present circumstances. Their act defines filial love.

Not all homes are perfect, and not all parents are paragons of virtue, social graces and culture. Some parents speak with an accent; others have a difficult time earning their daily bread, perhaps even being employed in positions that might prove "embarrassing" to their children. It is regrettable that many individuals in today's society thrive upon disdaining those who are not on the same social plateau as they.

This writer once witnessed a somewhat heated conversation between a mother and her son. The mother, a recent immigrant to the United States, was preparing to go to Parent's Night at the local Day School. Due to his parent's conscientiousness and hard work, the young boy had acclimated very quickly to the new culture. He actually spoke and dressed the part of a young American *Yeshiva* Day School student.

Prior to his mother's departure for the meeting, the child expressed concern about his mother's lack of "American" style clothing. He told her, "Try also not to speak too much because of your accent. I do not want you to embarrass me."

When the mother heard this unintended insult from her child, she responded with tears streaming down her face, "I am your mother regardless of what I wear and how I speak. I came to this country to provide for you a better life than I had. Remember that whatever you have, it is because I have lovingly provided it for you, sometimes at great personal and financial expense. Do not ever be ashamed of your mother!" - Perhaps this is an admonition we should all heed.

To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks, but a special heart that listens. ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס ***And the land was filled with corruption.*** **(6:11)**



Chazal teach that "corruption" refers to idolatry. why does idolatry stand out as the primary sin of that generation. What is there about "*chamas*," corruption, that infers idolatry?

Horav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zl, responds by first defining the essence of idolatry. We are taught that if a certain city has decided to reject one ritual of the *taryag*, 613 *mitzvos*, regardless of the type of *mitzvah*, that city is declared an "*Ir Hanidachas*," a city that went astray and is to be totally destroyed.

Accordingly, asks *Rav* Yaakov, why should the fate of the generation of the flood have been decided because of idolatry?

In truth, any sin which the people had committed on principle would have sealed their fate. To reject even one *mitzvah* of the *Torah* on principle is tantamount to serving idols. Such actions implicitly deny the divine origin of the *mitzvos*.

Taryag mitzvos constitute one G-d-given entity. To displace or deny a *mitzvah* is to cause the entire structure to come tumbling down. As a servant cannot tell his master what to do, so, too, we cannot tell Hashem how to govern the world. If He has given us 613 commandments, then we must keep all 613 commandments. To refuse to observe even one command, is tantamount to open rebellion against Hashem. Our refusal denies Hashem's supremacy.

The people of that generation rejected the "*bein adom lechaveiro*," the laws governing man's relationship with his fellow man. They accepted cheating, stealing and other forms of corruption on

principle. They denied that Hashem had established a specific code for humans. Their actions denoted *avodah zarah*, idolatry.

We must ask ourselves whether we ever reject a *mitzvah* because we feel it is not practical. Do we concoct our own interpretations of *mitzvos* to suit our lifestyles? We must remember that the difference between an idol worshipper and an observant Jew can be a single *mitzvah*.

***וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו הַיּוֹנָה לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְהִנֵּה עֲלֵה־זַיִת טָרָף בְּפִיהָ The dove came back to him…And behold an olive leaf it had plucked with its beak.* (8:11)**



The image of the dove returning with an olive branch in its bill has become the symbol of peace. *Chazal* tell us that the dove does not eat the bitter olive leaf. He was sending a message using this gesture. "*Better that my food be bitter, but from Hashem's hand, than sweet as honey but dependent upon mortal man.*"

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, understands this message to mean that freedom overrides bitterness. The sweetest food eaten under duress, beholden to others, is no longer sweet, while the most bitter food eaten in freedom suddenly becomes sweet.

In his commentary in *Sanhedrin 108b*, the **Maharal** attributes the dove's choice of food to the origin of its benefactor–Hashem. While Noach was certainly providing the proper nourishing food for the dove, it chose to be dependent upon Hashem for sustenance and not

to rely on man. Although provisions for the dove were placed in the domain of man, the dove chose specifically to be sustained directly by Hashem. The dove chose to be independent, not to sublimate itself to anyone other than Hashem.

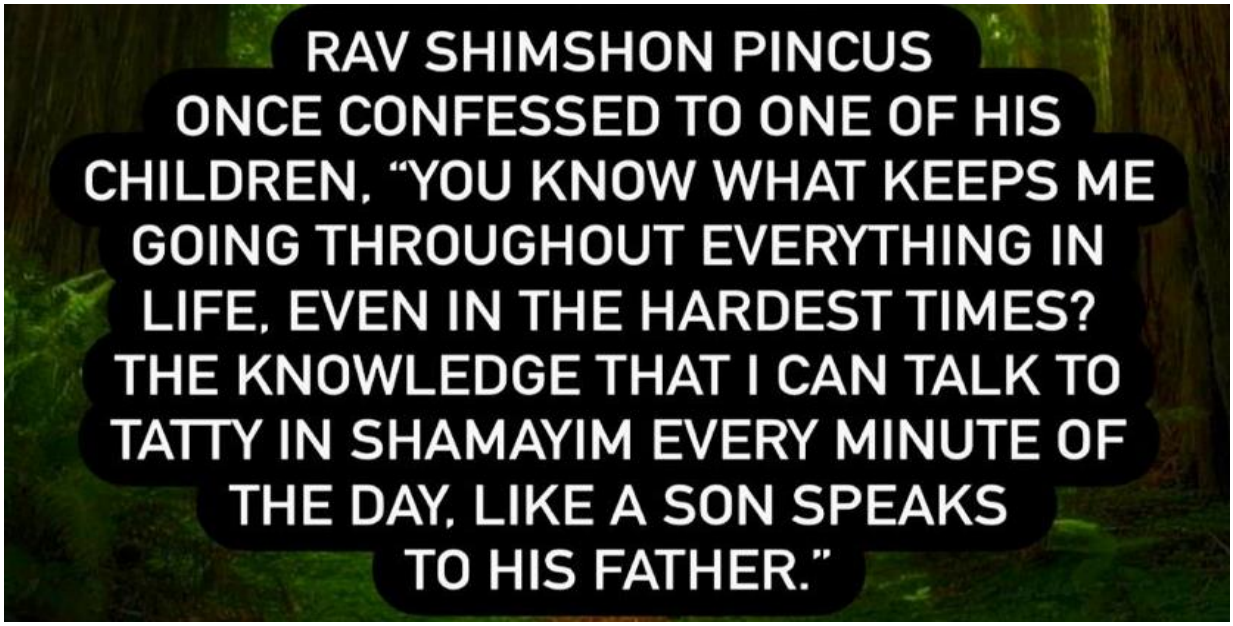
We may infer from here the significance of self-sufficiency. The Maharal focuses on a number of areas where *Chazal* emphasize the importance of a *Torah* scholar refusing to accept gifts from people. They cite the *pasuk* in *Mishlei 15:27*, **וְשֹׂנֵא מַתָּנֹת יִחְיֶה** "*The hater of gifts shall live*" is the basis for this concept.

Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, explains the significance of this *pasuk* in the following manner: A Jew's ability to receive the *Torah* is commensurate with his capacity to emulate Hashem's attributes. We merit receiving the Torah by virtue of our status as being "banim la'Makom," Hashem's children. We become Hashem's children by attempting to resemble Him, as a child resembles his parents. The attribute which most closely associates us as Hashem's children is the attribute of self-sufficiency. Hashem is the source of everything. Hashem needs nothing; He gives everything.

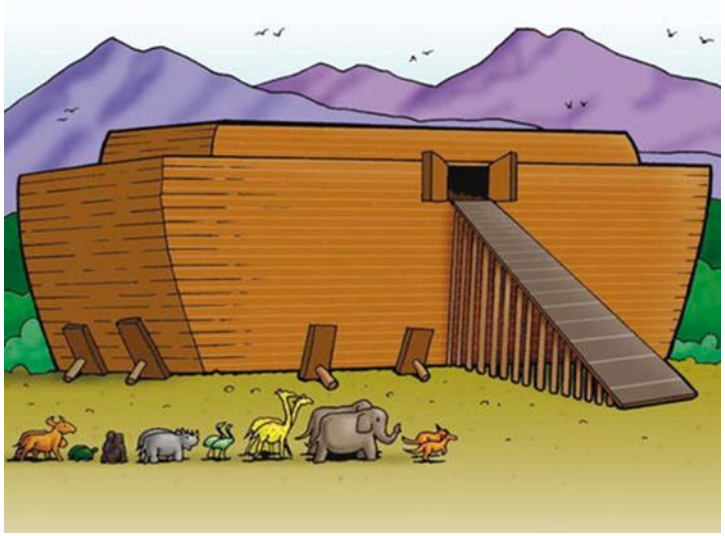
When we act in a giving manner to those in need and we act in a way that demonstrates self-sufficiency, we are G-d-like. This type of giving is also unique in that we give of ourselves as Hashem gives of Himself, since He is the source of everything.

Giving that which we have accepted from others is not an act which resembles Hashem's behavior. Thus, we should shun accepting gifts from others. What we then give originates from a source outside of ourselves — which is not G-d-like. This close relationship with Hashem demonstrates our readiness to accept the *Torah*.

"We can't control life, but we can control our attitude." ~ The Ba'al Shem Tov.



אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו *Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations*. (6:9)



The *Torah* emphasizes "*his generations.*" This word stimulates various interpretations of Noach's true level of virtue. Was he virtuous only because he lived in a generation that was synonymous with evil? Or would he have been considered much more righteous had he lived in a truly virtuous society? Regardless of the outcome of this dispute, we have to wonder. What is the basis for these two opinions? What aspect of Noach's virtue provokes question?

Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger applies a thought from **Rav Meier Shapiro** in response: The quest for peace is most compelling. Every single day we read about continued strife in some area of the world. Indeed, only in the days of *Moshiach* will we finally merit peace. The *Navi Yeshaya* speaks about the day when animals which are by nature antagonistic to each other will live in harmony.

Horav Shapiro asks why we strive for the time of *Moshiach* to achieve peace. Did not Noach accomplish a similar type of unity when, for one year, all animals and wild beasts lived together in the Ark? Why is that peace less idyllic than that of the time of *Moshiach*?

The peace in the Ark was coerced by circumstances. They were all victims of the Flood. They had to coexist in order to be saved. If they fought, they would all die! When *Moshiach* comes, we will be blessed with a self-motivated serenity. Everyone will just want to get along. Each person will see the beauty of peace and experience the satisfaction of living in harmony. No, we cannot compare the two forms of coexistence.

Horav Schlesinger continues that a similar idea applies to Noach's leadership capabilities. Was he truly successful in uniting the survivors of the Flood? Was he really the great peacemaker? Or did the flood itself help him in this quest?

It is easy to keep thousands of animals from all over the world living together when they have nowhere to go. Could Noach have achieved peace in a generation when there was no coercion, no external pressures? Was Noach really the great *tzaddik*, or was he a caretaker for a world under siege? - Success is measured in light of the circumstances which precede it.



אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו *Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations*. (6:9)

The *Torah* begins by stating that it will list the "generations" of Noach. Instead, it proceeds to relate that Noach was a righteous man. Are we discussing his offspring or his good deeds?

Rashi cites the *Midrash* that infers from this *pasuk* that the primary generation, the principal legacy of a righteous person, is his good deeds. This is what he bequeaths to the next generation.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, says that offspring and good deeds should be analogous. No good deed should be viewed as inconsequential. The same love that one manifests toward his offspring should, likewise, be demonstrated toward *ma'asim tovim*. As a father loves all of his children - regardless of individual personality, character, or acumen - so, too, should one love his good deeds, never regretting that he did not devote himself to deeds of greater significance.

This same love should manifest itself in his attitude towards performing good deeds. He should not feel compelled to perform. Rather, he should look forward to their performance, as a parent is excited to help his child.

A father scrutinizes his children, looking for ways to enable them to grow spiritually, morally and intellectually, ferreting out their flaws and correcting them. So, too, should an individual examine his good deeds, seeking out imperfections and correcting them.

The **Yehudi Ha'kadosh m'Peshischa** was wont to say, "People are used to saying that they work hard only for their children. They slave and toil, so that their children will grow up to be devout *Torah*-observant Jews. When these children grow into adulthood, rather than strive for self-perfection, they focus once again on their children. They also claim to do everything for their children." - The *Rebbe* continued, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*, I would like to see that one child for whom all of the generations are toiling!"

Everyone focuses upon his children while completely ignoring his own self-development. While this form of selflessness is noble, there is a limit. A father who expends all his time for his children, who does not find time for his own advancement, will ultimately not appreciate his children's spiritual development. One must be knowledgeable himself to acknowledge and appreciate another's learning.

Noach was not a person who neglected his own spiritual growth. The generations of the righteous are their good deeds. They understand

the significance of their own deeds. They accord them the same respect they would give to their offspring. While they continue to strive to transmit a legacy to their children, they realize that if they do not study and perform *mitzvos*, they will not have much of a legacy to transmit to their descendants.

ואני הנני מביא את המבול מים על הארץ לשחת כל בשר ***And as for Me – Behold, I am about to bring the Flood-waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh*. (6:17)**



The Flood was the greatest destruction of all time in the sense that it destroyed almost the entire world. It came as a Heavenly punishment to a generation of human beings that had gone totally awry. Evil was rampant; immorality was a way of life; idol worship was their mode of religious belief.

Hashem gave them 120 years to repent, while Noach, his righteous emissary, labored strenuously building an Ark to save those who would repent. Then He gave them a seven-day reprieve to observe the seven-day *shivah*, mourning period, for Mesushelach.

Perhaps the passing of this righteous person would arouse some positive thoughts, some contrition that would lead to repentance. Sadly, no one was interested. Hashem sent water to destroy them all. The earth was awash. People, animals, the entire world society was wiped out, drowned in a deluge of water.

Why did Hashem use water? Was there no other way to destroy the world? We have a rule that Hashem gives retribution *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. How does this rule apply to the punishment of water? What relationship exists between the flood and the various sins committed by the generation of the Flood?

I recently saw a noteworthy dissertation concerning the concept of water, which I quote with my own supplement.

The *Pirkei D'R'Eliezer* writes, concerning Yonah *HaNavi's* fleeing from Hashem: "On the fifth day, Yonah ran from G-d. Why did he flee?… He said to himself, 'I know that this nation will repent. Now they repent and Hashem will release His anger on *Yisrael*.'"

How did Yonah run from Hashem? He took a ship going to Tarshish, paid his fare and settled in as a passenger.

Why did he choose a ship? Why use water as a means of travel? Why not take a donkey, a camel, travel the desert?

He went out of his way to locate a ship and paid cash in full prior to the trip.

The *Midrash* explains, "Yonah said, 'I am running to a place where Hashem has not rested His Glory. Concerning Heaven and earth, Hashem rested His Name during Creation. Not so on water."

"On the fifth day," This corresponds with the fifth day of Creation when Hashem said, "Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures." The creatures of the deep waters were created then. Water began to function on the fifth day. Yonah chose this day to run from G-d. Apparently, water symbolizes an entity of Creation from which Hashem removes His Presence.

In his commentary to *Bereishis* 2:3, ***Ramban*** writes: "The Six Creation Days represent all the days of the world, for the endurance of the world is six millennia. As on the first two days, the entire world was filled with nothing but water, so, too, for the first two millennia, the world was without anyone who was *korei b'shem*

Hashem, called out in the Name of G-d. As on the third day, the dry land was beginning to appear; likewise, Avraham *Avinu*, at the age of forty-eight commenced his mission to reach out to a pagan world and teach them about Hashem."

Water symbolizes heresy. Water flows everywhere and can be halted from spreading only by placing borders around to contain it. Water has no parameters. One cannot stop water. It has no form, no boundaries; it is literally unstoppable, unless it is contained by a solid wall. Water takes on the form of what container it is placed in. If it is spilled, it rolls and moves about at will.

This describes the sin of the *dor ha'mabul*, generation of the Flood. They acted freely, without restraint, without control whatsoever. They did whatever they wanted, wherever they wanted, with whomever they pleased. No parameters, no constraints, no boundaries. Pure lust, unrestrained sin, unimpeded evil, thoughtlessness of others, uncaring.

These are words which describe the generation of the Flood. They acted like water. They were destroyed by water. They catalyzed the land's transformation into water.

When *Klal Yisrael* left Egypt, they achieved an exalted level of *Vayaaminu b'Hashem*, they believed in Hashem. As a result, the Almighty transformed the Red Sea into dry land. The water deferred to them.



וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְנֹחַ קֵץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ - *"The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with robbery through them."* (6:13)

The people had become overtly corrupt. At first, they committed immorality and idolatry. Then their sinning "progressed" to blatant robbery. Their covert sins led to overt corruption, for which Hashem would not forgive them.

Rashi cites *Chazal*, who say that, indeed, Hashem did not seal their verdict until they began stealing from one another. This is enigmatic. Is stealing more sinful than immorality, idolatry and murder?

Horav Dov Eliezrov, zl, explains that while stealing is certainly not as evil as the three cardinal sins of immorality, murder and idolatry, it is, however, the bitter root of evil. It indicates the true evil within a person.

A person who steals demonstrates his lack of belief that Hashem determines the amount of material possessions he will hold during the year. He shows that he does not trust Hashem to provide for him. One who steals displays a total moral breakdown. He is prepared to do anything to fulfill his needs. He will even take someone's life if he is challenged.

In other words, stealing indicates that the other sins are not just the result of a temporary lust or error in religious perspective. Rather, they are the consequence of man's rebellion against the Almighty.

Furthermore, one who steals may be prepared to kidnap someone's wife if he so desires. He does not understand that Hashem has given certain possessions to certain people – and, in this instance, destined to be the owner. What belongs to my neighbor is his by right; it is his because Hashem has "given" it to him. - One who challenges this idea, challenges Hashem.

When the people of that generation broke down the boundaries indicating human possession, they showed their lack of conviction in Hashem. This was the true source of their iniquities. They no longer deserved to be forgiven, for they had progressed beyond the point of possible return.

מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנָּה טְהֹרָה וּמִן־הָעוֹף וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־רֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאֲדָמָה ***"Of clean beasts and of beasts that are not clean, and the birds and of everything that creeps on the ground."* (7:8)**



The symbol of "*acharis ha'yamim*," the days of *Moshiach*, is the "wolf will live in peace with the lamb." This concept has been presented by *Chazal* as the paradigm of peaceful co-existence that will reign during that period of time for which we pray and yearn daily.

Addressing a major Rabbinic conference in Warsaw, ***Horav Meir Shapiro z.l.*** questioned the uniqueness of this prophetic vision. What is so unique about the wolf "living" with the lamb? Did not all of the various species of the world co- exist harmoniously in Noach's ark? If we take Noach's ark into consideration, the vision of *acharis ha'yamim* is no longer impressive!

Horav Shapiro explained that in reality there are two forms of peace. There is peace which is the result of intellectual advancement, emanating from an attraction to pure spiritual refinement. The participant is dedicated to promoting the ideal of peace. This "idyllic" form of peace bespeaks the *Navi's* vision of *acharis ha'yamim.*

There is however, another form of peace: instinctive peace, which is dominant during times of elevated stress and anxiety. Indeed, for the sake of self-preservation, sworn enemies have made a hasty, temporary conciliation. When the world is "coming apart" and fear

of annihilation prevails, arch enemies seem to find a way to mollify their differences.

This, noted *Horav Shapiro*, was the form of peaceful coexistence which prevailed in the ark. At a time when the Heavenly rains lashed out at the ark from all sides, when the waves of death engulfed them, when any moment could be their last, it is no wonder that every living creature lived in harmony. If they were to "fight" with one another, then their end would be imminent, death would devour them. This peaceful coexistence was a matter of life or death!

Horav Shapiro summed up his speech with a plea for peace and unity among all Jews. The dangerous crisis which loomed ahead was so intense that, unless they all banded together, they would be engulfed by the sea of death and destruction.

כי השחית כל בשר את דרכו על הארץ *For all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth*. (6:12)

The people must have been extremely evil if Hashem saw no resolution to their sins other than destroying them all – literally putting an end to the world as it existed.

How bad actually were they? We know they were immoral; bloodshed meant nothing to them; and we can throw in idol-worship for good measure. Did this warrant an end to society? Was there no one other than Noach that acted in a redeemable manner? The Torah writes, *Ki hishchis kol basar*, "Everyone – everything had become corrupt." How bad was their level of corruption?

Targum Yonasan ben Uziel gives us a clue to the level of their corruption. The Torah writes that, during the beginning of the flood, *nivke'u maayanos tehom rabbah*, "All the fountains of the deep burst forth (*Bereishis* 7:11). What did the people do when they saw water rising from the cracks in the ground? They used their <u>own</u> children to fill the cracks in the earth. Talk about evil! Can

one imagine this perniciousness? Burying one's children alive in order to save themselves!

Hashem responded to them, "Do you think that you are more capable than I? Let us see if you can stuff up the cracks of the Heavens." At that point, the Heavens opened up, pouring out a deluge that destroyed them all.



Having gained some insight into the sick minds of the people of that ill-fated generation, we now turn to the word *hishchis* to seek a proper definition of *hashchasah*, corruption.

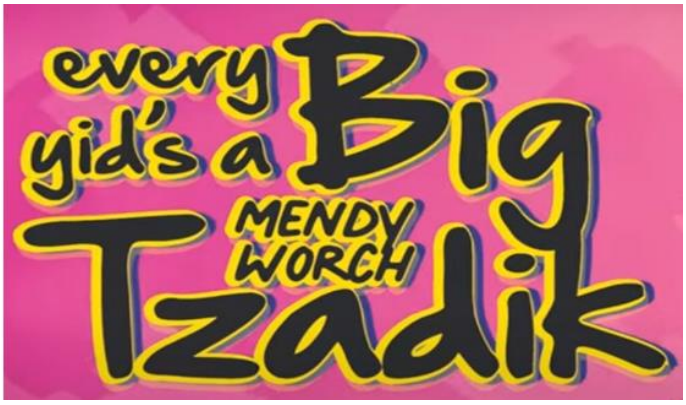
The Torah in *Devarim* 20:19 admonishes us not to cut down a fruit tree, *Lo sashchis es eitzah*, "Do not destroy its trees." In *Hilchos Melachim* 6:7, the ***Rambam*** writes that one may cut down a fruit tree only for a legitimate reason which mandates its removal. He concludes that it is forbidden to cut down the tree *derech hashchasah*, in a destructive manner. This implies that *hashchasah* is defined as doing something wantonly, for no reason, to waste something, without care, acting for no other reason other than he wants to do it. *Hashchasah* is malicious destruction for the sole purpose of destruction.

The people of that generation had other ways of stuffing up the cracks in the earth. They used their children as a way of showing G-d, "You cannot scare me. You try to hurt me – I will hurt my children!" with nothing to be benefitted other than pure malicious destruction.

People were stealing, but, in most cases, what they stole was insignificant, not even the value of *shavah perutah*, "penny." Why did they do it? They wanted to. No other reason. Plain wanton, malicious destruction. It was their way of showing that they did not care. They were in charge, and no one could tell them how to live, how to act, or what to do.

When a generation plummets to such a nadir of depravity, whereby they sin maliciously, kill for fun, acted immorally simply because they want to, there is no reason to keep them around. They have not demonstrated anything about themselves that is of redeemable value. There is simply "nobody home." If this is the case, Hashem will close down the house.

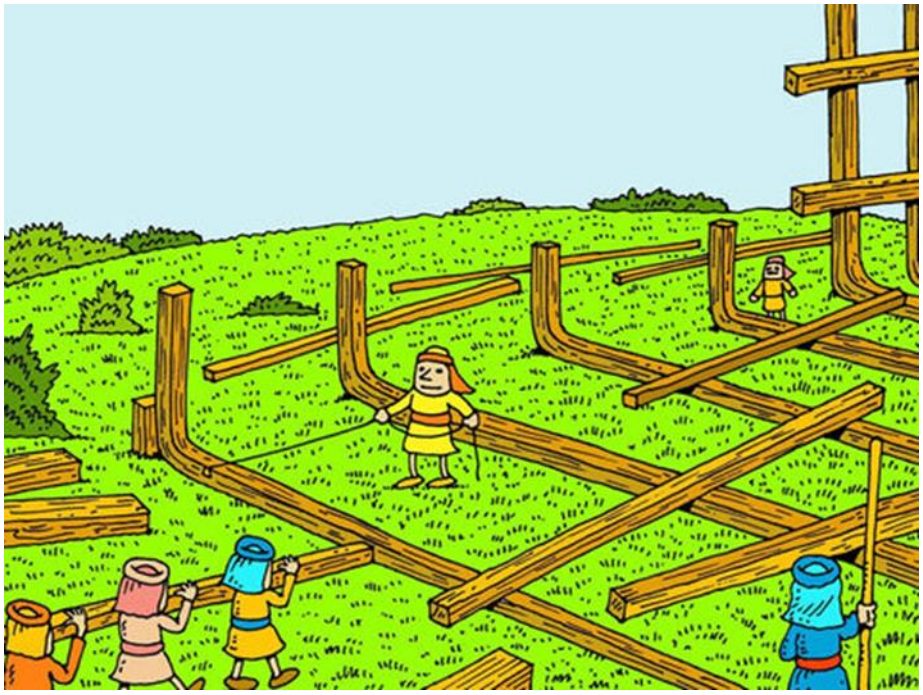




ועמך כולם צדיקים

"Although we are not assured that every request we make of Hashem will be fulfilled, Tefilos on behalf of Ruchniyus (spiritual matters) are guaranteed a positive response from Hashem!" ~ Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l in the name of R' Yisroel Salanter zt"l

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גֹפֶר ***'Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood, with rooms; you shall make the ark. And you shall pitch it within and without… A light/window you shall make for the ark.'*** (6:14,16)



Horav Aharon Levine z.l. uses the ark as a metaphor for the Jewish home. *Chazal* explain that gopher wood is actually cedar wood. As the cedar tree stands tall, towering above the other trees, so, too, should the Jewish home exemplify lofty goals and ideas in establishing the spiritual foundation of the Jewish family.

The roots of the cedar tree are firmly implanted in the ground and will not yield even to the strongest winds. The Jewish home must also have its perspective on life firmly rooted in *Torah hashkafah*, rendering it immune to the heretical winds of change. As the cedar grows straight, resplendent in its upright posture, our moral lives must be impeccable as well, the paradigm of integrity and virtue.

Furthermore, the ark was lined "within and without with pitch", to protect it from the elements. So, too, must the Jewish home be rendered impervious to the double standard of acting one way at home and another way in the street.

As the ark needed a window, so must the Jew look out of his home, and not completely isolate himself from his community. Involvement is an integral part of Judaism.

The ark's door alludes to the openness of the Jewish home, standing ready to serve all those that approach it.

The three floors of the ark may represent the three pillars upon which the world exists: *Torah*, study; *avodah*, serving Hashem; and *gemillus chasadim*, acts of loving-kindness.

Horav Levine notes that every specie had its own "room." This reflects a respect for privacy, *tznius*, which has always been the standard of the Jewish home. If we construct our homes following the blueprint of the ark, we will be prepared to travel the sea of life and brave the vicissitudes which imperil those who venture out without safeguards.

בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּא נֹחַ וְשֵׁם־וְחָם וָיֶפֶת בְּנֵי־נֹחַ וְאֵשֶׁת נֹחַ וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת נְשֵׁי־בָנָיו אִתָּם אֶל־הַתֵּבָה ***"In that very day entered Noach… with them into the ark."* (7:13)**



Rashi explains the *Torah's* emphasis on when Noach entered the ark. He explains that the people of that generation said, "If we see Noach entering the ark, we will break it and kill him." Hashem responded to them, "I shall bring him into the ark before everyone's eyes, in mid-day, so that we shall see whose words will prevail."

Their threatened action is puzzling and seems inconsistent with their words, since they did not believe in the arrival of the flood. In any case, if Noach was credible, they should have listened to him and repented. If, to the contrary, he was wrong and there was no flood, then they should have simply ignored him, let him enter the ark, and wait to see what transpired. When the rains would not appear, Noach

would then leave the ark in humiliation and disgrace. Why did they feel compelled to "break" the ark?

Horav Eliyahu M. Bloch z.l. derives from this *pasuk* that two contradictory sentiments exist within the non-believer. On the one hand, they exhibited open rebellion, deriding Noach's appeal with scorn and disdain. Simultaneously, deep down in their hearts, they knew that Noach was correct and there would be a flood. Hashem's retribution would arrive; the people would drown, and Noach would be spared. What did these hypocrites do? How did they respond to their inner voice which implored them to accept the truth? They responded by attempting to destroy Noach's means of escape, so that he would die with them!

This is the result of a warped and twisted perception which regrettably prevails in the minds of many of the unfaithful. They said that they did not believe Noach, but, nonetheless, they battled with him as if they believed that he was right.

The sceptic's constant challenge and the empiricist's incessant derision are indications of their own insecurity and vulnerability. We can only hope that one day they will succumb to the challenge of their own hearts and defer to the truth.

קץ כל בשר בא לפני *The end of all flesh has come before Me*. (6:13)

Simply, this means that the immorality of this generation had exceeded all boundaries. A people that behaves so immorally, who are filled with such corruption, have forfeited their right to existence. Their end must come. - Hashem told Noach to build an Ark and take his time doing it, so that maybe the people would repent, thereby averting the decree issued against them.

The **Kli Yakar** interprets this statement with a homiletic twist. "*The end of all flesh has come before Me*": When is there an end to all flesh? This refers to the *yom ha'missah,* day of death, when the

immortal soul severs its relationship with its temporary residence, the body, and the person (as we know him) dies.

Hashem said to Noach, "The *yom ha'missah* has come before Me with a complaint. It laments the fact that people no longer either remember or care about the meaning of death. They have lost all sight of the fact that life is temporal. No one lives forever.

I countered, 'How do you know that people have forgotten about You?' The *yom ha'missah* replied, 'For the land is filled with corruption. Is it possible that someone who is acutely aware that he is going to die (and answer for his way of life) would be so corrupt? Apparently, they have lost sight of reality.'"

Remembering that he is mortal is the last frontier for salvation for the individual. Realizing that one is not here forever is considered by *Chazal* the last and most potent argument for preventing him from abdicating and falling prey to the wiles of the *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination.

Chazal teach that when an individual senses the *yetzer hora* taking the leading edge over him, he should study Torah. If this is not successful in overpowering the cunning of the evil-inclination, he should recite *Shema Yisrael.* If this, too, does not resolve his dilemma, he should remind himself of his own mortality. The realization that he will die and have to answer for his behavior should be sufficient deterrent from sin. If it is not – then he is at the same point of no return reached by the *dor hamabul*, generation of the Flood.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, was wont to give greater meaning to the concept of *yazkir lo yom ha'missah*, "Let him bring to mind the day of death," with the following incident: The *Maggid* was visiting America on one of his many trips. At the time, he was the guest of a wealthy family that supported many Torah causes. He was taking a "tour" of the house when he came to a room which surprisingly, did not have a *mezuzah* on its doorpost. (Perhaps the owner thought

that since the room served a secular purpose, it did not require a *mezuzah*).



Lying on the table situated in the middle of the room was a large coffee table size book, which was more like an album, dedicated to the life of President John F. Kennedy, one of America's most beloved leaders, who was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. He was a young man with a wonderful future, whose life had been cut short by an assassin's bullet.

In the first picture, one saw a smiling President Kennedy getting into his open presidential limousine. He seemed like he did not have a care in the world. The whole world seemed to be smiling with him. The second picture showed the crowds of well-wishers and spectators lining the route that his car was taking. The third picture showed the President and the First Lady in the car, surrounded by his secret service. The fourth picture showed the President falling over, the victim of a shot to the head. The next few pictures depicted the scene of the tragedy: the ambulance rushing to the hospital; the doctors meeting the ambulance; the doctors rushing to surgery; the sad-faced surgeon leaving the operating room; and then, the last picture: his grave.

As Rav Sholom stared at the pictures, *Chazal's* statement, *yazkir lo yom ha'missah*, came to mind. A person must realize and internalize the thought that at any moment his life could change, and even worse – it could, *chas v'shalom*, Heaven forbid, end. It is all in the

pictures. A few snapshots depict the ultimate prestige, the epitome of happiness, and just a few pictures later, one sees the bitter end. From the limousine to the grave in a few snapshots; a few hours that changed the life of a young president on top of the world, and, incidentally, also changed the course of the world.

Rav Sholom now adds his observation. If a person would sense that he could very well die the very next day, that tonight would be his last *Maariv*, evening prayer; would he *daven* in the same manner that he has during the past years? Do we ever think that tonight could be our last *Maariv*, our last *Krias Shema*?

How many spouses have bemoaned not saying "goodbye" with more feeling when their husbands/wives left for the day – not to return? How many of us "planned" on settling disputes, only to discover that it is too late, the *Malach HaMaves*, Angel of Death, settled it for us? We read this and say, "Tomorrow, I will change," but what if there is no tomorrow?

All of the foolishness that man wrought throughout life can be directly attributed to a lack of awareness conveying the *yom ha'missah*. This does not suggest that one be morbid and walk around depressed all day, thinking that he might die at any moment – but he should have a balanced approach.



אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק *These are the offspring of Noach – Noach was a righteous man.* (6:9)

The *pasuk* begins with an introduction: the following are Noach's offspring. Yet, rather than mention any names, it goes on to praise Noach as a righteous person. What happened to his offspring?

Rashi quotes the *Midrash* which teaches that one's primary "offspring" are his good deeds. This is especially true concerning the *tzaddik* whose entire life is devoted to the performance of good deeds.

A young man who had been married for some time– and had not yet been blessed with children– had occasion to bring something to the venerable ***Rebbe of Gur, the Lev Simchah***. The *Rebbe* was appreciative. He then said the following: "*Rashi* quotes the *Midrash* that teaches that the primary offspring of a person are his good deeds.

Rav Bunim, zl of Peshischa, taught that in Heaven there are a number of 'gates'. The gate for *banim*, children, is situated right next to the gate for *gemillas chassadim*, good deeds. (This means that the access for prayer and reward flows through these 'gates.') When a person stands by the gate of *gemillas chassadim* , it is possible to 'sneak' into the gate which provides children."

The young man understood the *Rebbe's* implied blessing. The following year Hashem blessed him with a child.

I write this story due to its veiled message. From a purely psychological viewpoint, it makes sense that the individual who enhances the lives of others by performing good deeds reflects an inherently selfless nature.

Positive parenting occurs when parents maintain a sense of selflessness with regard to their children. *A tzaddik* is a person for whom selfhood does not play an active role. It is all about Hashem and the Jewish People. Perhaps this is why the primary "offspring" of the righteous are their good deeds. One good deed leads to "another."

"Depression isn't an aveirah, but it pulls people down more than the greatest aveirah. Simcha isn't a mitzvah, but it raises a person higher than the greatest mitzvah." ~ The Beis Aharon

וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס



Rashi explains that *chamas*, violence, refers to robbery, which had become rampant. Indeed, as *Chazal* note, the decree of ultimate destruction for that generation was the result of their blatant robbery. What was "unique" about their type of robbery that distinguished it to such an extent and effected their annihilation?

The *Ozhrover Rebbe z.l.* explains that they derived no material benefit from the fruits of their theft. Their thievery always remained within the parameters of legitimacy, since they stole less than the value of a *prutah*, a coin designated as the minimum standard for theft. They stole for the specific purpose of stealing, but they were careful to stay within the boundaries of the law.

Indeed, they performed every form of abominable activity, but they found a *heter*, permission, for their evil behavior. Every type of behavior was excused and justified. It was a generation in which the sinners performed every degenerate and repulsive act but defined their iniquity as culture and enlightenment. Never was it viewed in its true essence. Indeed, they probably told Noach that the deluge, if it would come, would engulf only himself and not them.

This was the root of their invidious behavior and consequent annihilation. When one sins in a manner for which he can be admonished, the rebuke might be effective in motivating the sinner

to repent. However, when one justifies his miscreant behavior, when one "steals less than the value of a *prutah*," he indicates that he sins only for one purpose– to challenge Hashem!

This is the *pasuk's* interpretation, "*And the earth was corrupted before Hashem.*" Only "*before Hashem*", Who knows what is in the recesses of everyone's mind, is it considered corruption. Their corruption was defined by the senseless stealing, rather than the *halachic* limitations. It was this form of immorality that sealed their fate.

וזה אשר תעשה אתה שלש מאות אמה ארך התבה חמשים אמה רחבה ושלשים אמה קומתה ***This is how you shall make it: The length of the Ark shall be 300 Amos, its width 50 Amos, and its height 30 Amos. (6:15)***



We should not overlook the fact that the Torah records the details of the Ark's measurements, nor should we fail to notice the Torah's repeated mention of the fact that Noach follows every detail. Noach's compliance with every instruction is noted with the words, *kein asah*, "so he did."

Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl, derives an important lesson from Hashem's entire act of saving Noach with a select group of representatives of the world's creatures. Hashem chose one man who was to save himself, his family and the animal world for the future, but that this man would be able to do so <u>only</u> if he did everything <u>exactly</u> in <u>strict accordance</u> with the commands given to him by Hashem.

Gadol metzuvah v'oseh, "Greater is one who is commanded and follows the command": It is a basic principle in Judaism that the value of an action executed because one is commanded by G-d is greater than that which is carried out spontaneously.

Contrary to the opinion of the "misguided," only acts performed for the purpose of fulfilling Hashem's will have true value. Acts performed impetuously, on impulse, have only uncertain, secondary significance.

One hundred twenty years elapsed between Hashem's command to Noach and the commencement of the Flood. During this time, Noach could have occupied himself with several things. He could have built a multitude of arks, but he built only one, and this took him one hundred and twenty years. Why? Because this is what Hashem told him to do – no more – no less. He restricted himself to doing – albeit with great accuracy and attention to the minutest detail – that which G-d had instructed him to do. The rest was up to G-d.



נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו *"Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations."* (6:9)

Chazal offer a number of interpretations for the phrase "in his generations." Some commentators interpret this as praise for Noach, who was able to transcend the evil even of his generation. Indeed, had he lived in a generation in which righteousness was the way of life, he would have been even greater. - Others contend that he could stand out only in his own generation, in which evil was the standard.

Horav Shlomo Margolis, Shlita, feels that "b'dorosov," "in his generations," reflects the limited effect of Noach's righteousness – it lasted only during his generations. He was not able to inspire others, to imbue his descendants with his way of life. His inspiration was, regrettably, short-lived.

We wonder why? After all, he certainly tried to infuse others with the righteous perspective, to live a life of virtue and integrity. What happened?

We suggest that since people, by nature, are resistant to criticism, they will look for any excuse to justify their actions, especially at the expense of the individual who is rebuking them. If they can find a loophole, anything to malign or impugn the integrity of the "mocheiach," admonisher, they will do so.

The people needed to find fault with Noach, so that they could reject his message. They found one thing wrong with Noach: his son, Cham. "Who is Noach to reprove us? Let him take care of his own family!" they declared.

While Cham's behavior was certainly not Noach's fault, since Noach probably did everything within his power to guide his errant son, people used it as an excuse not to listen to Noach.

It is unfortunate that, in this regard, the attitude of people has not changed very much!



וירד ד' לראות את העיר ...אשר בנו בני האדם ***Hashem descended to look at the city…which the sons of Man built. (11:5)***

Rashi questions the use of the words, *bnei Adam*, "sons of man." Who else would they be? Were they the sons of donkeys? He explains that the Torah refers to their lineage ascending to Adam *HaRishon*, primordial man, who exhibited ingratitude when Hashem asked him why he had eaten the forbidden fruit.

Adam replied, "The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me of the tree and I ate"(*Bereishis* 3:11). As he was a *kafui tov*, ingrate, likewise, his descendants rebelled against the One Who had spared them from the effects of the Flood. In other words, they were alive because of Hashem; yet, they were prepared to mutiny against Him.

Had they been spared from the Flood? They were born after the Flood, but anyone with basic common sense realizes that his debt of gratitude extends back to another place and time. Had Hashem not spared their ancestors, they would not be here. This is the Torah's concept of gratitude: *hakoras hatov*, recognizing /acknowledging the good one receives.



All too often we do not show appreciation, because we are indifferent to the good from which we have benefitted. We refuse to acknowledge that we owe anyone. After all, it was so long ago; or he had to do it anyway—it is part of his job. These are all excuses for a repulsive character.

Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, once stayed at an elegant hotel in Paris. He ordered a cup of coffee which cost a few francs. This was quite a bit of money at the time, especially for a Jew from Eastern Europe. After taking in everything that went into the coffee, however, he realized that it was not that much. True, the price of the actual coffee was minimal. There was also the elegant, clean building which housed the hotel. The ambiance of the restaurant- the china, silver and crystal flatware- was not to be ignored. The waiters and *maître d*, the staff that saw to the maintenance of the restaurant, were all included in the price. It was no wonder that a cup of coffee cost a few francs. All of these extras indirectly added to the "flavor" of the cup of coffee.

Afterwards, *Rav* Yisrael said, "How much more so are we obliged to recognize the benefits we enjoy in Hashem's hotel – the world. When a man drinks a cup of water, he enjoys the ground upon which he

stands, the air which he breathes, the ambiance of the trees, grass and flowers that surround him. The music of the birds, the warmth of the sun, the fresh air: all of these are included in his cup of water. This is something that should course through our minds the next time we make a *brachah*, blessing, prior to partaking from Hashem's world.

Horav Yisrael Abuchatzera, zl, reverently known as the Baba Sali, visited France. While he was there, he developed a serious infection in his eyes. His students immediately rushed him to a Dr. Klitzi, who addressed the *tzadik's* needs and provided the necessary medicine which cured his ailment and saved his eyesight. The Baba Sali thanked the doctor profusely and remained close with him, extending to him every accolade and privilege.

Several years later, one of the members of the French rabbinate visited the Baba Sali, petitioning him for a blessing for his wife. Apparently, his wife was very ill and her life hung in the balance. The Baba Sali blessed her, wishing her well.

As the *rav* was about to leave, he casually mentioned that perhaps the Baba Sali was acquainted with his father-in-law, Dr. Klitzi. As soon as the Baba Sali heard this, he arose from his chair and said, "You should know that your father-in-law saved my eyesight. Had it not been for his excellent care, I would not have achieved all that I have over these last few years. Indeed, I owe him an incredible debt of gratitude. In way of some form of remuneration, I assure you that your wife will immediately enjoy instant recovery from her illness. She will become completely healthy, and all signs of ill health will disappear.

When the *rav* returned home, he discovered that the Baba Sali's blessing had achieved immediate fruition. This is the power of *hakoras hatov*.

צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה *A light / window you shall make for the ark* (6:16)



There are two definitions stated by the *Torah*'s commentators of the meaning of *tzohar*. One explanation is that it was a brilliant jewel which lit the ark. The traditional approach however, is that the *tzohar* was simply a window.

The purpose of this window is difficult to understand. What great sights would they behold that would necessitate incorporating this window into the ark's structure?

The *Ateres Mordechai* poignantly explains the purpose of this window. Hashem hereby enjoins Noach to bear in mind his responsibility to mankind. While he sits in the ark calm and tranquil, secure in his being spared from the terrible fate meted out to the rest of humanity, he is to look out of this window, gaze upon the terrible sight before him, and reflect. He must realize the terrible spiritual danger which hangs over him were he to ignore this sight, and divorce himself from the pain and anguish of those less fortunate than himself. He must not be happy and relieved at his own rescue and ignore the sorrow of others.

The window serves as a symbol of his moral obligation to others, and as a reminder of his unrelenting obligation to acknowledge and show his gratitude to Hashem for His everlasting beneficence.

"Just as one is certain the sun will rise in the morning; he should be certain that Hashem will help him." ~ Sefer Ha'Ikrim.

***והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה And behold! An olive leaf it had plucked with its bill.* (8:11)**



The *Midrash* teaches that, in addition to representatives of every living creature which Noach brought with him into the *Teivah*, Ark, he also brought seeds and shoots from all types of vegetation.

The purpose was simple: He and all the creatures would survive, but what would they eat? From what would they sustain themselves?

There was one plant which he did not take: the olive. In their commentary to the Torah, the *Baalei Tosfos* explain that the olive cannot endure one full year out of the soil. Thus, it would not have survived on the Ark. Therefore, it is interesting that when Noach sent the dove out to investigate if the Flood waters had finally receded, it returned with an olive leaf. How did the olive survive the Flood? Everything else perished.

This teaches us that, when Hashem commands us to do something, it is not necessarily for our sake as our only means of salvation. Hashem can do anything, and every option continues to be available to Him. He decided that Noach should spend one hundred and twenty years building an ark, and that he and all the living creatures which were spared the effects of the Flood should escape on it.

This does not mean that the Ark was the only medium of rescuing Noach. Hashem could have saved him through a host of different paths. He wanted the Ark! Indeed, the olive had no ark, yet it remained standing in full bloom despite the waters of the Flood.

Every avenue for escape and salvation is open to Hashem. He does not require Noach or the Ark. He simply wanted to provide Noach an opportunity for *zchus*, merit, to go down in history as the man who rescued humanity. Hashem does not require man's assistance.

This is one of the principles of our belief. We have been gifted a plethora of Torah to study and *mitzvos* to observe, purely for our own reward. The world does not require our input in order to achieve its purpose. Our activities are solely for our own benefit.

Following the European Holocaust, during which the world of Torah was almost destroyed, some of the remnants, firebrands plucked from the burning flames of destruction, assembled in Yerushalayim to discuss how these few remaining *Roshei Yeshivah* could band together to create a renaissance, a rebuilding of the Torah world that once was. Everyone spoke passionately about the terrible loss, the irreparable damage that the Torah world had sustained, and each gave his advice concerning the future. They knew that they had to build, but how?

In the midst of the discussion, the **Ponevezer Rav, zl,** rose from his seat and declared, "*Rabbosai*, my dear colleagues! You are all mistaken in your approach toward rejuvenating Torah. The Torah does not need our help! Hashem made a promise *Ki lo sishkach mipi zaro*, 'It (the Torah) will not be forgotten from His children.' The world of Torah will blossom with or without us.

The question that confronts us is not, 'What will happen to the world of Torah?' No! The question is: 'How can <u>we</u> be involved? How can we share in its rebuilding?'

What are we willing to do in order to have a *zchus* in the regeneration of Torah in the post-Holocaust era? What are we prepared to do to have a part in Torah study in which future generations will be involved?"

צא מן התבה אתה ואשתך ובניך ונשי בניך אתך ***"Go forth from the Ark: you and your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you."*** **(8:16)**



Noach had been living in a sealed ark, together with thousands of animals for over a year. One would think that when the first opportunity to leave would present itself, he would run as fast as he could. - Apparently, this is not what happened.

After being in the Ark, slaving all day and night ceaselessly for a year, Noach was not ready to leave. It required Hashem's command to enable Noach to set foot outside of the Ark. Why? It is not as if he were living comfortably amid luxury. What was holding him back? Perhaps he did not know that the ground was dry! When he pulled off the cover of the Ark, he saw that it was dry outside. In any event, all Hashem had to do was to inform Noach that all was well; the Flood was over; the ground was dry. Why did he require a command in order to leave?

Horav Ben Tzion Firer, zl, responds with a powerful insight. Noach survived, while everyone else in the world perished. The world as he knew it was one large graveyard, with millions of bodies strewn throughout. These were his compatriots, people whom he knew, whom he had seen. He was alive – they were not. This could have catalyzed an overpowering emotion with which Noach had to grapple. Furthermore, to have survived when everyone else died, can leave one with an overwhelming sense of guilt. It is so much easier

to hide, to shelter oneself from reality, and not have to confront a destroyed world devoid of life.

Noach knew that he was not guilty of their deaths. He had tried to tell people that a flood was coming, but they did not listen. Furthermore, his survival was not linked to their deaths. He did not live because they died. Nonetheless, he did not feel good about his survival, when he was the only one to have survived. The emotional turmoil within him was palpable.

Was it any different in 1945 when pockets of survivors from the Nazi Holocaust looked around the death camps, and saw bodies of their friends strewn about, death everywhere? One was almost ashamed to have survived when others were not as fortunate.

Noach went through the motions of sending out the raven and the dove to ascertain that the Flood was over and the ground was dry, but he was personally not ready to leave. Only after Hashem commanded him to leave the Ark did Noach leave the "comfort" of his past year's "home."

Perhaps another emotion enveloped Noach, limiting his ability to leave the protected shelter of the Ark. He might have been submerged in a feeling of hopelessness. The entire world had been destroyed. No one, except literally a handful of human beings, was left. The world that had been was no more. He did not want to go on. Indeed, Hashem commanded him to be fruitful and multiply – propagate the world once again. Why did Noach need a reminder from Hashem? Had not Hashem given Adam *HaRishon* a long-standing command to procreate? Noach was concerned that another flood or some other punishment would once again wipe out the world. He needed assurances. Noach was a troubled man. Whatever the reason– survivor guilt, survivor shame, survivor despair– Noach was a survivor and he required special treatment.

There is one more major reason that Noach might have hesitated. In an earlier *Peninim*, I quoted an inspirational insight from **Horav**

Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, which I feel is appropriate to reiterate. Shortly after the tragic, untimely deaths of Nadav and Avihu, the two older sons of Aharon *HaKohen*, the Torah writes: "Moshe spoke to Aharon and to Elazar and Isamar, his remaining sons" (*Vayikra* 10:12). The words "*Banav ha'nosarim*", remaining sons, seem superfluous. Obviously, if Aharon had four sons, of which two had died, the two who remained were the surviving two sons. Why is their survival underscored?

The *Mashgiach* explains that Moshe wanted to emphasize the fact that they were survivors. They were no ordinary people. Having survived a trauma which took the lives of their brothers means that they now had the obligation to carry on. They had an added responsibility: theirs and their brothers'. Indeed, as the *Mashgiach* points out, we are a nation of survivors, having seen six million of our brothers and sisters brutally wiped out in the Holocaust. We have a dual responsibility which weighs heavy upon our shoulders.

Perhaps Noach could not handle the added burden. The world had perished. He alone had to carry on for them. This, he felt, was simply too much, too difficult a role for him to bear. Hashem told him, "Noach, you must go out, pick up the pieces and rebuild the world. This is what survivors do. Veritably, it is done with great sadness and extreme difficulty, but it must be done. This is why you were saved."

Following World War II, there were survivors, both in America and *Eretz Yisrael*, who reestablished Torah and laid the foundation for thriving Torah communities. It was not easy for them. Many had lost their entire families, friends, *yeshivos*; everything was destroyed in the flames of the Holocaust. They could have easily locked themselves in their homes and be consumed by remorse. The list of survivors who achieved the elite status of builders of Torah is not large. It is comprised of indefatigable warriors who fought

for Torah because it was who they were and was all they had left. Many of them had lost families and institutions that had constituted their life's work. Yet, they persevered and rebuilt, taking all of us with them.

The one person who stands out as the primary architect of Torah in *Eretz Yisrael*, the individual who taught others the meaning of building for Torah, was the *Ponovezer Rav*, **Horav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, zl**. *Horav Shlomo Lorencz, zl*, once asked him how a person in his position– having lost all of his family, his community and his Torah institutions– could evince such an extraordinary degree of ingenuity and creativity, to an extent that he overshadowed men much younger and healthier than himself. From where did he derive his energy and enthusiasm?

"Your question is a valid one," he began. "The truth is, I am engulfed by dejection and despair, yet this is precisely why I am involved in building… In my situation, there are just two options: either I roam around and break windows; or I build and build without stopping!"

The *Ponovezer Rav* found that working to reestablish Europe's devastated *yeshivos* calmed his tormented spirit after the losses he had sustained. He did not permit the emptiness within him to fester and lead him deeper into despair. Rather, he harnessed his pain and employed it as a vehicle for unparalleled creativity.

In his *hesped*, eulogy, for the *Ponovezer Rav*, the *Rosh Yeshivah*, **Horav Shmuel Rosovsky, zl**, offered a similar idea that further illuminates the *Rav's* remarks. *Rav* Shmuel related that he had once asked the *Rav* how he maintained such extreme focus on constant achievement without allowing for a moment's rest or relaxation. The *Rav* told *Rav* Shmuel that essentially he considered himself to have been incinerated together with the six million *kedoshim*, martyrs, of the Holocaust: "If despite that, there is still life within me, it is only for the purpose of rebuilding and restoring the glory of our People." It was with this thought

constantly in mind that he never wavered, never slowed down, until he breathed his last breath. It is what motivated him and imbued him with the energy to continue his noble and holy work on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*.

וישאר אך נח ואשר אתו בתבה *Only Noach survived, and those with him in the Ark*. (7:23)

Rashi quotes *Chazal,* who teach that Noach survived, but was physically spent. Alternatively, he was injured by the lion. Apparently, each animal had its individual feeding time. Noach was once late in feeding the lion, who did not take kindly to having to wait for his dinner. When Noach arrived late, the lion took out its anxiety on him with a powerful slap of the paw.



Life was not easy for the human beings who comprised Noach's passenger list. Their involvement with providing *chesed*, kindness, to the animals led Avraham *Avinu* to realize the significance of such acts of *chesed*. He made a *kal v'chomer*, statement of *a priori* logic: If performing *chesed* with animals is so important, how much more so should one act kindly to human beings. This motivated him to establish his famous *eshel*, welcome center, providing rest, relaxation and sustenance to travelers.

Chazal say that Noach and his sons hardly slept during that difficult year traveling on the Ark. Did it have to be that way? Why did Hashem not arrange it that all of the feeding times for the animals

coincide, so that they would all eat at one time? This way, it would be humanly impossible to feed them, and Noach and his sons could sleep in feedings. Was it really necessary for them to extend themselves to the point of superhuman exhaustion?

Horav Zeidel Epstein, zl, explains that the story of Noach is all about *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. The people of that generation sinned in a manner which indicated that they cared solely about themselves. They acted in complete opposition to the rule of *olam chesed yibaneh*, the world is built on (acts of) lovingkindness. Hashem created a world with the intention that its inhabitants would conduct themselves by caring for one another. He left no place in this world for selfish people.

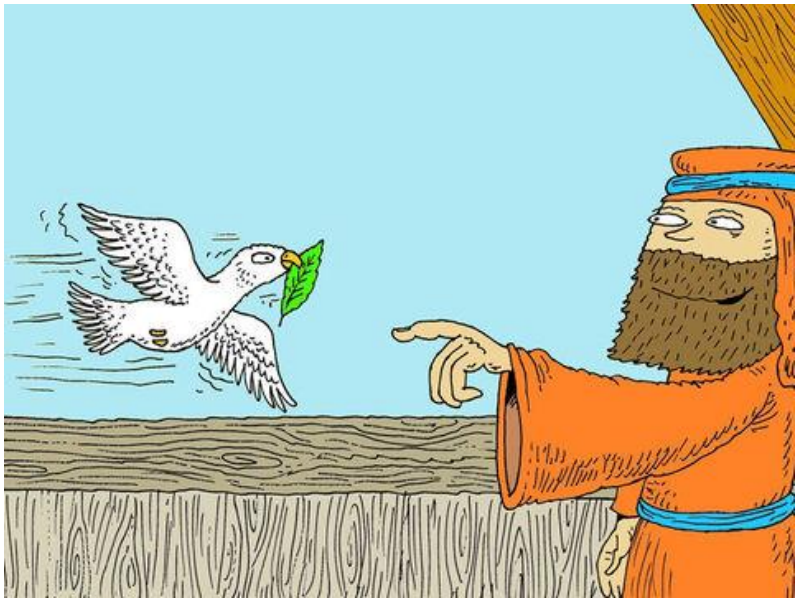
Thus, the only way the people were able to survive the Flood was by adopting acts of *chesed* as a way of life. Especially during the year of Flood, when the *Middas HaDin*, Attribute of Divine Justice, prevailed throughout the world, the only means of surviving was counteracting it with acts of goodness and kindness.

Middas HaDin demanded punishment for the lack of *chesed*. Noach and his sons could not let up for a moment, or they would fall prey to the effects of *Din*. Nonstop kindness was the only antidote to the Justice that was being meted out against society.

Always remember: Grapes are crushed to make wine. Diamonds are formed under pressure. Olives are pressed to release oil. And seeds begin to sprout in the darkness of the ground.

Whenever you feel crushed, under pressure, pressed, or in darkness, you're in a powerful place of transformation. Trust the process. ~ Based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

וְלֹא־מָצְאָה֩ הַיּוֹנָ֨ה מָנ֜וֹחַ לְכַף־רַגְלָ֗הּ וַתָּ֤שָׁב אֵלָיו֙ אֶל־הַתֵּבָ֔ה... וַיִּשְׁלַ֥ח יָד֖וֹ וַיִּקָּחֶ֑הָ וַיָּבֵ֨א אֹתָ֥הּ אֵלָ֛יו אֶל־הַתֵּבָ֖ה "*But the dove could not find a resting place…and it returned to him to the Ark…So he put forth his hand, and took it and brought it to him to the Ark.*" (8:9)



Noach sent the dove out of the Ark in search of dry land to ascertain if the time had come when the Flood was finally over. The first time, the dove returned, and Noach stretched out his hand, taking the dove back into the Ark. The Torah seems to be using this incident to tell us something. Why is it of any significance to us if the dove flew back into the Ark or was brought back in through Noach?

Horav Yechezkel Munk, Shlita, *Ram b'Yeshivas Telz*, shared an insight with me which elucidates the matter.

The generation of the Flood was guilty of many transgressions. The people were responsible for the moral and spiritual breakdown of society. In the end, it was one *aveirah*, sin, that sealed their fate. This sin had to be corrected before the deluge could come to an end. It was *chamas*, petty theft, in its various forms.

There was a complete collapse of society – man lost all respect for his fellow man. He took whatever he desired. There was no sensitivity, no empathy, no mutual respect. When man has no respect for his fellow man, then society cannot continue to function.

The year spent inside the Ark was a year of education, a year of learning to live with one another under circumstances that were far from comfortable. Noach sent the dove out in search of dry land. When it returned, it did not enter the Ark on its own. It waited to

be "invited" back inside by Noach. Is that not the proper way to enter someone else's home?

When Noach noted the dove's reluctance to enter, he stretched out his hand and "invited" it back in. He now knew that the transgression that had catalyzed the terrible deluge had been overcome. Once again, respect for another creature had returned to the world. There was no longer a need for punishment. The punishment had run its course and served its purpose.

The Sanzer Rebbe, Z'tl, Foresaw the Horror 50 Yrs. Ago: "Worse Reshaim Than Hitler"



In a sichah last week about the war and the terrible atrocities perpetrated by Hamas terorrists, the Sanzer Rebbe said that his father, the Ba'al HaShefa Chaim, z'tl, already foresaw such events over 50 years ago.

What was the Rebbe referring to? One of the chassidim quoted the Chumash-Rashi shiur that the **Shefa Chaim, z'tl**, gave over on Parshas Acharei Kedoshim in 1975.

The Shefa Chaim said at the time: "I already said a long time ago, and afterward someone told me who's close to Reb Aharon of Belz that he himself heard that the Rebbe also said these things – that the Yishmaelim and Mitzrim are much bigger reshaim than Hitler, yimach shemo. When I said these things 20 years ago, there who those who debated me about this but as I mentioned, the Belzer Rebbe also said it."

"Because according to the pnimius of the Torah, Bnei Yishmael are from the klipah of a chamor, and its tumah is greater than the klipah of a kelev. (Zohar HaKodesh, Shemos).

"The Mufti, yimach sh'mo is the one who gave an eitzah to Hitler on how to destroy the Jews in gas chambers. [In 1941, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, traveled to Berlin and met with Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and other Nazi leaders.]

As I already testified, when we were in the Feldafing DP camp, immediately after we were liberated from the Nazis, they housed us in a camp that previously belonged to Hitler Youth and I saw names and letters in Arabic on all the closets in the barracks because that's where the Arabs lived who taught the Nazis how to kill Jews. And they were the ones who urged them to exterminate the Jews, and now also today [1975], the Nazis who fled for their lives live in Arab countries."

The Sanzer Rebbe continued: "The ikar of the hatred of these reshaim is toward the das of Yisrael and therefore they schedule all their murders and tzaros davka on Yamim Tovim, once on Rosh Hashanah, once on Simchas Torah, once on Purim, etc. – every Yom Tov was an eis tzarah and you can clearly see that the tumah searches for itself davka yamim tovim to harm Yisrael because the ikar of their hatred is for Das Moshe."

"This war is a war of darkness and light – for the tumah cannot tolerate the kedushah. This inyan began from the time that the nachash [snake] was jealous of Adam HaRishon and it still hasn't stopped until this day. *Adarabah*, the closer we approach the days of Moshiach, the more the hatred of the sitra achrah increases. Therefore, a person who is careful about his nefesh and doesn't want chas v'chalilah to veer off the right path must be extremely cautious at a time like this." *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*



Ki Eshmira Shabbos: An Incredible Story About Kavod Shabbos

Prior to Rosh Hashanah, which fell out this year on Shabbos and Sunday, several Gedolim, including **HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shternbuch and HaGaon HaRav Yitzchak Zilberstein**, spoke more than once about the fact that when the shofar isn't blown on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the din for Klal Yisrael could be more severe.

Both Gedolim emphasized the importance, especially this year, of being mechazeik in shemiras and kavod Shabbos, including learning hilchos Shabbos every day. HaRav Zilberstein even promised that anyone who is mekabeil to learn hilchos Shabbos on a regular basis will be decreed for a good year.

Additionally, the Rav's talmidim say that in recent months, Rav Zilberstein constantly stresses during his drashos, shiurim, and sichos about kedushas haShabbos and the terrible punishment for those who are mechallel Shabbos or lend a hand to chillulei Shabbos by not acting against them. More recently, the Rav often asks for the song **'כי אשמרה שבת ק-ל ישמרני'** to be played at simchos.

As *YWN* reported, the residents of two communities near the Gaza Strip that are Shomer Shabbos were largely spared from the carnage that occurred last Shabbos. A video even shows the Hamas terrorists arriving last Shabbos morning at the gate of Kibbutz Sa'ad, which was locked to traffic in accordance with the request of its Shomer Shabbos residents, and moving on.

Another amazing story that was confirmed from a reliable source by *YWN* is that of M., a 22-year-old from a Chareidi home who has been struggling with his Yiddishkeit.

He and his friends, also struggling, drove to the Negev on Thursday night of Chol Hamoed to attend the music festival. They partied late into the night, slept for a few hours in a tent, and the next day

decided to remain for Shabbos/Simchas Torah but resolved to be shomer Shabbos the best they could.

But at 4 p.m. on Hoshanah Raba, M. and his friends went into their tent for a break. The quiet inside the tent had an effect – the excitement of the partying and loud music outside dissipated and their moods changed. They looked at each other and remembered past years – when they were mekabeil Shabbos/Simchas Torah very differently – in their homes and yeshivos. Each could see the yearning in each other's eyes – no words were necessary. Silently, they began packing up their belongings, and drove toward their homes – in Yerushalayim, arriving right before Shekiyah.

The massacre that they avoided by their last-minute decision does not need to be repeated here. Hashem should send all of those who were wounded a refuah sheleimah b'nefesh u'vaguf and a yeshuah to those who were abducted. *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*



וַיִּוֹלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶת ***Noach begot three sons, Shem, Cham and Yafes*. (6:10)**

Noticeably, Cham, who was Noach's youngest son, is placed out of sequence. One would expect the three sons to be placed in the Torah in accordance with their birth order.

In a response to a query posed by his *chassidim*, the ***Kotzker Rebbe, zl***, addressed this question. Apparently, one of his *chassidim* fell prey to the external winds of change, and, in a short time, he left the fold. Since he had originally been one of them, the *chassidim* attempted to persuade him to return. When talking failed to effect

a change in his behavior, they decided, or so they thought, that including him in their gatherings would make a difference. Sadly, they were wrong.

They asked the *Rebbe* why their efforts had not produced positive results. He explained, "The Torah positions Cham between Shem and Yafes because the brothers thought that by having Cham with them, they would have a positive influence on him. Alas, they were wrong. Cham remained Cham even in the presence of his righteous brothers."

A person changes when he wants to, often after he has gotten everything out of his system. *Mussar shmuesen*, ethical discourses, opening up one's home, *kumzitz* singing – among the many attempts we utilize to convince someone to return – all help. Until the person is prepared to make an intelligent decision not based upon emotion, however, he will not completely leave his non-observant fantasy. He might be unhappy with the way he was treated when he had questions about observance; or he might be just plain angry at an individual, and he is taking it out on Hashem and the entire religious community; or he is just simply mixed up and is dealing with issues, many of them self-contrived.

We should never give up and never become angry. Patience, coupled with even more patience – regardless how much it rankles you, is the way to go. Reciting *Tehillim* is vital. Would we act differently if he were physically ill? There is really not much difference. One illness is physical; the other is emotional.

Knowing how to speak to someone in such a situation requires extreme sensitivity and tolerance, which might be hard to demonstrate if the fellow is a family member or close friend. We seem to have greater tolerance for outsiders than for our own family. The hurt is greater when it is close by.

The following story, culled from Rabbi Yechiel Spero's latest volume on *Pirkei Avos* [The Eternal Wisdom of *Pirkei Avos*] is inspiring, as it

shows how a master whose love for all Jews, together with his understanding of the issues plaguing them, came into play to help return a young man to his roots.

The *Rambam* (*Hilchos Deios* 1:6) and the *Ramak*, in his *Tomer Devorah*, exhort us to follow in Hashem's ways – *Mah Hu af atah*. Hashem is patient and tolerant, to the point that, even when someone sins against Him, he receives the strength and ability to maintain his disloyalty towards Hashem.

The *Klausenberger Rebbe, zl*, was a giant in Torah erudition. He also possessed uncanny sensitivity to Jews of all stripes. He suffered greatly during the Holocaust, as his entire family had been murdered. Following the war, he went throughout the DP camps reaching out to his fellow survivors with love and respect.

One freezing wintry night, the *Rebbe* traveled to Montreal to celebrate a *chanukas habayis*. His driver was not familiar with the streets (before GPS and Waze); they looked all over for someone who could give them directions. True to form, however, the city was snowed under, the temperature was well below zero. No normal person would be taking a walk out tonight.

After driving up and down the various streets, they chanced upon a bareheaded fellow who had braved the elements. He gave the outward appearance of a native of Quebec, a Province where French is spoken alongside English. The driver attempted to communicate with the man, to no avail.

Suddenly, the *Rebbe* exited the car, walked over to the man and began to speak to him in *Yiddish*. It seemed bizarre to see a *chassidic Rebbe*, bedecked in all his *chassidic garb*, striking up a conversation with a man, who, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be anything but Jewish. Yet, they were conversing in *Yiddish*. Fifteen minutes later, the *Rebbe* had directions, and they went on their way.

Fast-forward thirty years, when that same driver was in Montreal for an event. Being that he had been the *Rebbe's* driver for years, the people peppered him with questions about the *Rebbe*.

When someone asked him to share a special story about the *Rebbe*, he related what had taken place that wintry night thirty years earlier. He emphasized how the *Rebbe*, with his boundless love for Jews and his penetrating understanding of what made each one tick, was able to assuage the feelings of a Jew and bring him closer to *Yiddishkeit*.

From the back of the room, a *Chassidishe*-looking fellow called out and asked to be heard, "I want to explain to you how the *Rebbe* intuitively knew that the man who was walking on that frigid night was a co-religionist. It was not *ruach Hakodesh*, Divine Inspiration; it was not a miracle. It was extraordinary perception born of love, empathy and an uncanny comprehension of people.

The *Rebbe* realized that the only person who would be walking outside on such a miserable night would be an angry Jew – a Jew who was in deep pain – a Jew who had lost everything, and, as a result of his anger, had discarded his *yarmulke*. Why else would he walk bareheaded? He was making a statement, which an astute, caring person would be able to perceive."

The *chassid* said, "I know that story well, because I am that person. The fifteen-minute warm, non-judgmental conversation with the *Rebbe* started me on my journey back to *Yiddishkeit*."

Patience, understanding, tolerance, empathy, warmth and care achieve what nothing else will. If we want those who are estranged from *Yiddishkeit* to return, we must love them – regardless of their behavior.

מֵי־נֹחַ

The *Navi Yeshayah* (54:9) refers to the flood waters as *mei Noach*, the waters of Noach, thereby attributing culpability to Noach for not attempting to prevent the flood waters from destroying the world. What should he have done? - *Daven*! His *tefillos* could have nullified the decree. One should never short-change the power of his *tefillos*.

Horav Dovid Feinstein, zl, began his day with *Tehillim*. Early in the morning, he sat at his table reciting *Tehillim* for people who were in need. His jacket pockets were filled with scraps of paper covered with names of people for whom he *davened*. His *tefillos* were sincere, identifying with the needs of those for whom he was asked to *daven*. He felt that *tefillah* was the highest form of endeavor in which one should invest effort and energy. He would often instruct family members of a *choleh*, sick person, that *tefillah* overrides a physician's diagnosis. Hashem has the last word. As such, we must petition Hashem for His blessing.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* felt that the *tefillah, V'Hu Rachum*, recited on Monday and Thursday, was one upon which we should all focus – especially when facing adversity. [Many reasons are given for the recital of this *tefillah* specifically on Monday and Thursday.

One – *Bais Din*, Jewish courts, would convene on these days, thus implying that they are *yemei hadin*, days of judgment. The *Bais Din shel Maalah*, Heavenly Court, coincides with the earthly court.

Two – Moshe *Rabbeinu's* second round of forty days on *Har Sinai*, which effected *Klal Yisrael's* reprieve from punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf, began on a Thursday and concluded on a Monday. - Let it suffice to say that it is an important prayer which has powerful ramifications for he who says it sincerely with *kavanah*.

In some synagogues, the worshippers sadly look for excuses (such as the *yahrzeit* of a great *tzaddik*) not to recite this tefillah because of its length. The *Rosh Yeshivah* felt that it is important that we

recite this *tefillah* with great feeling. First, in order to thank Hashem for not issuing adverse decrees against us; and second, to petition Him to keep it that way.

A *tefillah* of such significance and efficacy should be "welcomed" and appreciated.



Hashem Knows What's Best

The *nusach* of Yizkor, is **אב הרחמים שוכן מרומים**, "Compassionate Father Who dwells in heaven." Also, at a levayah, people say **רחמים א-ל מלא שוכן מרומים** , "Hashem Who is full of compassion and dwells in heaven."

Why do we mention in these tefillos that Hashem dwells in heaven?

It is because we are saying, "In this world, Hashem's ways might not appear like **רחמים** - compassionate, but Hashem dwells in heaven, and from that vantage point, it is clear and evident how everything is compassion and for the good.

Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem to explain to him why there are tzaddikim who suffer and resha'im who prosper (see Brachos 7.) Hashem responded (Shemos 33:21) **הִנֵּה מָקוֹם אִתִּי**, "There is a place near Me…"

Hashem was telling Moshe that if you will come to My place, in heaven, you will understand, and you will see that everything is for the good. It can be compared to a person on an airplane. From high up there in the sky, he sees so much further than a person looking from the ground.

Hashem told Moshe, come up to heaven, and you will understand how everything is compassion and just.

The Chofetz Chaim said that this is the reason an *ehrlicher* Yid is often called a "*hechere* Yid," a high Yid. It can be compared to a person standing near a fence but can't see over it. But someone tall can see above the fence. He sees so much more than others. Similarly, a *hechere Yid* is a person who can see the world from a higher perspective, and such a person knows that the world is run with chesed and rachamim.

The Chofetz Chaim explained that Hashem runs the world with perfect order, and everything He does is with compassion. If we don't understand, it is because we don't see the entire picture.

When we see the world, we don't see the entire picture, and that's the reason we have questions. We only see what happens in this world, but we don't see what happens after one's death, and what happened in previous gilgulim. We see only part of the picture, and therefore we don't understand Hashem's ways. But if we could see the entire picture, we would know that Hashem is just, and all his ways are compassionate and kind.

These ideas are relevant to the difficult times we are living in. There are many things that we don't understand, but it isn't expected that we should understand Hashem's ways. We are not in heaven to see the entire picture, but we believe that everything is only Hashem's compassion, everything is kindness, and everything is exactly as it should be.

The Ibn Ezra (Devarim 14:1- 2) writes that just as children rely on their parents to take care of them in the best way, we are Hashem's children, as it states **בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם** and we should trust that Hashem is leading us with kindness and with compassion. We don't always understand, but like children, we know that it is always good.

Incredible: Hear What Rav Chaim Kanievsky Zt"l Told United Hatzolah Founder Eli Beer About Treating Terrorists

In a Zoom conversation with Rabbi YY Jacobson, United Hatzolah founder Eli Beer shared a fascinating conversation he had with Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l regarding his ethical obligation to treat or not to treat a terrorist.

Beer first stressed that during the current hostilities, his group has not provided medical treatment to a single terrorist, nor have they transported one to a hospital.

He then recalled a question he posed to Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l. The question was: in a hypothetical scenario where a terrorist stabbed a Jew and was then shot, and the terrorist is in a more serious condition than the Jew, who should he treat first? Emergency response ethics call for a more seriously injured individual to be treated ahead of a less seriously injured one, but what do you in a case where one of the injured is a terrorist?

Rav Chaim's response was nothing short of incredible.

"You have a *chiyuv* to go first to the terrorist, shoot him in the head, and then treat the Jew," Beer recalled Rav Chaim as saying.

"He has a *din* of a *rodef*," he quoted Rav Chaim as saying – even if the terrorist is no longer able to hurt anyone. *(YWN World Headquarters – NYC)*

"A Yid must believe in Hashem's salvation, not solely when he understands how it can happen. Even if he doesn't have any plan, and he doesn't see any possibility (within the rules of nature), he still believes and trusts in Hashem's salvation."

~ R' Klonymus Kalman Shapira of Piaseczna hy'd (The Aish Kodesh)

Tosfos Shabbos



It is always the right time to discuss Shabbos, but we add that there is a special indication to Shabbos in this week's parashah.

One of the songs of Shabbos is **יונה מצאה בו מנוח**, "*The dove found rest on Shabbos*." Some explain that the dove is the Jewish nation (who are compared to a dove), and some say that the song alludes to the dove that Noach sent out of the *teivah*. On Shabbos, it found solace and rest.

We learn from last week's parashah that the weekdays were cursed, and Shabbos was blessed. The week was cursed as it states **תאכל לחם בזעת אפך** "by the sweat of your face, you will eat bread." In contrast, Shabbos is blessed, as it states **אלוקים את יום השביעי ויברך ויקדש אותו** , "Hashem blessed the seventh day, and He sanctified it."

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l says that the wise will bring in Shabbos early and leave Shabbos late, so they can have more blessing and less curse.

Reb Zalman Sorotzkin *zt'l* taught, that when a guest asks for another portion, you know that the guest enjoyed the meal. Similarly, when one takes in Shabbos early and leaves it late, tosfos Shabbos, it demonstrates that he loves the Shabbos and wants more of it.

The Rema writes, "The custom is to say **והוא רחום** and **ברכו** with a long and pleasant tune [on the *Maariv* of *motzei* Shabbos] to add from Shabbos onto the weekday." By drawing out these words, he holds onto Shabbos for a few extra moments.

Rav Hai Gaon promises that those who do so will have immense *hatzlachah* throughout the week. "This is **בדוק ומנוסה**, proven and true" (see *Shaarei Teshuvah* 293:2). He is only adding on a few moments to Shabbos, because how long can a person stretch out these words? Nevertheless, he will be blessed with immense hatzlachah throughout the week, and this is proven to be true!

We learn from this that even just a few seconds of *tosfos* Shabbos are very precious to Hashem and will grant him many *brachos*.

The Rebbe of Lechovitz *zy'a* said, "If people would listen to me, they would keep *tosfos* Shabbos, and they wouldn't lack anything throughout the week."

Rebbe Noach of Lechovitz *zy'a* explained that Shabbos is entirely spiritual, and one cannot earn material benefits from Shabbos. *Parnassah* comes specifically from *tosfos* Shabbos.

Chazal (*Kiddushin* 39:) tell us **שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא** "There are no rewards for the mitzvos in this world." But there are exceptions to this rule. Some good deeds are rewarded in this world, too.

One example is *tosfos Shabbos*. The reward is in this world. **The Yeitav Panim** writes that when one goes beyond his limited obligation he is rewarded in this world, too.

Rabbi Frand - Sometimes Only Hashem Realizes…

The pasuk says **וַיַּ֣רְא אֱלֹקִ֔ים אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ וְהִנֵּ֣ה נִשְׁחָתָ֑ה כִּֽי־הִשְׁחִ֥ית כָּל־בָּשָׂ֖ר אֶת־דַּרְכּ֥וֹ עַל־הָאָֽרֶץ** *"And Elokim saw the earth and it was corrupt for all flesh corrupted its way on the earth."* (Bereshis 6:12).

Rav Chatzkel Abramsky asks a question: Why was it only "And Elokim saw that the earth was decadent"? The pasuk seems to imply that only the Ribono shel Olam saw that things were bad. What about all of society?

He explained that sometimes when society begins to decline, the society does not realize how far they have drifted. We need the Ribono shel Olam to say, "My gosh! Look at what has happened."

Before the Mabul, things had become so corrupt and people had become so accustomed to the corruption and the decadence and the depravity that He was the only one to notice the problem. "*And Elokim saw*" but everyone else said, "This is just the way it is!"

Parshah Pearls - Families

לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיהֶם יָצְאוּ מִן־הַתֵּבָה "According to their families, they (the animals) exited the Boat" (8:19).

Since when do animals have families, asks the **Da'as Zekeinim M.T?**



This refers however, to the animals that had not mixed breeds, as we just explained, since it was only they who were allowed to enter the Boat.

The Rosh however, citing Rashi, explains that this Pasuk is speaking, not about the past, but about the future, and it teaches us that the animals left the Boat with an undertaking to breed only with their own species.

He cites the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108b) which states "***le'Mishpechoseihem***,", 've'lo heim'. Literally, this baffling Pasuk means "to their families", ' but not them', which the Rosh explains to mean that although the animals undertook to stick to their own species, No'ach and family were afraid to breed at all, for fear that, at some stage, G-d would bring another flood on the world, and wipe

out the whole of mankind - until He swore to them that He would never bring a flood of such magnitude again, and clinched it with the sign of the rainbow (which follows in the Torah immediately).

Parsha Points to Ponder

The Gemora in Bava Kamma (91b) derives from 9:5 that it is forbidden to injure one's body. Does having plastic surgery for cosmetic reasons violate this prohibition?



In the case of a woman who wanted to have plastic surgery to improve her appearance, Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that it is permissible. He quotes the Rambam (Hilchos Choveil U'Mazik 5:1), who specifies that the Torah prohibition against injuring a person (including oneself) only applies when it is done maliciously and degradingly, which is not the case in a surgical procedure.

Even if one disagrees with this distinction, Rav Moshe permits the surgery due to the fact that it is being done willingly and for the well-being of the woman. This is also the opinion of the Chelkas Yaakov. In the case of a woman who felt that her unattractive nose diminished her chances of marrying and wanted to have it surgically altered, Rav Menashe Klein cites Talmudic sources indicating that medical procedures were performed at that time to improve appearance, thereby proving their permissibility.

He adds that it is forbidden for a man to undergo surgery solely to enhance his looks, as attempting to beautify himself in this manner

violates the prohibition against adopting female garb and conduct (Devorim 22:5).

However, if his appearance causes him such discomfort that he avoids interacting with others, surgery would then be permissible. Dayan Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss agrees that cosmetic surgery does not violate the prohibition against injuring oneself, but he is hesitant to permit any elective surgery due to the inherent risk involved, and he concludes that the subject needs further study.

On the other hand, Rav Eliezer Waldenberg strongly prohibits all cosmetic surgery. He argues that it is forbidden both for the doctor, who is only given permission by the Torah to heal sick patients but not to perform unnecessary procedures on healthy people, and for the patient, who has no right to ask the doctor to wound him simply to enhance his appearance. Additionally, on a theological level, he maintains that plastic surgery is an insult to Hashem, implying that He created a person defectively and incorrectly.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach permits cosmetic surgery if it is being done to remove a blemish which causes a person psychological suffering and embarrassment but forbids elective procedures which are done solely to enhance one's appearance. For practical questions, one should consult a competent Rabbinical authority.

"Someone who has bitachon will not be afraid when someone opens up another store in his neighbourhood. He will even try to help him and offer him good counsel.

- How much kedushah is increased in the world when one does kindness for his competitor! Fortunate is he, and fortunate is his generation." ~ The Chazon Ish.

Parshah Pearls - A Good Drainage System

וְאֶל־אַמָּה֙ תְּכַלֶּ֣נָּה מִלְמַ֔עְלָה ***"And to an Amah, you shall finish it on top"*** (6:16).

No'ach's boat had a sloping roof, the **Da'as Zekeinim mi'Ba'alei Tosfos** explains, so that the water would flow off it, instead of collecting on top and causing it to sink.

In that case, they ask, why was the roof one Amah wide? Surely one Amah was sufficient for a lot of water to gather and threaten the boat's safety?

Therefore, they cite **R. Yosef Ca'aro** (a Rishon), who explains that the boat actually came to a point on top, and the width refers to the one Amah below the roof where they fixed the צֹהַר light (see Rashi).

Hamaayan by Shlomo Katz - The Dove's Rest



We read in this week's Parashah that, after the flood, Noach sent a Yonah / dove to scout for dry land. At first, the Torah tells us (8:9), ***"The Yonah could not find a Mano'ach / resting place for the sole of its foot, and it returned to him to the Ark, for water was upon the surface of all the earth."***

Then, says the Torah (8:10-11), ***"[Noach] waited again another seven days, and again sent out the Yonah from the Ark. The Yonah came back to him in the evening–and behold! It had plucked an olive leaf with its bill. Then Noach knew that the waters had subsided from upon the earth."***

In the Shabbat Zemer "Yom Shabbaton," we read: "***Yonah Matz'ah Bo Mano'ach*" / *"On it (Shabbat), the dove found a resting place*."** **R' Aryeh Leib Gordon z"l** (1845-1912; Lithuania and Eretz Yisrael; Grammarian and author of commentaries on the Siddur) writes: This refers to the Congregation of Yisrael, which is likened to a dove (see Shabbat 49b), and which rests on Shabbat. Alternatively, R' Gordon writes, the Zemer is referring to the Yonah that Noach sent out, which found a resting place on Shabbat. (Siddur Otzar Tefilot: Etz Yosef p.770)

How do we know that the day on which the Yonah found a resting place was Shabbat? **R' Yosef Shaul Nathanson z"l** (1808-1875; rabbi of L'vov, Galicia, and a leading Halachic authority) writes: The author of the Zemer must have had access to a Midrash that is lost to us. Alternatively, the author derived it from the fact that the Torah tells us: "He waited again another seven days"–alluding to the Seventh Day, Shabbat. (Divrei Shaul)

Notably, a student of **R' Yisrael Isserlin z"l** (the "Terumat Hadeshen"; Central Europe; 1390-1460) records that his teacher did not sing the Zemer "Yom Shabbaton" every week, but he did sing it on Shabbat Parashat Noach because it was Inyana D'yoma / relevant to that particular day. (*Lekket Yosher p.36)*

"We have no right to ask when sorrow comes, 'Why did this happen to me?' unless we ask the same question for every moment of happiness that comes our way."

"When you master the ability to view others as they see themselves, you will gain the love of everyone." ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.

Hamaayan by Shlomo Katz - וַיֵּ֥שְׁתְּ מִן־הַיַּ֖יִן וַיִּשְׁכָּֽר

"He drank from the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent. Cham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside." (9:20-21)



It seems, says **R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld z"l** (1848-1932; rabbi of the Eidah Ha'charedis of Yerushalayim), that Noach was not aware of the dangers of excessive drinking–despite being more than 600 years old, and his son Cham, who was approximately 100 years old, also had never seen a drunken person! Can this be?

R' Sonnenfeld explains: Midrashim relate that the atmosphere and climatic conditions were entirely different after the Flood compared to before. Before the Flood, the air was always clear and fresh. Vegetables and meat never spoiled because microbes and bacteria were absent from the air. Before the Flood, the entire world enjoyed the same fresh air that later was found only in the Bet Hamikdash, where, we are told (Avot ch.5), the meat of the Korbanot never went bad.

As such, continues R' Sonnenfeld, fermentation also was impossible or, if it was possible, it produced only weak alcohol, Thus, in fact, no one had ever become drunk before the Flood. What Noach experienced, and what Cham witnessed, was an entirely new phenomenon after the Flood. (Cham is not criticized for being bewildered by what he saw; only for sharing the news of his father's shame with his brothers.) (*Chochmat Chaim)*

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

קֵץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ בָּ֣א לְפָנַ֔י כִּי־מָלְאָ֥ה הָאָ֛רֶץ חָמָ֖ס

Being close to many religious soldiers in the Israeli Defense Force gives Rabbi Ilay Ofran a unique opportunity to see some of the amazing qualities of these young men, even in the most pressing situations.

One such event occurred during the most recent outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. This is the story told over by Rabbi Ilay Ofran himself:

At one point in time, we were able to offer a brief leave leave to our soldiers. I went to one that I thought could use this break and offered him to go home for a bit. He shook his head. "My wife and children are doing well," he said. "I'm ok. Put me at the end of the list and give it to that guy standing over there instead - he could really use a break."

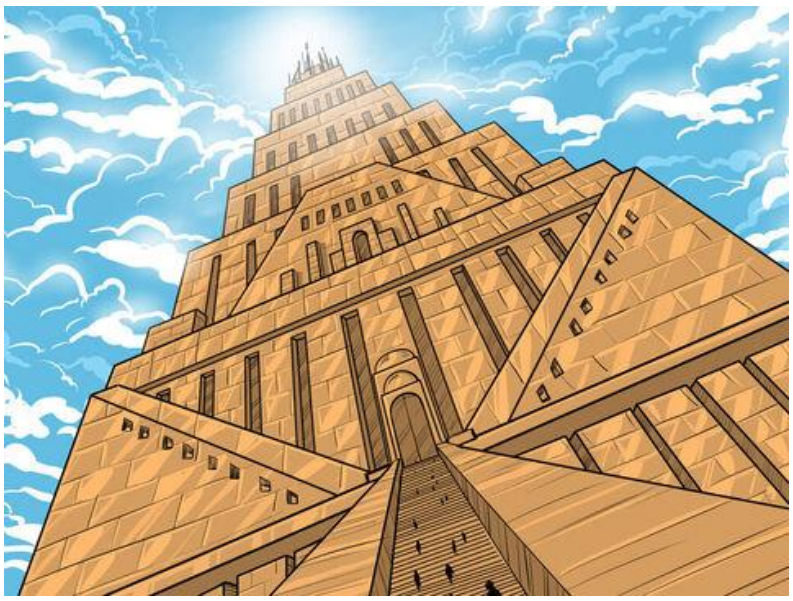
That was fine with me. I went over to the other guy and made him the offer. "Me?!" he exclaimed. He shook his head and said, "Oh no, I'm single. I'm ok. Put me at the end of the list and give it to that guy over there, he has a family!"

My heart began beating with exuberance. I lifted my head towards the heavens with pride and whispered, "*Hashem, Mi K'amcha Yisroel!*"

The devastating *mabul* was brought upon humanity because of the abysmal actions that they performed against one another. The way we counter that is by looking out for the good in each other and trying to help one another!

דרגה יתירה

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO



After the world is destroyed through the *Mabul* and eventually rebuilt, the *Torah* introduces us to the *Dor Haflaga*. The generation of the Tower of *Bavel*. These people were the "new generation." The people who lived in the shadow of the *Mabul*. They were united and respectful. They knew how to treat one another and were not looking to hurt another human being. But they were still wicked. They united their efforts to rebel against *Hashem*! They built a tower that reached the heavens so that they could wage war against *Hashem*!

How ludicrous! What a terrible sin! To wish to overpower the only true power in the world?

This seems to be much worse than a lack of respect between people! And yet, we see that in *Hashem's* eyes, the sin of total rebellion against Him, pales in comparison with the lack of honor and kindness between individuals! - The *Dor Haflaga* was punished by mixing up their languages. But the *Dor HaMabul* was eradicated from the world!

What a tremendous lesson for us. How careful we must be with the honour and feelings of the people around us. How much must we value all people even if they are different from us. How important this is in the eyes of *Hashem*.

The *Torah* tells us that *Hashem* commanded Noach, saying, "*Tzohar Taase LaTeiva.*" One of **Rashi's** explanations is that this means a bright light that emanated from a precious gem. As we know, the

word *Teiva* in Hebrew means "word" and based on this we can understand the deeper message that we must make our words beautiful and shiny. We must think before we speak and know how our words will affect others. "Will my words brighten someone's day or darken it? Will my words show kindness and respect? If not, then maybe it is better to keep my mouth shut!"

One of the greatest ways to generate kindness is with kind words. Let us use the power of *Lashon* to build a world of *chessed*. It is only with this great *Middah* of *Avraham Avinu* that the world will reach its final rectification and with unity and kindness may we all go out together to greet *Moshiach* very soon.



Dvar Torah For Kids by Kids - Akiva Solway

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יְבֹשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ "*And he sent forth the raven……*" 8:7

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָה מֵאִתּוֹ לִרְאוֹת הֲקַלּוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה "*And he sent forth the dove……*" 8:8

The Torah says that after the mabul finished Noach sent first a raven to check and see if the mabul was indeed finished. If the raven would return, it would be a sign that it is still wet outside the Teiva and that the mabul did not yet finish. The raven came back. Then, Noach sent the dove, and we see that the dove was the right messenger.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller in his book "Toras Avigdor" asks the following: Why was the dove the right Messenger and the raven was not?

Answer: The Torah wanted to tell us that the raven who is a Tamme bird, is not proper to have good news delivered by and that is why the dove was the messenger because the dove is a kosher bird.

He continues and says that this is a lesson for life. We see that Hashem created the world. He chose us as humans to be the

messengers to bring the world to its purpose, to bring light to the world. Hashem appoints messengers who are righteous, like Noach, who continued the world.



The takeaway is that Hashem appointed us, as Jewish people, to be His messengers. Every one of us can decide what being a messenger means to them. What we do know is that each and every one of us can help and bring the Mashiach.

In order to do this, we have to fulfill this mission by doing another Mitzvah taking on another Kabbalah and that's the only way we'll bring the Mashiach. We also know that each of our mitzvahs helps to add protection to the Jewish people. That protection is needed now more than ever.

Please everyone let's do more mitzvahs like wearing tzizit, saying a blessing over food out loud, answering amen to someone's blessing, and doing extra kindnesses for the Jewish people. In this merit, we will be adding extra protection for our soldiers and all of Am Yisrael!

**Dedicating this Dvar Torah for the safety of my cousin [Uriel Ovadia ben Elisheva Orah Tziporah] fighting on the front lines in Gaza and all the soldiers, and security forces fighting to protect us!*

"If the congregants of just one shul would preserve peace in their community as they should, their merit could bring Moshiach." ~ The Chofetz Chaim zt"l.



War & Shabbos - by Michael Winner

We had our first air raid siren last week that sent us to the shelters, which turned out to be a false alarm. We had our first Iron Dome intercept. One of the new F-35s practically buzzed my home. We have, from what I understand, an army field hospital set up in our town. The entrance of our town is full of APCs. And they've evacuated all civilians within 5 km of the northern border, since every day is bringing more exchange of fire.

As a father of a family, you are forced to think: what do we need, how much do we need, what happens if this happens, what happens if that happens. And while we are relatively quiet compared to the south, we know if things open up, it could be really, really bad.

However, on the brighter side of things, the country is full of chesed right now. Somebody put a call out four hours before Shabbos, that he needs help making chullent for 200 soldiers, and within 3 minutes, he thanked everybody for volunteering. Another call went out to help with several hundred meals. Two minutes later, a call went out thanking one of the kosher restaurants. These are only small examples, coming from only our area.

What's interesting is that many in the frum community have been helping make tzitzis for soldiers, as mentioned last week. And I've noticed from the photos/videos coming from the front, there are many non-religious soldiers actually wearing them.

The air is … thick. Everybody is waiting for the ground offensive to begin. Not only worrying about those who are actually going in, but also how Hezbollah and the world will react.

The only way to lower the flames of such a fear is to remind ourselves, that EVERYTHING is from Hashem. Our politicians, our generals, and our enemies are mere pawns in some larger scheme. We can talk and talk about who will do what, but it's all a waste of time and nothing but hot air. In the end, only what HE wants will occur.

Yet, there is some hope. While Netanyahu, Biden, Hamas, or Hezbollah cannot tell Hashem what to do, WE have some power, to … perhaps … make Hashem reconsider some plans. Whatever merits we create, can arouse mercy for the nation.

I received a copy of a small talk that Rav Barcley from Neve Yaakov gave last week.

The Oruch L'Ner writes [that any year which Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos, will be a very bad year or a very good year.

Why is that? As we know, we have two days of Rosh Hashanah. The first day is Rosh Hashanah according to the Torah. The second day was rabbinically instituted for reasons beyond the scope of this dvar Torah.

According to the Torah, we have a mitzvah to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. However, the Sanhedrin made an enactment that if Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, we do NOT blow. Why? Because we fear that people might come to carry the shofar on Shabbos in places that they are not allowed to carry. So, because of Shabbos, we don't have shofar (on the Torah's Rosh Hashanah).

So, how does that affect the year? When we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we arouse ourselves to teshuvah and we arouse Hashem's mercy. He moves from His "throne of judgement" to His "throne of Mercy," if you will. And when we lack the shofar, we lack the mercy.

However, writes the Oruch L'Ner, on such years, we have another possible layer of protection. Just as Shabbos canceled the shofar,

Shabbos can protect us in its place; as the Ibn Ezra writes "when I keep the Shabbos, Hashem watches over me." Incidentally, there were one or two kibbutzim that were fully-religious kibbutzim that the terrorists tried to break into, but were unsuccessful. There are security videos that were released showing them attempting and eventually giving up.

This is why **Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein** in Bnei Brak suggested that everybody learn two laws of Shabbos every day, to serve as a special protection, which we are lacking this year.

He also noted that the **Chasam Sofer** writes that every year Hashem decrees a certain amount of war in the world. There's a quota that needs to be filled. The Chasam Sofer explains that there are two types of war: the war of Torah and physical war. The more "war of Torah" that is fought, the more the quota is being filled, and the less amount of physical war is needed.

Of course, we are not prophets, and we have no idea what exactly we can do or what exactly we are supposed to do. However, we do know that we need to do something to serve as a protection to the Jewish nation. And every little thing helps. Perhaps those who do not keep Shabbos, could at least light Shabbos candles and keep Shabbos for 15 minutes. Perhaps those who do keep Shabbos, can take Rav Zilberstein's advice, and learn a little more about Shabbos every day. Perhaps we can increase our "war of Torah" a little bit, either in quantity or quality.

Each person knows where they can improve. And hopefully, with these merits, we can turn this very bad year into a very good one.

"When we encounter challenges, let's not despair, but turn to Hashem in prayer. He is our source of strength, comfort and will guide us through every difficulty. ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler.

Short And Sweet Story of The Week by Aryeh Fingerer

A poor scholar once approached **the Imrei Moshe, Rabbi Moshe Sokolowsky, ZT"L** and expressed his deep desire to have a copy of the Imrei Moshe's Sefer. The problem was that he wasn't able to afford it.

The scholar asked the Imrei Moshe if he could have a copy of the sefer. The Imrei Moshe felt a deep sense of sympathy for the scholar. Even though selling his books was his sole source of income, the Imrei Moshe decided to give the scholar the book for free.

Amid the war, most Jewish books were tragically destroyed. After the war, people wanted a copy of the Imrei Moshe's sefer; however, not a single copy was to be found.

One day, a family member of the Imrei Moshe met someone who had a copy of the sefer. Miraculously, the one surviving sefer that remained unscathed was the sefer that the Imrei Moshe had given to the Torah scholar!

That Torah scholar in the story was none other than the great **Steiper Gaon!** That Sefer that had been given away in an act of compassion was reprinted and continued the legacy of the Imrei Moshe! By performing this act of kindness, the Imrei Moshe saved his legacy for future generations!

Rabbi Mordechai Schwab, ZT"L would look outside right before Shemonei Esrei. When someone asked him to explain this practice, he told the person, "I love to admire how round and balanced the trees are." - He recognized the greatness of Hashem and that brought him joy.

למודי משה

Understanding A Seemingly Ridiculous Rashi

Rashi remarks on the *pasuk*,

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יִבְשֹׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ "***And he sent forth the raven and it kept going and returning until the drying of the waters from upon the earth.***" (Bereishis 8:7)

When Noach thought it might be safe to emerge from the *teiva*, he sent out the raven. However, the raven did not fly out in search of dry land as Noach had expected but just circled the *teiva*, flying back and forth.

Rashi, states: "***The raven did not go on its mission because it was suspicious [of Noach] with regard to its mate…" (Sanhedrin 108b)*** הוֹלֵךְ וּמַקִּיף סְבִיבוֹת הַתֵּבָה, וְלֹא הָלַךְ בִּשְׁלִיחוּתוֹ, שֶׁהָיָה חוֹשְׁדוֹ עַל בַּת זוּגוֹ. As strange as it seems, the raven was afraid that Noach would take its wife while he was "off the boat" doing his mission!

R' Frand relates that he once heard a true story about a young man in a *ba'al teshuvah* yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel. His Rebbe came over to him and asked him how things were going. The young man replied, "things are going pretty well except that I read a Rashi today that is ridiculous." Which Rashi was he referring to? It was the above cited Rashi that the raven suspected Noach concerning its mate while he flew away on a mission.

The Rebbe carefully explained to him that such teachings of *Chazal* have to be understood in the light of the nature of *Aggadic* literature in general. They are really metaphors. There are messages here. *Chazal* are trying to teach us here something that has nothing really to do with ravens. It has to do with human beings.

The *Maharal* explains the metaphor of this teaching about the raven rejecting Noach's mission: Ravens by their nature are obsessed with the relations they have with their mates. They are so obsessed by these relations that this is all ravens think about. Therefore, says

the *Maharal*, since the raven was constantly obsessed with thoughts about having relations with his mate, he projected those same obsessions onto everybody else. He assumed that everybody must be thinking the same thing he was.

The *Maharal* writes that it is very common amongst creatures (man included) to project their own thoughts and shortcomings upon others. There is a popular saying "What Peter says about Paul says more about Peter than it says about Paul." Think about this statement.

This means that if a person goes through life thinking that everybody is out to get him — besides being somewhat paranoid — it is because he really does have such thoughts about "getting" other people. Individuals really project their life view of how they think and how they act and they are convinced that everybody else thinks and acts like that as well.

Therefore, says the *Maharal*, since the raven was so obsessed with having relations with his mate, in his mind he was convinced that this is what Noach must be thinking about as well. Therefore, he suspected Noach of having intentions towards his mate.

This lesson of *Chazal* is not trying to teach us so much about ravens as it is about ourselves, about human beings in general. It is teaching us that how we view life and how we view people says a lot about us. If we're negative about people, if we're sceptical of their motives and suspect them of wrongdoing and ill-intent then that's really a function of how we view the world. These thoughts may be the farthest thing from those other people we cynically suspect.

The lesson about the raven is not so much a teaching about birds. It is a teaching about human beings — which is the purpose of the entire Torah.



Riddles of The Week – Moshe Harris

Q: When instructing Noach to build the *teivah* Hashem said: צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה – "***you should build a tzohar for the teivah***" (*Bereishis* 6:16). Rashi brings down two interpretations as to what the *tzohar* was, either it was a window, or it was a special stone which gave off light.

Towards the end of the *mabul* the *pasuk* says: וַיִּפְתַּח נֹחַ אֶת־חַלּוֹן הַתֵּבָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה – "***Noach opened the window of the teivah which he made***" (8:6).

It seems that up until this point the window was closed, if so, how was Noach and his family, and all the animals in the *teivah* able to breath - surely there was nowhere for the bad air to escape, or for fresh air to come in. Moreover, according to the opinion that the *tzohar* was a special stone, seemingly there was no window at all, so again, how could they breathe? And how were they all able to survive?

A: The simple answer is obviously that it was another one of the many miracles that took place in the *teivah*.

The *Ba'al Shevet Mussar* in his *sefer Agadas Eliyohu* on the *Yerushalmi* (*Pesochim* 1:1) writes that some animals breath in the bad air that human's breath out, and the bad air, that they omit is good air for humans. Since all types of animals were in the *teivah* it balanced out, and the air was filtered via these animals.

Another answer, is based on the *Chazal* that Og survived the *mabul* by hanging on to the outside of the *teivah* and Noach fed him through a small hole. Perhaps it was through this hole that the air was filtered.

Another answer, perhaps, is that the Gemara in *Zevochim* discusses an animal called a *re'am* which was too big to fit inside the *teivah*.

The Gemara says the *re'am* survived by placing its head and mouth inside the *teivah*. Perhaps through this whole the air was filtered.

Q: Why did Noach send a raven and dove to determine if the floodwaters had receded (Rashi 8:8) when this created a risk that one of them may die and render its species extinct?

A: **The *Netziv*** posits that the raven and dove that Noach sent out were not taken from the pairs that Hashem commanded him (6:19) to bring into the *teivah* to preserve their existence. Rather, since Noach was a respected individual prior to the flood, he followed the practice of noblemen at that time of owning pet birds, which were considered part of his household and therefore eligible to be brought into the *teivah* (7:1).

Accordingly, Noach's decision to send the raven and dove to check whether the water had receded did not jeopardize their species in any way, for a pair of each still remained in the *teivah*.

While Noach's pet raven was content to remain near his house, the dove was trained to fly long distances to deliver letters and transport small objects in its mouth. Thus, when Noach dispatched the raven and it saw that the *teivah* was surrounded by water, it simply flew around in circles because it was unaccustomed to flying long distances.

The dove was comfortable with traveling long distances, but on its initial mission, it did not find anything to bring back in its mouth, so it did not return directly to Noach, but rather (8:9): **אֶל־הַתֵּבָה** – "close to the *teivah*", for it had failed in its task and feared that its master would not allow it to return empty-handed.

Observing this, Noach understood what had transpired and compassionately took the dove in his hand to warm it up and restore its strength.

The Netziv writes that this teaches us that if we ask somebody to do something for us but he does not succeed through no fault of his

own, rather than getting angry and blaming him, we should still be grateful for his efforts and greet him warmly. (R' Ozer Alport)



An Unusual Phenomenon

Reb Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz was in *chinuch* for many years. He said that he observed an unusual phenomenon. Generally, the children who weren't successful in Torah in their youth became the most successful. out of their family, later in life. For some reason, the outstanding successful child of the family is precisely the one who didn't excel in his younger years. Sometimes, his success is in Torah and mitzvos or in business, but the pattern is that the one who seemed least likely to succeed ultimately outshined the others.

Reb Michel added, "I don't know why, but I think it is because the parents invested many *tefillos* for those children. They davened for all their children, but because they cried for those 'unsuccessful' ones, those *tefillos* were eventually answered."

"Regarding tefillah, it is difficult to daven properly in this world that is full of distractions. One must struggle to have kavanah. But this is what makes our tefillos most precious of all." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

"There are people who are afraid of swallowing an ant, but are unafraid of swallowing a man alive." ~ R' Boruch of Mezhibozh zt"l.

Noach's Teivah and The Chefs of Tel Aviv - Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

"*Eis tzarah hee l'Yaakov* -It is a time of deep pain and tragedy for Klal Yisroel." We are all walking around with aching hearts. We are one nation, one people, all connected. The pain of our brothers in Eretz Yisroel is our pain. We cry, we *daven,* for those being held in captivity, for the injured, for the lives lost, and for their families. It is a tragedy so horrific, the numbers so many, it's hard to fathom.

At the same time, we hear stories of inspiration. Stories of amazing strong men and women, doing the best they can for Am Yisroel, giving it all they got. Stories that give us hope and warm our heart.

Tel Aviv is a lively, busy city, home to many restaurants. Diners frequent its upscale steakhouses, and Israeli-style food joints.

While a large segment of the population was called up by the army, and family members at home aren't eating out, the restaurants are anything but empty. They are filled with extra chefs, staff, and volunteers, going all out for Chayalei Yisroel, those on the front lines, fighting for the Jewish nation.

Before supplying meals for the soldiers, many of the Tel Aviv restaurants had a hurdle to overcome. Some restaurants in this city unfortunately did not maintain kosher kitchens, or were kosher "style", while others, whose owners kept their kitchens nominally kosher, didn't have a *teudah*, a *kashrut* certification. But their desire to help, to do *chesed*, was so strong, that they undertook the proper measures to *kasher* their restaurants and receive certification.

As chef Shalom Simcha Elbert of OCD (one of the top restaurants, known for the chef's meticulous care that goes into every dish – hence the name OCD) said, "The restaurant now has kosher supervisors and is closed for Shabbat… We want to feed people in a way that will honor them."

Ha'achim, another bustling Tel Aviv restaurant, also went through a *kashering* process, and is now preparing twenty thousand meals a day for the soldiers. Chef Yoatim Doktor plans to increase the production next week, by providing freshly cooked meals for the displaced surviving families of the horrific massacre in the south. The gourmet chef will be making schnitzel-pita sandwiches, and other child-friendly foods.



There are even some vegan and gluten-free restaurants that received a *kashrut teudah*. They too wanted to join the effort to provide special meals for those who requested it, as well as for hospital patients.

Dovid HaMelech says, "*Olam chesed yibaneh*, The world is built through acts of kindness" *(Tehillim 89:3)*. It is a message that resonates for all time. We can continuously build – and rebuild – the world with kindness.

This Shabbos we will read Parshas Noach. "*Vatimaleh ha'aretz chomos*, And the land became filled with thievery and corruption." *(Bereishis 6:11)* The very moral fiber of society was lost, as there was a total lack of respect between man and his fellow. It was a time of social discord.

Additionally, it was a generation of self-centered people. People refusing to share their G-d given gifts and talents. Artists and musicians wouldn't share their creations. People refused to help others, offer advice or provide information that could help their fellow man. It was a generation with "attitude", what's in it for me, what do I get out of it.

It was time to rebuild a new world. A world based on honesty, truthfulness, justice and *chesed*.

HaShem saw Noach as the person through whom the world could be rebuilt. "*V'Noach motzah chein b'einei HaShem*, But Noach found favor in the eyes of HaShem." *(Ibid. 6:8)* Noach was his own person, and defied the world around him. "Everyone's doing it" was not part of his lexicon.

HaShem told Noach of the impending *mabul*, the flood that would bring destruction upon the world. He directed Noach to build a *teivah*, a safe haven that would sustain the remnants of the destroyed world by way of its *chesed*.

Noach hammered away, building an ark of epic proportions. A three-floored structure where he housed not only his family but a menagerie of animals. While it rained for forty days, it took a full year for the water to subside. A year of living in the *teivah*, being the world's busiest "zoo-keeper". Noach was on call morning through night, feeding, caring for and cleaning the animals, never taking a break. Life in the *teivah* was *chesed* "boot camp".

The trait of *chesed*, of being a giver, remained with Noach and his family. A trait that has been ingrained in the DNA of our people from that very day. To be a giver. To be concerned about others. To help when help is needed. To put a smile on someone's face.

Our world today has witnessed a different type of *chomos*, destruction and devastation. Lives snuffed out, families decimated, communities destroyed. Yet, when all looks bleak and helpless, there are those who follow Noach's example of building a *teivah*, a sanctuary in which to do chesed.

We have all been hearing and reading of the enormous acts of *chesed* that have been done over the past ten days. People all over the world going way beyond their comfort zone, offering support and

relief in a myriad of ways. I couldn't help but think of the chefs of Tel Aviv, uniting in a remarkable display of *achdus* and kindness.

Not everyone is on the front line, or has a restaurant that can cook up thousands of meals. But each and every of us can be do something positive during these difficult and trying times. We can take upon ourselves additional *davening*, saying Tehillim, giving *tzedakah,* or being more scrupulous with a *mitzva* as a *z'chus* for our people.

We blessed the new month of Mar-Cheshvan. *Mar* – bitter, because it is a month without any Yomim Tovim or special *mitzvos*. It is a month in which much suffering and tragedy befell our people throughout the ages. With a difficult war going on in Eretz Yisroel, the word *mar* took on extra meaning for me. What painful times we are living in. But as we *bentched* Rosh Chodesh, we said *chaveirim kol Yisroel*, we are a nation of friends, a nation that is interconnected, coming together, being there for one another.

With acts of *chesed*, may the bitter become sweet, and may HaShem bless us with *shalom al kol Yisroel*, peace onto all Klal Yisroel.

wh Y I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת־הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחֵת כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמָיִם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־בָּאָרֶץ יִגְוָע

'And as for me - behold, I am about to bring the flood waters upon the earth.' (6:17)

What was the purpose of the flood? If the purpose was to punish the world population and destroy the sinners of the world, then why did Hashem have to do it in such a spectacular way? After all, Hashem could have killed out the world population without the flood.

The Torah tells us, '*And Hashem saw the earth and behold it was corrupted.*' Not only were the people corrupt, but the land was

corrupt as well. The flood served not only to destroy people but also to purify the land - much like a Mikvah. (**Rabbi Shneor Zalmon of Liadi**)



וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה
Hashem said to Noach, come to the ark, you and all your household. (7:1)

Why was Noach only rewarded by being hidden in the ark and saved. Didn't he deserve a bigger reward? After all he was a lone Tzadik in an otherwise the wicked world.

The Mashal is given of a rebellious state. There is one person in the state who doesn't go along and remains loyal to the king. He informs the king about the rebellion. The king punishes the entire population with instructions to leave the informer alone. But doesn't he deserve a reward? Why is it enough to just leave him alone?

The king replies - what did this person actually do? He did nothing. He didn't rebel. But he didn't take any action to convince others not to rebel. He did nothing - so I will do nothing - not punish him. But reward him? For what?

So too, Noach. He remained loyal. He did not rebel against Hashem like the rest of the world. But he did not do anything to stop others from rebelling. So, he was rewarded by being saved in the ark and nothing else. (Kiflayim LeToshia)



"Although Tefillah is just one of many mitzvos the Torah has given us in order to bring us closer to Hashem, it is unparalleled in its power to arouse Hashem's mercy, save us from affliction, and bring us forgiveness and blessing." ~ Sefer HaIkarim, Maamar 4, Ch. 20.





But I Did Not Do Anything. I Only Said…

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer was a new bachur at the Volozhin Yeshivah. He felt lost and homesick and was ready to return home. One day, the Rosh Yeshivah, the **Netziv**, asked a question, and Rav Isser Zalman offered an answer that pleased him.

During lunch an older bachur, **Zelig Bengis**, later to become the great and famous Rav Bengis of Yerushalayim, came to Rav Isser Zalman and asked him, "Are you the one whose chiddush the Netziv is talking about with so much admiration?"

Decades later, when Rav Isser Zalman came to Yerushalayim, his first stop was at the home of Rav Zelig Bengis. "I owe you my life!" he told him. He then recounted how Rav Bengis's encouraging words had restored his confidence so that he remained in Volozhin.

The value of positive words is their power to make another person feel, "I have value." And that is the foundation of everything good that a person accomplishes in life. (from the Shabbos Newsletter of the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation).

The world had been destroyed by a flood. Only Noach and his family survived, in the ark that Noah had built. When Noach exited the ark, he planted a vineyard (Bereishis 9:20). Where did he get the vines for the vineyard?

Rashi says that Noach had brought them with him into the ark. Targum Yonasan ben Uziel says that Noach found the vine which the waters had carried from Gan Eden. Noach planted it and the grapes grew immediately. Noach pressed the grapes and drank some wine. He became drunk from the wine.

The Sfas Emes (quoted in Iturei Torah by Aaron Yaakov Greenberg) explains that Noach drank the same amount of wine that he had been used to drinking before the flood. However, man's constitution had been weakened from the flood and that same amount of wine, now, made him drunk. In his drunkenness, Noach was lying, uncovered, in his tent.

The B'chor Shor says that it was actually Canaan who had uncovered Noach. The Tur says that it was Cham who had done so. The Torah says that Cham looked and saw Noach's nakedness. Then he derided Noach to his other brothers.

The Da'as Zekanim, as well as the Targum Onkelos and Lekach Tov, say that Cham did not tell his brothers the news quietly. Rather, he stated it publicly, for all to hear. He spoke scornfully and derisively about his father.

When Cham's son, Canaan, heard his father's words, he went ahead and sinned terribly against Noah (see Rashi 9:22). When Noach became sober and became aware of what his grandchild, Canaan, had done, he cursed him saying that he would become slaves to Noach's other two sons.

The Torah (9:22) says, "Cham,the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told it to his brothers [who were] outside."

The Da'as Zekanim says that we already know who Cham was. Why did the Torah feel that it was necessary now to specifically identify Cham as the father of Canaan?

The Da'as Zekanim answers that Cham is called the father of the one who sinned (Canaan) because Cham ridiculed Noach!

HaRav Henach Leibowitz zt"l asked, Cham did not do any negative ACTION. All Cham did, was to say WORDS disparaging Noach. Canaan was the one who did the terrible action. Why is the action being attributed to Cham? Why is he called the father of the sinner?

HaRav Leibowitz zt"l says that we see that it was Cham's words that CAUSED the terrible sin. Cham's words lowered Noach's esteem in the eyes of his son Canaan. Despite the wickedness of Canaan, he still had respect for his grandfather, Noach. Cham's derisive words stripped away that respect. At that point, Canaan sinned so terribly.

We see two important and fundamental things from this. We see the power of speech. Mere words said thoughtlessly can cause terrible sins. - Cham's words caused what happened to Noach. We also see one's responsibility for the words that he says. We are held accountable for everything that results from our words.

Negative comments are divisive. The divisiveness is why our Beis HaMikdash has not yet been rebuilt.

Keeping in mind what is currently happening to Klal Yisroel, let us be especially careful to say words that unite and not words that divide. - Our positive words can transform a frown into a smile.



וְהַבָּאִים זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה מִכָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּאוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹקִים וַיִּסְגֹּר ה' בַּעֲדוֹ ***...and Hashem closed it in front of him***. (7:16)

Noach is given credit for the construction of the entire ark. Why Hashem closed the ark? Why couldn't Noach close it himself?

The parable is given of someone who contracts out to a fruit merchant to supply him with various fruits for the entire year. Each day he would send his worker to the merchant and the merchant would give the worker as much fruit as would be needed for that day.

The merchant asked: "but how do I know how much fruit you need for the day."

The answer he received was as follows: "I'm sending my worker - when you see him close and seal the boxes you will know that it is enough."

Noach was told to bring into the ark from every animal that existed in the world. He wondered how will I ever know when I'm finished. There could always be another kind of animal that I don't know about hiding somewhere.

Therefore Hashem closed the ark for Noach - informing him that he finished his job. Every animal is already represented in the ark. (Kiflayim Letoshia)



Working on our Middos

A Rav in Eretz Yisroel once ruled on a question of Halachah using a certain leniency. The question was whether a certain Melachah could be performed on the second day of Yom Tov in Chutz LaAretz, and this Rav said it was permitted.

When **Rav Avrohom Genachovsky, zt"l**, heard this Rav's decision, he declared it to be mistaken. Rav Genachovsky was an expert on all aspects of Halachah, and he was also an expert on doing Chesed as well. He knew the Rav's mistake needed to be corrected, but he realized that it had to be done cleverly and skillfully, so as not to embarrass the Rav, or ruin his reputation.

Rav Genachovsky consulted the **Steipler Gaon** about the issue, and the Steipler said, "Clearly, the Melachah is not permitted, and the Rav needs to be corrected."

A student who was very close to Rav Genachovsky wondered how his Rebbe would manage to make the correction without hurting the Rav's feelings.

He saw Rav Genachovsky take out a piece of paper to write the Rav a letter, and he supposed that the strategy would be to start out with great accolades for the Rav's Torah knowledge and then point

out that he had made an error. However, Rav Genachovsky wrote something entirely different. - He wrote that he had heard that the Rav had ruled that the Melachah in question was not permitted, and he wanted to compliment him on his astute ruling and assure him that he was correct. He included that the Shulchan Aruch confirmed his ruling, and that the Steipler Gaon had confirmed it as well.

What would this Rav's reaction be to Rav Genachovsky's letter?

He would have thought that Rav Genachovsky had misheard his ruling, and he believed that he had said the opposite of what he really said. He also would have felt good about the compliment that was transmitted in the letter, that the great Rav Genachovsky thought well of him and reached out to contact him! But at the same time, he would have learned of his mistake and would have been grateful that his incorrect ruling could be corrected.

His mistake was addressed without him having to feel the shame of a great Poseik pointing it out to him, even in the kindest way!

L'Maaseh

Rav Yechiel Spero related a great story. A man was walking in a Bais HaChaim, and he saw engraved on a Matzeivah the name R' Eliezer Yosef Lederberg, and under the name it was written that he learned Masechtos Beitzah and Rosh Hashanah over 4,000 times. This man was very intrigued by this unusual inscription, and he tracked down the family to find out more about this Talmid Chacham.

He found Rav Eliezer Yosef's son, and he was happy to share the following story about his father:

At some point, Rav Eliezer Yosef started to experience headaches, and when it would not go away, he realized it was time to go to the doctor. The doctors ran some tests and determined that it was necessary to perform a surgery to correct the problem. However,

the surgery was a little risky, and it may cause him some discomfort and temporary blindness that would last for a few months, but there was also a strong possibly that it may leave him completely blind, R"L.

Rav Eliezer Yosef was devastated by the news, and he asked the doctors if he had to have the procedure as an emergency, or if he had some time to prepare for it. The doctors told him that he had some time, but he shouldn't wait more than six months.

Rav Eliezer Yosef understood that after the operation, it was quite possible that he would never be able to look inside a Gemara again, and the thought of that was unbearable. However, if it was indeed true, he had work to do.

For the next six months, Rav Lederberg spent every moment of the day focused on one thing — learning two Masechtos by heart. He reviewed Beitzah and Rosh Hashanah over and over again, day and night.

The day of the operation came, and his family cried and Davened for the best possible outcome. Rav Eliezer Yosef cried as well. He gazed one last time at his dear family, and at the words of his beloved Gemara, knowing quite well that this may be his last time to see them. He thought of all the moments he had wasted during his lifetime, time he could have spent doing more, and learning more. Now he had done all he could. He had mastered these two Masechtos, and he knew that he would always have them close to his heart, and forever in his mind.

He was wheeled into the operating room, and was cast into a world of darkness. When he woke up, Rav Eliezer Yosef's eyes were bandaged, and he was told that until the bandages were removed in a few days, he wouldn't know whether the operation had blinded him.

Finally, the day arrived, and the bandages were taken off. He opened his eyes and began to weep tears of immense happiness. Baruch Hashem he could see!

When he eventually came home, Rav Eliezer Yosef realized that since he was prepared to learn the Masechtos of Beitzah and Rosh Hashanah without his eyesight, he should certainly continue learning them with his vision intact! - For the rest of his life, wherever he went, Rav Eliezer Yosef continued to review the Gemara he had studied so diligently during those six months when his eyesight hung in the balance.

After he passed away in 1955, his children found an unusual request in his will regarding what he wished to have inscribed on his Matzeivah. He asked that it be written that he had learned the Masechtos of Beitzah and Rosh Hashanah over 4,000 times.

After this, the following words were to be engraved: "In his will it was written that this accomplishment be engraved on his Matzeivah, so that perhaps one day, someone will read this and accept it upon himself to do the same!"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



A boy worked as the bell ringer in a train station. He would ring the bell, and people would begin to board the train. Five minutes later, he would ring the bell again, and those who didn't board the train at the first call, boarded the train now. When he rang the bell a third time, the train departed the station.

A man stood at the side, watched the bell-ringer boy, and said, "You must be a very important person! Everyone does what you want. I can see that you are in charge of everything that happens here at the train station. It is my great honor to meet you!"

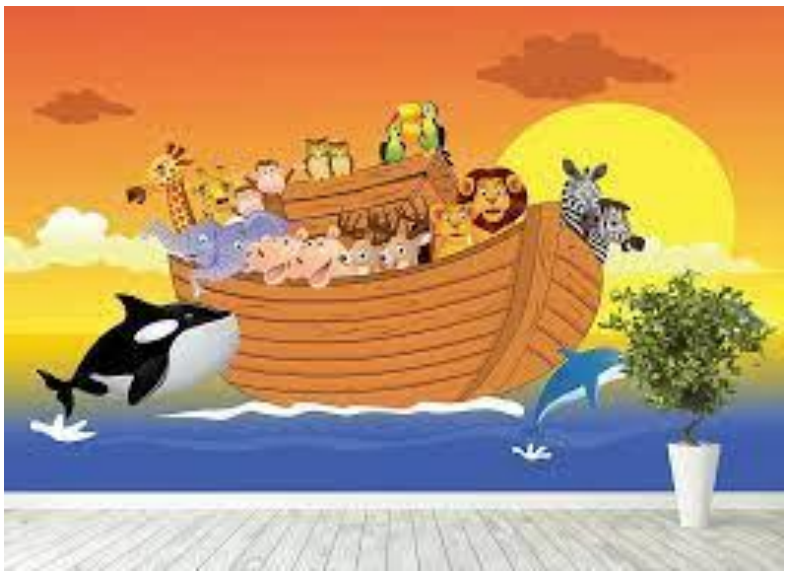
The boy replied, "I am not a big person here. I am actually at the bottom of everyone that works here. I just ring the bells, and that's all."

The Chofetz Chaim would say this Mashal about how Hashem runs everything. We see influential and wealthy people, and we are amazed at their strength and power. However, we forget that they are merely pawns in Hashem's world, fulfilling the missions that Hashem sent them to do!



Pray Before It Happens

כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֛חַ זֹ֥את לִ֖י (Yeshayahu 54:9) **מתוך ההפטרה** ***'For this, the waters of Noach, are to Me.'*** (from the *Haftarah*)



Chazal learn from this verse that Noach was called to account for the *Mabul*, and that's why it was called after his name: **מי נח**, "The waters of Noach." - But who was really responsible for the tragedy that took place – Noach, or the people of his generation? Weren't they steeped in robbery and forbidden relations? Why was Noach, the *tzaddik* of the generation, held to account for what happened?

It's because a perfect *tzaddik* like Noach was expected to pray and beseech on behalf of his generation, and since he didn't, the Flood was named after him.

After the *Mabul* was over, when Noach exited the *Teivah* and saw the utter destruction, he was moved by the tragic sight. He cried tearfully and offered *korbanos* to *Hashem*. Due to the pleasing scent of Noach's *korbanos, Hashem* swore He would never bring another flood to destroy the world, as it says, וַיָּרַח ה' אֶת־רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ – "***And Hashem smelled the pleasing scent***…" (8:21)

This is why Noach was held accountable. When his heart was aroused, when he cried and prayed, when he offered pleasing *korbanos,* the effect was enormous! *Hashem* swore He would never bring another *Mabul*.

If so, why didn't Noach do so *before* disaster struck? Why wasn't he aroused to tearful prayer while the world could still be saved? He could have prevented it from happening.

We find this same idea expressed in a *Midrash*. It is written:

עַל־נַהֲרוֹת בָּבֶל שָׁם יָשַׁבְנוּ גַּם־בָּכִינוּ בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת־צִיּוֹן – '***On the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and also wept***.' (Tehillim 137:1)

The *Midrash* recounts that when the exiled people of *Yehudah* saw *Yirmeyahu HaNavi* leaving them on the banks of the rivers of Babylon, and going his way: They all broke out in tears, and screamed out, "Our Master Yirmeyahu, are you leaving us?!"

Yirmeyahu answered them, "I bring heaven and earth to testify that if you would have cried once while you were still in *Tzion,* you would not have been exiled."

I remember that when I was a child, when I would get up after a good, long, uninterrupted learning session, my father would say to me, "Now you are in trouble. - Now you see that if you want to do it, you can. So what happened yesterday, and the day before?"

Tragedies happen so we will feel pain and thereby be woken up to *daven* and cry out to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu.* Since this is their purpose, if we would have cried out before the tragedy, we could have stopped it from happening. If we would have cried yesterday, there would be no reason for today's tragedy, since its purpose was already achieved.

This puts a question to us. Why didn't we cry yesterday?

The Chofetz Chaim would exhort people that they should *daven* and plead to *Hashem* while things are good, like they would if they had fallen ill, *chas veshalom. As Chazal* say: A person should always pray before the trouble comes. (*Sanhedrin* 44b.)

We all would like to avoid sickness and trouble and calamity, the whole purpose of which is to make us cry out to *Hashem*. So we should *daven* now, while we are still okay, and save ourselves from what didn't have to be.

Baal Teshuvah

I want to share with you a question that bothered me for a long time. It says that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Noach to work on building the Teivah for 120 years, so people will ask him what he is doing, and he will answer that Hashem is going to bring a disastrous flood on the world. This was supposed to bring them to teshuvah.

Did anyone hear about a baal teshuvah that Noach made? Was there a single person in the world who did teshuvah thanks to Noach? No. We know of no such person.

But how could this be? It went on for 120 years, and not a single person did teshuvah?

We know that Avraham Avinu brought myriads of people back to Hashem. The influence he had on his generation was enormous. What was the difference between these two tzaddikim? What was

responsible for Noach's stunning failure and Avraham's smashing success?
That's a tough question. If you have an answer, I would be very happy to hear. Please write to me.

I thought of an answer like this: It says that Noach was **מקטני אמנה**, his emunah was not 100%. He didn't actually go inside the Teivah until the rain started pouring down, because he didn't totally believe that Hashem would bring a Mabul and wipe out the entire world.

This is the answer. When he told everyone about the Mabul to come, it didn't have much of an effect on them, because he himself didn't totally believe in it. Yes, he faithfully fulfilled Hashem's command to speak to the people of his generation about the Mabul and the punishment awaiting those who do aveiros. But it did not enter their hearts because it didn't come from his heart. He didn't totally believe in what he was saying.

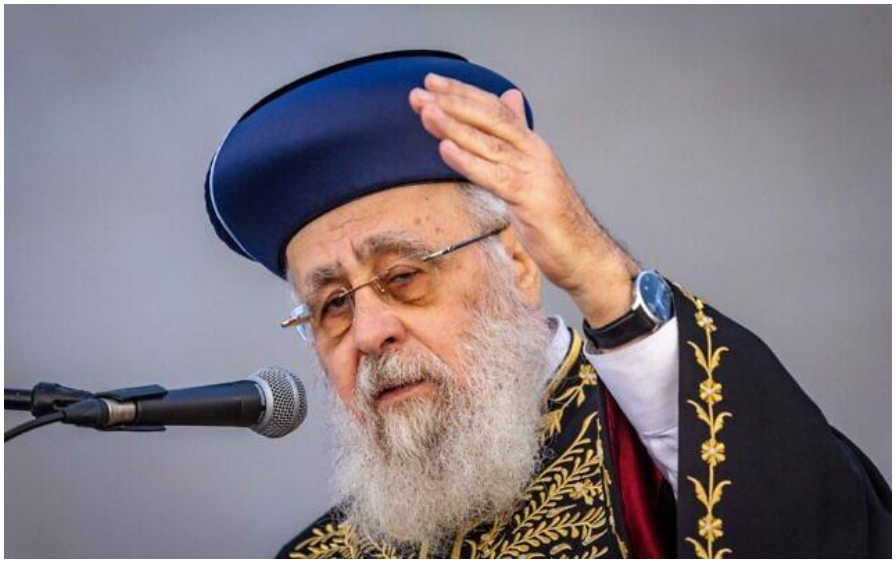
When we want to influence someone, in whatever area, whether it is at home with the children, or with talmidim, or even in business, you need to totally believe in what you are saying. Otherwise, your words won't be very effective. People won't accept and be convinced by what you are saying.

May it be Hashem's Will that we hear besoros tovos, and see yeshu'os, and merit the Geulah Sheleimah very soon. Wishing you all the best, with all my heart

Harav Yosef Dov Pincus

"If you say, I won't bother Him (Hashem) for such a small thing; I'll try to catch the bus myself, without Him, you're off the tracks already. - In everything you try to do, remember to include Hashem; He doesn't mind being bothered." ~ R' Avigdor Miller.

Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef - Words of Chizuk



The Rambam (Hil. Taanit 1:1-3) writes:

"It is a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and blow trumpets over any calamity that befalls the Jewish community, as the verse states, 'Upon the enemy who attacks, you shall blow the trumpets.' This means that with regard to any calamity, such as a famine, epidemic, locust or the like, you should cry out and blow trumpets.

This is part of the process of repentance. At a time when a hardship occurs and the Jewish nation cries and calls out, everyone will realize that it is because of their bad deeds that this hardship has occurred. This response will be cause for the calamity to be removed from the Jewish people.

But if the Jewish nation does not cry and call out, and instead says that this occurrence is mere happenstance and the way of the world, this is the way of cruelty and causes that they remain stuck in their evil ways, and further calamities will transpire."

I have thought that if **Maran Ovadiah Yosef zt"l** was with us today, what would he be doing? During past wars, such as the Yom Kippur War, Maran advised people to strengthen themselves in prayer. Moreover, he encouraged others to further devote themselves to Torah study and Taanit Dibur, refraining from speaking about other matters unrelated to Torah study and Jewish subjects.

As many individuals are now returning to their schedules of learning in Kollelim, one should accept upon oneself to learn for a duration of

several hours without any other conversation (i.e. Taanit Dibur). This is worth many times more than actual fasting. Fasting was not the approach of Maran zt"l, but Torah study was.

The Gaon of Vilna was once asked by the Dubno Maggid, "I travel from city to city, and I strengthen different communities. Please tell me, in what regard can I strengthen them? Observing Shabbat in accordance with halacha? Raising children? Family purity?" All of these were important, but the Gaon of Vilna replied with one thing. "To establish fixed times to study Torah." A day should not pass during which a person does not study Torah nor a night.

An individual who is spending his time in Kollel devoting himself to Torah study should take to heart that there are soldiers on the front lines who are risking their lives. At such a time, it cannot be that when one is studying Torah, he turns to distracted conversations. There rather must be intensified commitment and focus to learning with increased diligence and refraining from any side conversations (i.e. Taanit Dibur).

Each and every individual knows what it is that they need to improve upon. First and foremost, as mentioned, Torah study. But there is more, such as guarding one's eyes, observing Shabbat as dictated by halacha, and keeping Kosher according to halachic standards. Each of us should ask ourselves in what area we can focus our efforts, and say, "I am strengthening myself [in this area] in the merit of Am Yisrael."

We have experienced horrific things this past week. We cannot recall the last time such a calamity struck Klal Yisrael in the Land of Israel. Since the Holocaust, such a number of Jews have not been killed in one day in such a brutal, horrific way.

Our focus must be to engage in complete teshuva, as the Rambam writes. One who says this tragedy 'just happened,' is considered to be cruel.

The Rambam (Iggeret HaRambam, Kiddush Hashem) states that "one who is given the merit of rising to this level by giving up their life 'Al Kiddush Hashem' because they are a Jew, even if they had sins like the sins of Yerovam ben Nevat, he is of the World to Come." Even if the individual was not a Torah scholar, this is true of them. If the individual does in fact have the merit of Torah study and good deeds, it is even more so.

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni) adds that even if the person was not righteous in their lifetime, but they die because they are a Jew, they become someone who is a chassid (pious).

The Midrash Talpiyot notes that there is a special chamber in Gan Eden which includes an image of all those who were killed 'Al Kiddush Hashem.' Mashiach enters inside along with the Avot (Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov) and sees the images of all those who gave up their life. He then raises his voice like a lion until all the tzaddikim in Gan Eden shudder. Hashem, so to speak, cries two tears, reminiscent of the verses, "O G-d of vengeance, Hashem;' 'O G-d of vengeance, appear!'

Rav Yonatan Eibeschitz (Yaarot Devash) writes that those who are killed by non-Jews to sanctify Hashem's name are considered to be "completely righteous." The Sefer Rokeach additionally adds that there are seven rows before the Divine Presence, and those who are seated in the front row are those who were killed 'Al Kiddush Hashem.'

In the **Zohar**, this idea is brought down slightly differently. "There are seven halls before the Divine Presence. The first hall is reserved for those who are righteous converts, the second hall is reserved for those who were afflicted with terrible illnesses, the third hall is for those schoolchildren who died in their youth, the fourth is for those who mourned Jerusalem and 'all those who were killed by non-Jews because they were Jews.'"

Rav Moshe Cordevero notes that these halls are one above the above in ascending order, with the first hall on the bottom, the second hall above the first, the third hall above the second, and the fourth hall above that.

The Zohar as well states that when a Jew is killed by a non-Jew, all of the angels in Gan Eden let out a profuse cry and the entire dynasty of Dovid Hamelech accompany Mashiach who stands in his place and cries out. On Rosh Chodesh, Mashiach puts on a special robe and upon it are the images of all those who were killed 'Al Kiddush Hashem.' These concepts speak in spiritual terms, and we do not understand it in human terms.

Ultimately, we do not understand the ways of Heaven. We cannot say that such a tragedy happened because of this or that reason. Moreover, we cannot be certain that this tragedy occurred because of any misdeeds that have been committed in our day. We are not new souls nor are we in this world for the first time.

The Arizal says that just about all of our souls are reincarnated from previous lives. It could very well be that in a previous lifetime, a person was a tzaddik but had been derelict in a few areas. As a result, the Neshama (soul) descended once again to this world, and was then killed 'Al Kiddush Hashem,' and the soul ascended to Gan Eden. As it is, we do not know all the ways of Hashem.

A story is told about the **Maharal of Prague**. One Friday morning, a woman approached him with a question pertaining to a chicken she had intended to cook for Shabbat. The chicken had sustained an injured leg, and she was unsure it if rendered it a tereifah (non-kosher).

The Maharal told her that at the edge of the city of Prague, there lived a nine-year-old boy. The woman should go to him, and he will rule about the kosher status of the chicken. The woman, respecting the directive of the Maharal, approached the home where the young

boy lived. The parents opened the door, and the woman relayed what the Maharal had instructed her to do.

But the parents did not understand. "Are you making fun of us?" they said. "Our son is deaf and mute. He has never spoken a word in his life. How will he be able to give you the ruling?" "I came here just as I was told to," replied the woman. As soon as they heard that the Maharal had instructed the woman as such, they acquiesced.

The young boy was sitting in the corner of the room. The woman approached the boy and handed him the chicken, after which he began examining it. The parents along with the mother and father stood nearby, unsure if the boy would say anything. After all, he was deaf and mute. Suddenly, though, after examining the chicken, the boy declared, "Kasher." The woman greatly thanked the boy, knowing that she would now have what to cook for Shabbat.

The woman began making her way out the door, when suddenly, they heard a large boom. Returning to the room, they saw that the boy had collapsed dead on the floor. The boy had uttered one word in his life— "Kasher"—and then he died. The woman returned to the Maharal very uneasy. "Don't worry," replied the Maharal, "I will explain later what happened."

The funeral was arranged for that day, with the entire city in attendance. After the burial, the Maharal announced that everyone should make their way to the shul, as he had a message to share.

The Maharal got up in the middle of the shul and began: "You are all wondering what happened here. A woman came to ask me a question in halacha, I sent her to a young boy, he rendered a ruling of Kasher, and then he died. What does this all mean?

"If you remember, nine years ago, there used to live a particular rabbi in this city." The community immediately recalled who this great rabbi was. He was both righteous and learned. - "One Friday, he was on his way to the *mikvah,* and a woman approached him,

stating that she had a chicken and she was unsure if it was Kosher or not. Caught off guard and distracted by his focus on walking to the mikvah, the rabbi ruled that the chicken was not kosher. Without another option, the poor woman returned home, and her children went hungry for that Shabbat.

"The truth was that the chicken was kosher, but in the rabbi's haste to the *mikvah,* he erred in his ruling. Sometime later, the rabbi passed away.

"In Heaven, everything is precisely calculated to the very last detail and there is no such thing as a special dispensation or "protection." (Torah study is the exception, which in fact does provide a wall of protection for a person in Heaven). Therefore, this rabbi who ruled that the chicken was not Kosher when it really was Kosher needed to rectify his soul. As such, he was sent back to this world. - The problem was that should he return to this world, there would be the chance that he would commit more sins. In order to avoid that, he asked that he be protected by being born as someone who was deaf and mute, so he would not be held culpable and commit any sins.

"This nine-year-old boy," concluded the Maharal of Prague, "was the gilgul of that great rabbi who passed away exactly nine years ago. When the woman brought the chicken to the boy, it was the opportunity for this soul to be rectified. That is why I informed the woman to seek out the boy. Once he uttered the word "Kasher," his soul completed its rectification, and returned to Heaven.

This should strengthen our Emunah. Everything in this world has its place, and everything has a purpose and address. We are intended to turn to Hashem in prayer that He accept our requests and merit us to fulfill His will for as long as we can.

Those who are going out to war now are waging a Milchemet Hashem, war of Hashem. We have a "thousand from a tribe, a thousand for a tribe" (Bamidbar 31:4). For every thousand that are going out into the battlefield, we have a thousand who are praying for them and

engaging in Torah study (Bamidbar Rabbah 22:3). We are now charged to diligently apply ourselves to Torah study and increase our concentration for the benefit of the relief and redemption of the Jewish people.

Anyone who is in need of a refuah sheleimah should be blessed by Hashem to have their entire body healed. We should no longer hear of any calamities in our Land, and we should all merit to herald the Final Redemption.





Are You Dancing?

Rav Ahrel'e M'belz once said that if a person would really understand what it means to be a Yid, when he says the Brocho of "Sheloi Asani Goy", it is not Shayech for him to have any form of depression or sadness that day. The fact that he appreciates that he recognizes how special it is to be a Yid, brings him to a happiness that will override all sorrow. - **Ais Tzarah He L'yaakov!**

We are all aware that we are in an eis Tzarah and we need to continue crying for the yeshuas Hashem! It is a difficult balance since we must feel the pain of other Yidden, yet at the same time we must strengthen our emuna and bitachon and serve Hashem with extreme simcha! We are Ma'aminim Bnei Ma'aminim and we believe that Yeshuas Hashem K'heref Ayin!

The seforim hakedoshim write that the greatest heights that a person can ever want to achieve in his lifetime can only be acquired with Simcha! The shechina cannot rest on someone who is not b'simcha.

In these times especially when children can have fears, I heard B'shem **Rav Elyahu Diskin Shlita** that one has to dance with the children and sing with them songs. Sing songs of emuna and bitachon and dance with the children. Even when running into a miklat, which we should never have to, one should dance with the children to calm their fears and that they should not Chas V'shalom come away with any traumas!

A few years ago I heard from **מו״ר הגרי״ב** that one thing every child is **הגיע לחינוך**, and probably one of the most important things to implement into their life, is the idea of **שמחת החיים**, the idea that it is good to be alive!

Under normal circumstance, a child will have it, our job is that we have to just reinforce it and not teach otherwise. **שמחת החיים** is real. Giving over and internalizing the understanding that it is good to be alive! Yes, there are difficult moments, cry - sleepy, cry – tummy ache, but all and all it's good to be alive. A home has to be an atmosphere of happiness.

The first assignment is to work on **שמחת החיים**. A home that has constant complaining and kvetching, is teaching contrary to the natural happiness. True, Hashem made it that some people are naturally happy, and people who are not as happy naturally. If you are naturally a happy person this is not your big **נסיון**, but if not, you must work on it. And even when there are challenges, there are even many people who are disappointed with themselves, and critical, however one must learn to take a step back, take a deep breath and say "Wow, it's good to be alive!

Rav Yonason Eibshitz in his **יערות דבש – ספר** writes **בשם** the **אריז״ל** that most of the reason for the long and bitter **גלות** is because we are not doing the mitzvos and serving Hashem with simchah. - In this tekufa, many people are depressed and low. The question is, is this what Hashem wants from us?

May we all be zoche to "V'sechezena Ei'Nainu Beshuvcha Le'Tzion Brachamim speedily in our days!

"When it comes to mitzvos, don't make a "To Do" list. Instead, make a "Do" list. Don't wait!" ~ R' Yisroel Majeski.

REB YOEL R. ON THE PARSHA

After the world was created, two generations were noted as being particularly wicked. The first was the *dor hamabul*, judged wicked for rampant theft, while the second was the *dor haflaga*, which rebelled against Hashem.

Question: Why was the punishment of the *dor hamabul* more severe than that of the *dor haflaga*? How can robbery be a more serious crime than rebellion against Hashem?

Answer: Despite the severity of the *dor haflaga's* sin they had *achdus* (unity). In the merit of their *achdus* they were saved from destruction.

United we stand, divided we fall.

"Anything that is important enough for you to do is important enough for you to do better." ~ R' Yisroel Reisman.

Parsha Pearls

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גֹפֶר-- בראשית ו:יד 'Make for yourself a teiva of gopher wood...' -- Bereishis 6:14

Midrash Yalkut teaches that the 50-amah wooden beam used for hanging Haman came from Noah's teiva. What's the significance of that beam (besides the fascinating fact that the beam remained intact after thousands of years)?

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l explains that through intense toil for 120 years in building the teiva for the sake saving the people from the flood Noach changed the actual material of the teiva. It became a material infused with the incredible strength to save. Hence, a part of the teiva was used to save Klal Yisroel in the generation when

Haman arose against Klal Yisroel. Rav Shmulevitz points out that if an object changes its nature when a person toils over it for the sake of doing good, all the more so, the inner nature of children changes when parents toil in raising them in derech Hashem.



Immense Reward - The Soul of Kaddish by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

The Alter of Kelm, Rav Simchah Zissel, once spoke to his talmidim to be mechazek them and shared the following (see Notrei Amen, Vol. I, p. 241): All the world and all its pleasures cannot supply the reward an individual deserves for responding "Baruch Hu u'varuch Shemo" one time. Moreover, it was worthwhile for Hashem to bring the world into being for 6,000 years so one Jew could answer "Baruch Hu u'varuch Shemo" just once!

It goes further: Saying "Baruch Hu u'varuch Shemo" 1,000 times doesn't reach the reward for one Amen! In fact, it was worthwhile for man to be created and to come to This World — even to endure the suffering of Iyov for seventy years — just to answer Amen one time!

But there is more: The reward for responding Amen 1,000 times doesn't reach the reward for an Amen for HaKeil HaKadosh or for Shome'a Tefillah (in Shemoneh Esrei), or Kedushah or Borchu, which declare the holiness of Hashem Yisbarach.

Rav Simchah Zissel added: 1,000 times of responding Amen doesn't reach the reward of responding "Amen yehei Shemei rabba mevorach" just once.

Then came the clincher: The reward for responding "Amen yehei Shemei rabba mevorach" 1,000 times does not come to the reward of one word of Torah! What power we possess!



שמחנו בישועתך על התורה

נכתב לע"נ מרת מרים בת ר' גדלי' ע"ה

Written by R' YZ Grossberger

A Very Special Bird

We know that Noach had to spend the entire year in the Tevah feeding the animals. Chazal tell us that Noach didn't sleep as he was so preoccupied at all times of the day and night because each animal had to be fed at the time it normally eats and some eat during the day and some during the night.

In fact, when Noach delayed feeding the lion, he was kicked by it causing him to limp.

There is a very interesting Gemora in **סנהדרין קח** that tells us about a remarkable bird called the "Chol" that Noach noticed was not eating. Noach asked it, "Do you not need any food?" and the Chol answered, "I saw that you were very busy, so I didn't want to trouble you." When Noach heard this, he was so impressed with it that he gave it a Brocho that it should never die.

The question is, true, the Chol was an easy-going and humble bird and didn't want to trouble Noach, but why was it therefore blessed to never die because of it?

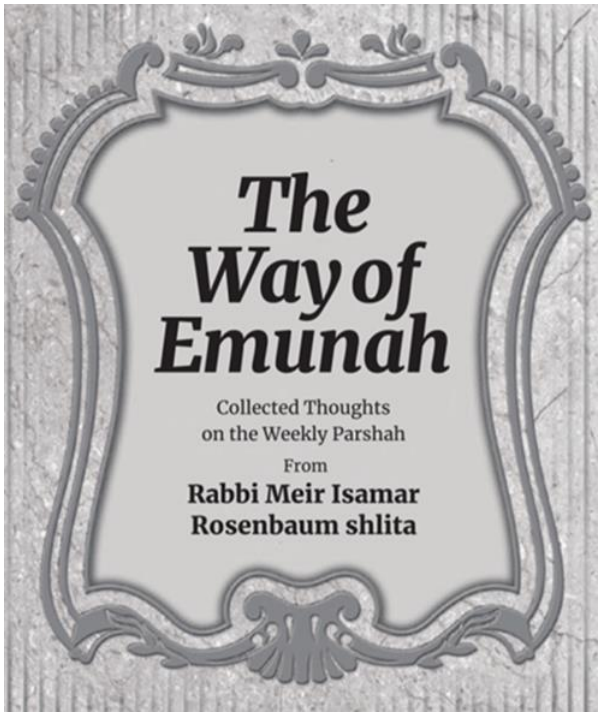
The Maharal in **חידושי אגודות** explains that most people lead bitter lives because they are not easy-going. Chazal tell us that **שנאת הבריות... מוציאין את האדם מן העולם** "***Hatred towards people causes a person to leave this world***."

When people constantly have complaints about everyone else, either because of what they should be doing or what they shouldn't have done, that is a key for a short life since eventually this can affect a person's health.

In contrast a person who is humble and easy-going leads a happy life without aggravation and therefore he will live long. This is the message that the Gemora is giving us from the Chol bird.

Noach was saying to this bird, "By the very fact that you are so easy-going, and you see others in a positive light, like when I was so busy and you didn't complain that you haven't eaten, that is the best recipe for a long life which you will therefore be blessed with!"

What an amazing Limud to take from such a special bird!



Making a Nachas Ruach for Hashem

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו *'These are the generations of Noach, Noach was a righteous man. He was faithful in his generation'* (6:9)

Sefer Kisvei Rama"m quotes the **Yesod Ha'avodah of Slonim *zy"a*** as noting that the *pasuk* repeats the name "Noach" twice. He explains that the *pasuk* is saying that the "*toldos* of Noach was *noach*", i.e., to create a *nachas ruach* for Hashem. His entire life was devoted to providing Hashem with Divine pleasure.

This is in accordance with Rashi's words that "the main *toldos* (offspring) of a *Tzadik* is his good deeds."

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 30:5) states similarly: "He was Noach (pleasant) to the Heavens and Noach (pleasant) to people." The outcome of Noach's righteous actions were pleasant both to Hashem and to people who were positively influenced by him.

When One is Merciful to His Friend, Hashem is Merciful as Well

קֵ֚ץ כָּל־בָּשָׂ֣ר בָּ֔א לְפָנַ֖י כִּי־מָלְאָ֣ה הָאָ֥רֶץ חָמָ֛ס מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם וְהִנְנִ֥י מַשְׁחִיתָ֖ם אֶת־הָאָֽרֶץ
***The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the world has become full of robbery because of them.* (6:13)**

Rashi states: "The world has become full of robbery: Their decree was only sealed because of theft."

Sefer Tiferes Shlomo asks why Hashem cared so much when wicked people were stealing from each other. Was He really so concerned about their money? Weren't they just like wild animals who steal food from each other?

He answers this question by quoting the Medrash that relates that Avrohom Avinu asked Shem, the son of Noach, "How were you saved from the flood and the great wrath Hashem sent upon the world?"

Shem answered, "I don't really know. I only know that we had the merit of showing compassion to birds and animals. During the entire time of the flood, we were busy taking care of them. In this merit, Hashem had compassion upon us because anyone who shows mercy to His creations will be shown mercy by Him."

We thus see that because Noach and his family had mercy on Hashem's creations, He showed mercy to them.

So too, if the people of that generation had shown mercy upon each other, Hashem would have shown mercy and He would not have punished them for their sins. But because they stole from each other with no mercy, their decree of destruction was sealed.

"No one will ever love us like Hashem does. His love is boundless and unconditional." ~ Chovos Helevavos [Shaar Habitachon.]

Every Word is Luminous

צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה A light / window you shall make for the ark (6:16)

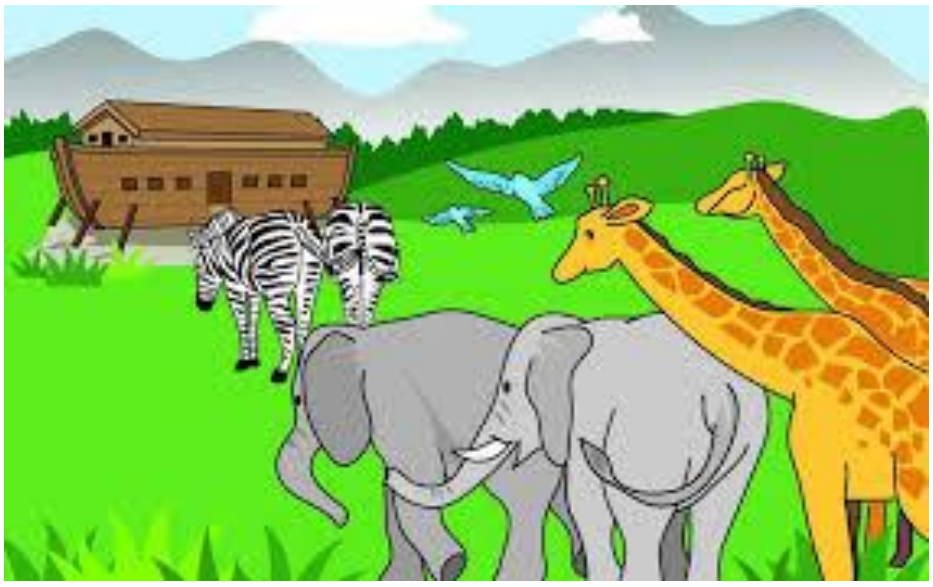


Rashi says that the "*tzohar*" was a gem that provided light.

Sefer Noam Elimelech writes that the word "*teiva*" also means "a word". Accordingly, the *pasuk* is hinting that every word that comes out of a person's mouth can illuminate the world like this gem, as long as one uses only the proper words.

Noach's Power of Emunah

וַיָּבֹא נֹחַ וּבָנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּנְשֵׁי־בָנָיו אִתּוֹ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה מִפְּנֵי מֵי הַמַּבּוּל 'And Noach came…to the ark because of the waters of the flood.' (7:7)



Rashi says that Noach was also small in his *emunah*. He didn't fully believe that the *mabul* was coming, so he didn't enter the *teivah* until the water pushed him in.

Sefer Ohev Yisroel quotes the **Magid of Zlotchov *zy"a*** as asking why Noach, the great *tzadik*, would be suspected of being small in his *emunah*.

He answers that the word "*emunah*" can also mean to raise (as in Esther 2:7: "*V'hu uman es Hadassah*. He raised Hadassah). This is because *emunah* has a power to "raise up" any matter.

If one has *emunah* and trusts that something will occur, he can cause it to rise up and happen. Of course, Noach fully believed that whatever Hashem says is true. However, he was afraid to fully believe that a great flood was coming, because he didn't want his *emunah* to bring about the flood. - He knew how powerful *emunah* is, and he didn't want to be the cause of the destruction.

Accordingly, Rashi is saying that although Noach did believe what Hashem said, he forced himself not to have full *emunah* until he was forced into the *teiva*.

In The Year 5600, The Gates of Wisdom Were Opened

בִּשְׁנַת שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה לְחַיֵּי־נֹחַ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בְּשִׁבְעָה־עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִבְקְעוּ כָּל־מַעְיְנוֹת תְּהוֹם רַבָּה וַאֲרֻבֹּת הַשָּׁמַיִם נִפְתָּחוּ ***'In the six hundredth year of Noach's life…all the springs of the great deep were split, and the windows of the heavens opened up.' (7:11)***



The Zohar Hakadosh (Vayeirah 107A) explains "the 600th year" that is mentioned in this *pasuk* to be a reference to the 600th year of the sixth millennium (5600). It states that in this year, the springs of deep wisdom and windows to *chochmah* will be opened.

The Kotzker Rebbe *zy"a* (Ohel Torah) states that this is why new ideas in regard to scientific matters have been discovered very often since the year 5600.

Although the gates of wisdom were opened, due to our many sins, we were not worthy of receiving an increase in Divine wisdom, and only scientific and natural forms of wisdom were increased.

Noach Believed They Would do Teshuva

Rav Yitzchok of Vorka *zy"a* explains Rashi's words that Noach did not have full *Emunah* by saying that Noach certainly did believe that the flood was coming; however, he waited until the last possible moment to enter the *teiva* because he still believed that the people would do teshuva and the decree would be averted. That is why he was not convinced that the flood would actually occur.

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev.

וַיִּשָּׁאֵר אַךְ־נֹחַ וַאֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה '***And only Noach and those with him in the ark survived***.' (7:23)

Rashi ZY"A quotes the Medrash that Noach did not sleep in the Teivoh [Ark] the full year of the duration of the Mabul [flood], as each animal had its own time of eating. "Ach Noach – Noach was in agony". **לְבַד נֹחַ, זֶהוּ פְּשׁוּטוֹ; וּמִדְרָשׁ אַגָּדָה גּוֹנֵחַ וְכוֹהֶה דָּם מִטֹּרַח אַךְ־נֹחַ: הַבְּהֵמוֹת וְהַחַיּוֹת. וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים שֶׁאַחֵר מְזוֹנוֹת לָאֲרִי וְהִכִּישׁוֹ, וְעָלָיו נֶאֱמַר הֵן צַדִּיק בָּאָרֶץ יְשֻׁלָּם (משלי יא)**: He praised Hashem when the Mabul was over, and he was told by Hashem to leave the Teivoh. Once, Noach was late to feed the lion and the lion kicked Noach.

During WW2, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, **Rav Avrohom Kalmanovich ZY"A** was in the USA and was making appeals for the Mirrer Yeshiva who were displaced in Shanghai. He would quote the above as follows. How did the lion have the Chutzpah and lack of Hakoras Hatov [appreciation] to kick Noach and hurt him just because he came late one day of that full year?

Answered the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva as follows. The lion had the following calculation. If I am the only lion survivor, if I get my meal late, it will weaken me. If so the species of lions will be weakened. So too said the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva at the appeals, as WW2 was

raging, from the few Yeshivos that survived from Europe was the Mirrer Yeshiva together with the various other Yeshivos who found haven in Shanghai. If so, if there will be a weakness in them, it will weaken the future of Torah in Klall Yisroel.

When my Rebbe **Reb Refoel Green ZY"A** would say this to his Talmidim, he would conclude, "And surely when he told this over to his Talmidim, he would emphasize how important it is that the study and Mesoras [lineage] HaTorah not be weakened, as it is the future of Torah by Klall Yisroel.

In the days of the **Chofetz Chaim** there was a wealthy man who would spend a part of his day accepting Talmidei Chachomim [Torah Scholars] to support them in their Torah Study. One day it occurred to him as follows, why do I only support the Talmidei Chachamim and those needy, when I can sit in Beis Medrash all day? And so, the next day he was not to be found at home and there were lines of needy awaiting his help, to no avail.

When this reached the ears of the Chofetz Chaim ZY"A, he explained the situation as follows. - During WWI there was an army recruiter of the Russian army of that time. Everyday hundreds or thousands of men came to the office to enlist in the Russian army. One day the consignor thought the following. Why am I just signing up people to serve in the army, I myself can serve? And as so, the next day, he immediately flew a military bomber to fight the war.

After a day of his service, he returned to the base awaiting applause. To his surprise he was greeted by his commander who asked him, "Where have you been?". To which he answered his episode. The commander, pointing to the long line of people awaiting to enlist, "You are under arrest!" you have not fulfilled your role as to accomplish your purpose in the Czar's army.

So too, said the Chofetz Chaim, every person has his purpose. Going out of his limits and responsibilities does not justify his actions, just as our enlisting office acting as a pilot.

After WW2 many people Davened [prayed] that life should get back to "Normal". Many Tzadikim of the generation corrected that, in such a situation we must beseech Hashem that we be Zocheh [merit] a Geuloh Shleimoh [complete redemption].



וַתִּשָּׁחֵת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס

It is very difficult to feel upbeat at the moment. *Klal Yisroel* has just endured its most difficult day since the Holocaust and still stands in great danger. The unspeakable atrocities carried out against innocent *Yiddishe kinderlach*, followed by their glorification in the streets of many cities including London, make us all feel sick to the stomach.

Is there a ray of light to be found anywhere in this thick darkness?

This week's *parsha* talks of *Chomos*, wanton cruelty and total lack of regard for a fellow human being, which resulted in the near-destruction of all life on Earth. *Noach*'s response was to spend a year engaged in *chessed*, caring for and nurturing a multitude of living creatures in the *teivoh*.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks in *Eretz Yisroel*, *Yidden* across the globe sprang into action and started to do what *Klal Yisroel* does best: *chessed*. Every conceivable item that might be needed was packaged up and rushed to the front.

In one sweet moment, a *chossid*, whose *hakofos shenios* had been cancelled, donated all the *Simchas Torah pecklech* to soldiers heading to war.

Campaigns to produce *tzitzis* and *teffilin* en masse burst into life. Doors throughout the country and around the world were flung open to accept refugees of the South or people fleeing from the war zone.

Mi ke'amcho Yisroel, goi echod boOretz! - *In times like this we are reminded that beneath the surface we are truly all one.*

The letters of *Noach's* name form the root of the word *Chanukah*. When searching for that ray of light we are reminded that in the *Beis Hamikdosh* the light was produced *kosis lamo'or*, through a process of crushing.

We all feel crushed at the moment but there is no question that we are producing a tremendous light of *chessed* as a result. *Chazal* tell us that specifically through acts of *chessed* we will survive the difficult times before *Moshiach*.

Let us therefore capture these feelings of *ahavas Yisroel* and the urge to help another *Yied* regardless of background for all time and in this *zechus* be *zoiche* to see the end of all *Yiddishe* suffering with the coming of *Moshiach* **במהרה בימינו אמן**.

Modesty

Rabbi Ami ben Tzion, who is the grandson of the late **Rabbi Ben Zion Abbah Shaul Zt'l**, one of the great sages of our time, told over this story: Rav Ami ben Tzion has a sister that lives in Bnei Brak. This sister has several children, and she tells over the following story about one of her daughters:

Once this girl became a teenager, all of a sudden, she revolted against the family. She decided to be more 'open minded'. Little by little, she slowly but surely left the fold of a religious, orthodox, observant Jewish life. First came Shabbos, then came kashrus, and little by little, she just gave up on everything… except for one thing.

Inexplicably, she retained the mode of her modest attire. She would always wear modest clothing. There was no apparent rhyme or reason for this, considering that she had ditched everything else, but she felt that this was the one thing that she wanted to hold on to. This was her uniform, and she wasn't changing it. - She was hanging out

and going out with the wrong crowds. Doing the wrong things. But even so, she kept her modest attire.

About a week before the Nova Festival, she gets a call from one of her friends, who said, "Listen, we are all going to the Nova Festival we got tickets and want you to come with."

She is so excited, and can't wait to be at the party, which was the biggest music festival around. She says, "Of course – I'm in, count me in – let's do it, can't wait!"

She went home to tell her mother that she would be away for Shabbos and Yomtov, as she was going out with her friends to the festival over the weekend.

Her mother was distraught. "But what about Shabbos and Simchas Torah?"

She says, "Mum, don't bother me about this, I've already made up my mind to go to the festival with my friends."

The night before the festival, she went to bed, but couldn't sleep and kept on having a recurring dream. In the dream, she saw all the horrors that we know that occurred play out right before her. She woke up with a cold sweat and terrified of the nightmare that she had never experienced before. People getting killed all around her – she couldn't understand it. – She feels like maybe this is a message from Hashem. She decides that she's not going to go to the music festival.

The next day, her friend calls her and says, "What's doing – are you all ready, we'll pick you up in half an hour."

She says, "I'm sorry, but I'm not going, you guys go without me."

"What are you talking about, it's all planned. We are all going together – you gotta come."

"No, I can't come – don't ask. Just leave me alone."

"Tell us what happened."

"Well last night I had this dream, it was terrifying, things were happening. I would rather not go, and maybe you shouldn't go either."

"What are you talking about, dreams? It's in your subconscious, you knew you were going to go. Dreams don't mean anything. How old are you?"

So, they finally convinced her, and she said, "Ok, let's do it, let's go."

When the horrors start to unfold at the Festival, bombs are flying, terrorists are shooting everywhere. – She finds herself with her face down in the ground, crying and praying to Hashem to save her.

She says, "Hashem, please save me, I know that I shouldn't be here, I knew I shouldn't be doing this. I was wrong and You were right. I should have listened, but I didn't. – Please Hashem forgive me. Do a miracle for me just this once, and I promise You that I will come back to You and You only."

As she is crying to Hashem and thinking these thoughts, she gets a tap on her shoulder. She lifts up her head, and lo and behold, she comes face to face with…. A terrorist! He picks her up, and looks her up and down, and says, "What are you doing here? – you don't belong here."

Looking at her clothes, he was saying, "You don't belong here, you're not dressed like them, you are different. These are not festival clothes! Get out of here now – run!"

She said, "I can't run, they will shoot me or kidnap me!"

He said, "Don't worry about it, just come with me, and act as if I have captured you."

He pulled her by her sweater and dragged her away from there. Anyone that saw them, thought that he had captured another hostage for himself, and didn't bother him at all. They go far away from where the main massacre was taking place, until they were

completely in the clear. He lets her go, and she goes straight home – her life was saved!

Obviously, she's now turned her life completely around. At home, Rav Ami says that her grandmother told her, "You think that was some random man who saved your life? No, I promise you it was Eliyahu Hanavi himself who had come down to save you! – Why? Because in life we have anchors.

Just like an astronaut wouldn't dare to step out of his space ship without a tether to anchor him to the ship, otherwise he would be lost in space forever, similarly, if we don't anchor ourselves with some sort of tether, we could get lost in this world. – Your anchor and tether was to dress modestly, and this saved your life!"



וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְנֹחַ קֵץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ – *'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them.' (6:13)*

Why was the generation of the Flood utterly destroyed, but not the generation of the Tower?

Because the generation of the Flood were consumed by robbery and violence, while amongst the generation of the Tower, love prevailed. ~ (**Midrash Rabbah**)

G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. Man looks into Torah and sustains the world. ~ (**Zohar**)

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה – G-d said to Noah . . . "Come into the ark" (7:1)

The Hebrew word for "ark," *teivah*, also means "word." "Come into the word," says G-d; enter within the words of prayer and Torah study. Here you will find a sanctuary of wisdom, meaning and holiness amidst the raging floodwaters of life. ~ (**Baal Shem Tov**)

The chronology of events, as indicated by the dates and time periods given in the Torah's account and calculated by Rashi:

Cheshvan 17: Noah enters ark; rains begin.

Kislev 27: Forty days of rain end; 150 days of water's swelling and churning begin, during which the water reaches a height of 15 cubits above the mountain peaks.

Sivan 1: Water calms and begins to subside at the rate of one cubit each four days.

Sivan 17: The bottom of the ark, submerged 11 cubits beneath the surface, touches down on the top of Mount Ararat.

Av 1: The mountain peaks break the water's surface.

Elul 10: Noah open the ark's window and dispatches the raven.

Elul 17: Noah sends the dove for the first time.

Elul 23: The dove is sent a second time and returns with an olive branch in its beak.

Tishrei 1: Dove's third mission. Water completely drained.

Cheshvan 27: Ground fully dried. Noah exits the ark.

Total time in ark: 365 days (one solar year; one year and 11 days on the lunar calendar).

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

מהעוף למינהו ומן הבהמה למינה מכל רמש האדמה למינהו שנים מכל יבאו להחיות אליך (6:20)

מן הבהמה הטהורה ... ומן העוף וכל אשר רמש על האדמה שנים שנים באו אל נח אל התבה (7:8-9)

Parshas Noach revolves around the ark that Hashem instructed Noach to build to save himself, his family, and all the species of birds and animals from the flood that destroyed the earth. Interestingly, when Hashem initially commanded Noach to build the ark, He told him to bring into the ark two of each kind of birds, animals, and creeping creatures, mentioning birds first.

However, when the time came for Noach to actually go into the ark, the Torah records that he entered together with the animals, birds, and creeping creatures, listing the animals before the birds. What is the reason that the Torah reverses the order of the birds and the animals in a span of only ten verses?

Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter suggests that birds are considered superior to animals due to their ability to fly over them, and therefore they are listed first. However, this advantage is only relevant when they are living naturally in the wild and free to fly around. If, on the other hand, the birds are restricted to a confined area, their inherent advantage becomes irrelevant, and their unutilized potential renders them inferior to other animals.

In light of this distinction, it is now understandable that when Hashem initially approached Noach to discuss the impending flood with him, He mentioned the birds before the animals, as they are naturally considered superior. However, when the time arrived to enter the ark, which would negate the birds' ability to soar toward the heavens, they no longer had any edge over the animals and are listed after them.

Rabbi Senter adds that the Gemora (Shabbos 130a) teaches that Klal Yisroel is compared to a bird: a dove. Just as the dove's wings enable it to fly, so too the Torah is the wings of the Jewish people.

If we elect to lower ourselves to the restricting decadence of the immoral nations that surround us, we give up our advantage and become inferior to them, due to our wasted abilities. However, when we use the Torah properly, by studying and keeping its laws, we are able to actualize our potential for greatness by soaring to lofty spiritual heights.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Rav Ozer Alport



Q. Who was the first person in history born with separated, distinct fingers?

A. When Noach was born, the Torah records (5:29) that his father Lemech remarked, "This one will bring us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands from the ground."

The Paneiach Raza cites a midrash that says that until Noach was born, people's hands were like mittens, and he was the first baby born with separated individual fingers. When his father saw this, he immediately recognized that this would enable him to manipulate farming tools with ease, without suffering the same pain in his hands that others endured due to their lack of distinct fingers.

"Believe that everything from Hashem is for your ultimate good. And when you don't understand, trust that it is an even greater kindness." ~ Rebbe Moshe Kobriner – Sefer יסוד העבודה



The Gemara says that a person must make a bracha on bad things that happen to him, just like you make a bracha on good things that happen to him – With the same happiness and the same joy.

Somebody once asked the **Chofetz Chaim**, "Rabbi, I don't understand anyone who could do that? How could a person say a bracha on bad things and misfortunes with the same joy as with good things? I don't understand – tragedy and celebration? How can you make a bracha like that?"

The Chofetz Chaim said to him, "There is a person in a nearby town who has no clothing, has very little shelter, and has terrible health issues. Go and ask him, because he always seems to be happy." – "Go to his house, and ask him – 'How can you bless Hashem for all the good things, and do the same on bad things?'"

So, the guy gets all exited, finally, he's going to understand the Gemara. And he goes into this person's house. He is invited in, and he notices that the walls are all black, the furniture and soft furnishings are all shabby. There is a terrible stench in the house. The man is frail, weak, and can hardly walk.

He says to the visitor, "Do you have a question?"

The guy says, "Yeah, sure – you know that there is a Gemara that says that a person must make a bracha on bad things that happen to him, just like you make a bracha on good things that happen to him – With the same happiness and the same joy? And the Chofetz Chaim asked me to come here to find the answer to this Gemara as to how this is possible."

So, the man thinks for a couple of minutes, and says, "Listen, I would love to tell you the answer but thank G-d nothing bad has ever befallen me!"





Who Do You Want to Talk To?

Noach was a tzadik. He was able to maintain his devotion to Hashem despite the rampant immorality and thievery of the entire world! It is a tribute to a person who can maintain his values and not be affected by everyone around him acting in a degenerate way. Because of that, Hashem saved Noach from destruction.

The Haftorah quotes a pasuk which attributes the flood to Noach, as it calls the Flood, "the waters of Noach" (Yeshaya 54:9). That seems strange! The Flood was a punishment for a degenerate society devoid of morals and honesty! Why does the pasuk attribute it to Noach?!

The Chasam Sofer says that Noach was criticized for an inaction. Hashem had told Noach that He was going to destroy the entire world. Yet, that did not spur Noach to daven for the world as our forefather Avraham did when he heard that Hashem was about to destroy Sodom. The Zohar (Noach 67b) says, as well, that despite Noach's greatness, he was faulted for not having prayed on behalf of the people of his generation.

Was Noach expected to daven for such people? The people were such terrible sinners. They served idols, murdered, and had illicit

relations. They stole from each other. The judges were corrupt. Furthermore, Hashem gave the people 120 years to repent. During that time, Noach followed Hashem's command and built an Ark, a ship, to save himself and his family, as well as animals and birds. When the people passed by Noach, they asked him what he was doing. He told them and explained that if they did not repent, then Hashem would destroy the world. Not only did they laugh at Noach, but they also even cursed him. Were these the people that Noach was supposed to daven to Hashem to spare?

The answer is yes! Noach was supposed to daven even for such people. He had the ability to daven to Hashem to save the world. However, he did not do so. For that lapse, he was faulted. Perhaps Hashem would have responded no to Noach's prayer, but at least Noach should have tried. Remarkably, his tefillos may have possibly been accepted! This is the power of tefillah!

Chazal tell us that a Jew who was going to the market to sell his goods would not want it to rain. Rain would cause the market to close. He wouldn't make money that month and his family would go hungry. If he would see a rain cloud on the horizon, he would give a heartfelt tefillah to Hashem that it should not rain. This would be a powerful tefillah.

However, rain is important for so many others. Therefore, the Kohain Gadol had to daven on Yom Kippur, in the Kodesh HaKadashim, the Holy of Holies, to counter this man's sincere prayer. The holiest Jew, on the holiest day, in the holiest place had to daven to counter the sincere prayer of one individual.

It is important to understand that Hashem does not need our prayers. Prayer is for our benefit to help us develop a relationship with Hashem. Hashem wants us to have that relationship. We can ask Hashem for any need or want that we have, be it big or small. We can even ask Hashem to help us get a parking spot. No request is too trivial because Hashem is our loving Father who wants to give to us.

When we praise Hashem and thank Him for all that He does for us that also strengthens that relationship. So, let's keep building that relationship by talking to Hashem.



An Appropriate Sensitivity

ואתה קח לך מכל מאכל אשר יאכל ואספת אליך והיה לך ולהם לאכלה

"***And as for you, take for yourself of every food that is eaten and gather it in to yourself, that it shall be as food for you and for them.*" (*Bereishis* 6:21)**

Rav Elchonon Wasserman *zt"l* questions the wording of the above *pasuk*. Hashem tells Noach to take food. Why does the Torah then add "that is eaten"? Is that not obvious? What else is to be done with food? Furthermore, why does the Torah reiterate "that it shall be…. for you and them"? These words seem redundant.

Rav Elchonon explains that *Chazal* teach that the fruit of the pre-flood era was tastier and of better quality than that of the post-flood era. Therefore, Noach might have thought to hoard more fruit than was needed in order to enjoy those fruits even after new fruit was produced after the flood. Thus, Hashem tells Noach to take food that "is eaten" to emphasize that he should only take an amount of food that was to be eaten during the flood and its immediate aftermath.

Noach, however, still might have thought that he could take an amount of fruit that is fit to be eaten during the time it was needed but he would ration it in a way that there would be a surplus of the produce to be eaten after the flood and its immediate aftermath.

Therefore, he is told that it "shall be food for you and them" – to be eaten and not saved for later.

One of the reasons that Hashem did not want Noach to enjoy the pre flood fruit in a post-flood world was to drive home the point that one must never exploit the misery of others. It would lack sensitivity if he were to use the destruction of the world as an opportunity to hoard produce for the future. (Rabbi Yirmiyahu Neuman)



The Weekly Vort

צהר תעשה לתבה – *Brightness shall you make for the ark* (6:16).

Some commentators interpret this source of brightness as a skylight, and others say it was a precious stone that illuminated the *teivah*.

R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, in expounding on the importance of concentration during *davening*, quotes the **Baal Shem Tov**: "The word *teivah* can also mean 'word'. Thus, the expression can also imply, 'You shall make an illumination for the word', i.e. every word of *tefillah*. Each word should sparkle with the proper intent, pronunciation, and knowledge of its meaning."

R' Mendlowitz adds that the *teivah* rescued Noach and his family from the flood. Similarly, the *teivos* (words) of *tefillah* can save each of us from the "flood" of immorality, dishonesty and secularism that threatens to overrun our society.

By concentrating on every word of the *tefillos*, we come to appreciate our total dependence on Hashem, and we become cognizant of His Divine Providence. This in turn leads us to be more observant of the words and directives of Hashem. (Reflections of the Maggid)





Deal Of a Lifetime

One of the old neighbors of **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman**, *zt"l*, was **Rav Lipa Yisraelsohn**. Before Rav Lipa would travel to New York, he'd come to Rav Aharon Leib to receive the *rosh yeshiva's beracha* for *hatzlacha*. One time, however, he was in for a surprise. Rav Aharon Leib lifted his eyes and said, "Rav Lipa, since you're going to America, I'll make a deal with you!"

Before Rav Lipa could inquire as to the type of business Rav Aharon Leib was interested in making, Rav Aharon Leib told him that the deal was indeed serious — one that Rav Lipa stood to potentially make *one million dollars*! "During your travels to America, you'll meet up with many wealthy people. If you meet one of them who's as wealthy as I am, I'll give you *a million dollars cash*."

Rav Aharon Leib stood up from his seat, took Rav Lipa by the hand, and proceeded to walk him around the house. Rav Aharon Leib stopped next to the refrigerator, opened its door, and pointed to the many items inside. "Tell me please, Rav Lipa, is there anything missing here? *B'chasdei Hashem*, there's plenty of food here — food for during the week, food for Shabbos, etc. *Baruch Hashem*, we're not lacking anything!"

Rav Aharon Leib's years in Lithuania were times of serious poverty. He once mentioned that they used to say that only the rich people could eat chicken on Shabbos, and only one known wealthy person, Zev Visosky, ate chicken even during the week! If so, they'd joke, what did he eat for Shabbos? Fruit compote!

"But my fridge," quipped Rav Aharon Leib, "has fruit compote all the time. See, then, how I'm the richest man in the world!"



Rav Aharon Leib continued his tour by opening his closet. "Look at how much clothing I have — weekday clothes, Shabbos clothes, clothes for winter, and clothes for summer. In *gashmiyus*, I'm not lacking anything, and in *ruchniyus*, I try to do what's required of me. So, if you're able to find someone better off than me, you'll be a million dollars richer!"

Rav Lipa got on the plane with Rav Aharon Leib's words ringing in his ears. He decided to search out and find if there really is a Yid in America richer than Rav Aharon Leib. Sure enough, he went around and met many wealthy people — millionaires and even billionaires — but none of them could testify that he was happy or content with his lot.

One told Rav Lipa how every time he earns a million dollars, he's pained that he didn't work harder and bring in two. Another revealed how his life is nothing but worry and fear — to the point that his young son needed an armed guard to escort him to school lest he get kidnapped for ransom! Every wealthy philanthropist he met complained about the tremendous yoke he carried on his shoulders, about the headaches, the ungratefulness, and the constant pressures that filled his life.

On the course of his trip, Rav Lipa came to one person's mansion that was so big that Rav Lipa had to drive six minutes from the front gate just to get to the man's office. In the middle of the meeting, the *gvir* turned to Rav Lipa and said, "If you promise me a *month* of peace and serenity, I'll write you a check for *three million dollars*!"

On his flight back to Eretz Yisrael, one millionaire confided to Rav Lipa: "All my friends only care about my money. I'm alone without any

companions. I can't trust anyone, not even my close family. All of them only honor and flatter me just because of their personal interests. Nobody in the world sincerely cares about me."

Throughout his journey, Rav Lipa thought to himself, "How can I tell these wealthy people that in Bnei Brak, on 5 Rechov Chazon Ish, in an old, dilapidated house, there's a happy Yid who's richer than any of them?" Nowhere in Rav Lipa's travels did he meet anyone as wealthy as Rav Aharon Leib, and thus he resigned that he wouldn't be getting his promised million dollars. However, he did ask Rav Aharon Leib if, when he traveled again to New York, if the deal was still "live," and the *rosh yeshiva* agreed.

On that second trip to New York, Rav Lipa ran into **Rav Uri Zohar**, who was one of the previous generations best known *mezakei rabim.* Rav Lipa told Rav Uri all about the deal he'd made with Rav Aharon Leib to find someone richer than the *rosh yeshiva*.

After a few moments, Rav Uri happily announced, "Rav Lipa, you've just won the 'lotto!' You can return to Rav Aharon Leib and tell him that you met someone richer than him. He was never part of the 'outside world,' but *I* came from there, and therefore I *know* how much richer I am. I know how much meaning and purpose lays in a Torah life verses the *empty* joy that occupies the "outside world." Coming from there make me wealthier than Rav Aharon Leib!"

The two then jokingly quibbled over how much percentage Rav Uri should get for helping Rav Lipa to his million dollars. Before they parted, though, Rav Uri turned to Rav Lipa and said, "You know what? I think I might be wrong. Go back and tell Rav Aharon Leib that while I originally thought I was the wealthier one, I've changed my mind and think that he's the richer one.

"I'll tell you why: Every time I come into Rav Aharon Leib's house, whatever hour it may be, I see the *rosh yeshiva* sitting in the same position — his body upright, his tzitzis upon him, his hat on his head, and a pillow behind his head to prop him up. Where in the entire

world would you find someone who sits like that even when nobody is around? Only someone who lives with a constant awareness of Hashem's presence. That person is the richest man in the world, and there's nobody more content than him anywhere on the globe."

When Rav Lipa returned to Eretz Yisrael, he admitted to Rav Aharon Leib that he hadn't found anyone as wealthy as the *rosh yeshiva*.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

There is a famous commentary from Rashi, describing when the rain began to fall, and Noach entered the Ark. He says, "Noach was from 'those of little faith,' believing and not believing the rain would come, and he didn't enter the ark until the waters forced him."

It sounds like Noach's faith was shaky. The Chasidic master, **R' Yitzchok of Vorka**, frames the commentary in an entirely new way, simply by moving a comma. Read his way, Rashi states, "Noach believed even in 'those of little faith,' and didn't believe the rain would come, and didn't enter the ark until the waters forced him to."

Now we're looking at this with an entirely new perspective. Noach was an optimist! He'd been toiling 120 years on building the ark, hoping to impress on people the severity of their bad behavior. However, he felt they would get the message eventually. He didn't give up on Mankind until the last moment. And he showed his faith. He remained outside the ark as long as he possibly could, to show the people he believed in them; that he knew they were inherently good. Alas, they were not up to the challenge, and they perished.

But look at the light this paints Noach in! He was a man who saw the good in people and didn't give up on them. He wanted others to succeed and let them know it. That's what the new world would be built upon.

There's actually more to this. We also see that one should not let negativity overtake him. He could have thrown up his hands, entered the ark, and waited for the storm. But he didn't. Instead, he lived each moment with hope and only entered the ark when there was no other choice.

So often we get anxious and fearful; we see the potential for disaster on the horizon and act as if the storm has already hit. Noach teaches us that this isn't how we are to act. Live every moment to the fullest, and don't worry about the maybes. - So far, you've survived 100% of the bad things that have happened to you. That's a pretty good record.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam ZT"L (1813–1898), was known as **the Shinever Rov**. He was the eldest son of the **Divrei Chaim, Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz ZT"L**. Rav Yechezkel Shraga was born in Tarnogród, Poland which was then under the Russian Tsar, Nicholas the First. Tsar Nicholas the First, issued the draconian Cantonist decrees where Jewish children were forcibly taken from their parents to serve in the Tsar's army for many years.

At the age of 16, Reb Yechezkel Shraga married the daughter of Rabbi Arye Leib Lipszyc. To get married at the age of 16, Rabbi Arye Leib needed permission from the civil authorities who required that he be assessed as to whether he was mature enough to marry. He met with the authorities and was accompanied by his mother.

During the meeting, the official asked him a sensitive question, "Who do you like better, a Jew or a Gentile?" Alarmed, his mother whispered to him, say "gleich" which means "equally". This was the response that the official wanted to hear and would gain him the permission to marry. Instead, Reb Yechezkel Shraga responded forcefully and in a somewhat perturbed fashion, "Why should I

dislike a Gentile who has done me no harm?" Satisfied with the response, the official permitted him to marry and issued him a marriage license.

When they had left the building, Rav Yechezkel Shraga apologized to his mother and said, "Had I responded with, 'gleich' that would have been a lie, and I did not wish to lie."

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita – Learning from Noach's Life Story

There is a very interesting Rashi at the end of Parshas Beraishis: The Pasuk tells us: **וַיְהִי־נֹחַ בֶּן־חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד נֹחַ אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶת** – ***'And Noach was five hundred years old, and Noach begot Shem, Cham, and Yaphes.'*** (5:32)

The average time that people were having children at that time was from about age 100. So, the question is, why did Noach (the Tzadik of his generation) have to wait 4-5 times as long as anyone else with all the associated difficulties and challenges of being childless?

This needs explaining. Why was Noach singled out to remain childless for all this time?

So, Rashi explains: **מַה טַּעַם כָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת הוֹלִידוּ לְק' שָׁנָה וְזֶה לַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת? אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אִם רְשָׁעִים הֵם יֹאבְדוּ בַּמַּיִם וְרַע לְצַדִּיק זֶה, וְאִם צַדִּיקִים הֵם אַטְרִיחַ עָלָיו לַעֲשׂוֹת תֵּבוֹת הַרְבֵּה,כָּבַשׁ אֶת מַעְיָנוֹ וְלֹא הוֹלִיד עַד חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה** – *"What is the reason that all the generations begot children at [the age of approximately] one hundred years and this one [Noah, had children] at [the age of] five hundred years? Said the Holy One, blessed be He, "If they [his children] are wicked, they will perish in the [flood] water, and it will be bad for this righteous man, and if they are righteous, I will have to burden him with making many arks." He closed his fountain, and he did not beget [children] until the age of five hundred years.*

I once saw, that from this Rashi we can take tremendous inspiration. If you think about Noach's life and how difficult it was, that he went through 500 years being childless. Everyone around him were marrying off children, and they were having children and grandchildren while Noach – the Tzadik of the generation, remained childless. He was sad, lonely and devastated.

This is the way it seemed for 400 years. Imagine all the tefillos and petitions that he made to The Riboino Shel Olam during these hundreds of years. He did everything that a person could do – all apparently to no avail, and he wasn't answered for hundreds of years.

The truth was that it was only for his benefit. It was a truth that he never knew at the time, and maybe he never did. It was to protect his future generations during the time of the mabul or to save Noach the impossible task of building a much larger teiva or additional teivas. - The result was that Noach and all his family survived the mabul, and they were all there at the end to tell the tale.

Often people go through challenges and times of difficulty. Why do the reshaim prosper and tzadikim struggle? Why are our tefillos not being answered?

But there is a cheshban – It is ultimately only for our good!

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PARSHAT NOACH

Tales of Tzadikim - Where is R' David?

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֵת כָּל־הַחַיָּה וְאֶת־כָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה"-***"And G-d remembered Noach and all the beasts and all the animals"*** (8:1)

It was the eve of Rosh Hashanah. Everyone had had a busy day, preparing for the holy festival. But now that evening had fallen,

everyone was in the beis haknesses in Lublin, waiting for the service to begin. **The Chozeh of Lublin** looked around at the packed hall. One person was noticeably missing. It was **R' David of Lelov**, the great tzaddik who would be spending this festival in Lublin.

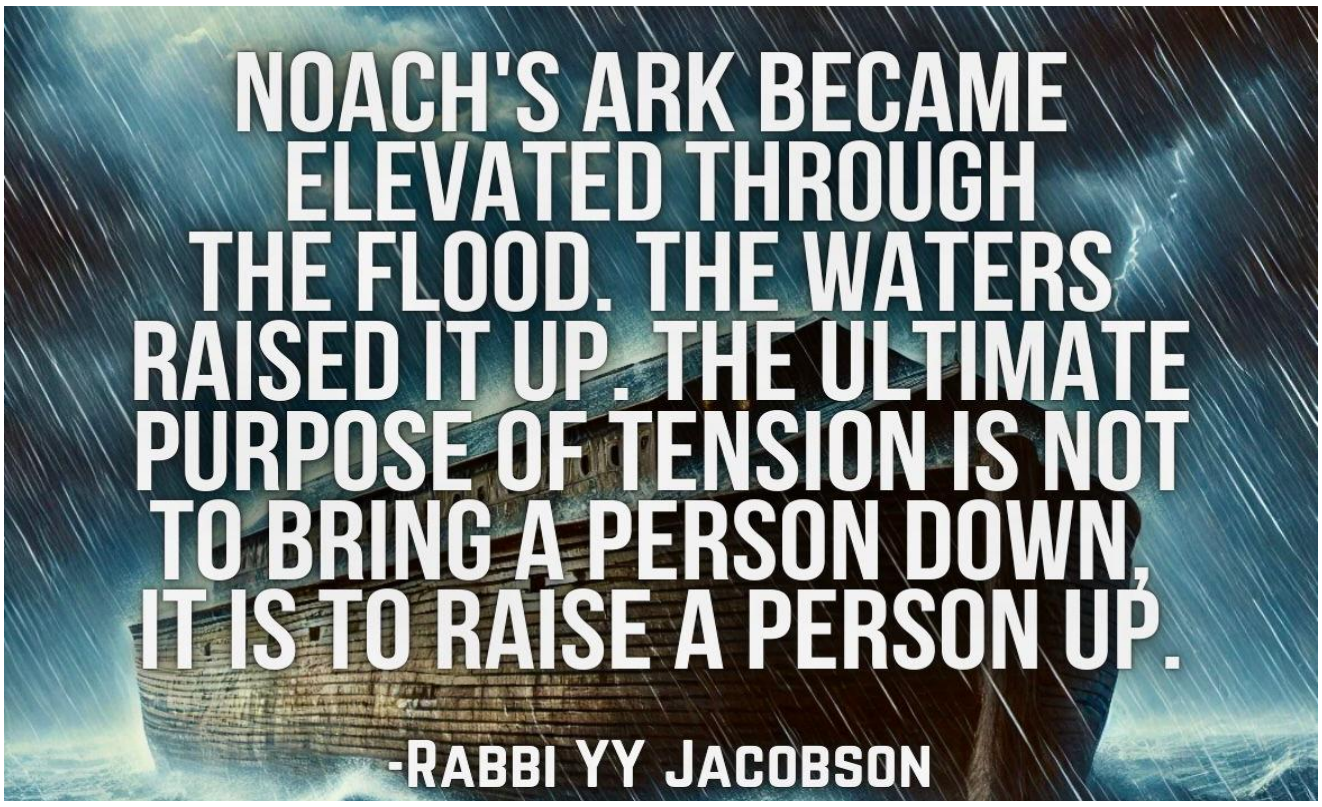
"We cannot start without R' David!" said the Chozeh emphatically. "Send someone out to look for him."

The chasidim rushed out to search. What could be detaining the great man on this important evening?

They finally found him after much searching. To their surprise, he was standing beside a horse, feeding him oats from his own hat!

"What are you doing?" they asked in wonder.

"The horse's owner must have worked the beast very hard today. It is starving. And yet, he forgot to feed him before going to shul." - A man must pray, but a hungry horse still comes first.





L'Maaseh

A fascinating story with **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l**, took place on the day of elections in Yerushalayim one year. A man who was suffering from Parkinson's disease fell and broke his ribs.

The patient was rushed to the hospital where the doctors had discovered that the broken ribs had caused a hole in the man's lung, and he needed to undergo urgent surgery.

The patient's family approached Rav Chaim Kanievsky and asked for a Brachah for the success of the operation. In response, Rav Chaim asked, "Has this man voted today already?"

The family members replied that the patient was already hospitalized and he was awaiting his procedure. Rav Chaim again asked, "Has he voted already?"

The family members understood that Rav Chaim was giving them a message, and that he saw the voting in the elections as a necessity, despite the urgent surgery. Therefore, they contacted one of the medical organizations in the area and asked them to send an ambulance to take this man to the polling station in order to vote. - It took a few hours, and the patient was then returned to the hospital and was now ready for surgery.

Before the procedure began, the doctors took another x-ray of his lungs, as requested by the surgeon. The x-ray stunned the doctors. The hole that they had seen in the lung had disappeared as if it was never even there before!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Bais Yisroel of Ger, Rav Yisrael Alter, zt"l, was once walking through the old cemetery in Teveria, when he stopped by the Kever of **Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, zt"l, the Kapischnitzer Rebbe**, and he told this story:

A woman came to the Kapischnitzer Rebbe, and with tears in her eyes she asked for a Brachah. She was very ill, and she begged the Rebbe to give her a Brachah that she would recover. The Rebbe gave her a Brachah, but she wasn't satisfied. She cried, "Promise me that I will recover!"

The Rebbe replied, "How can I promise that you will get better?" But the women would not back down.

She said, "I will not leave until you guarantee that I will get better and recover!"

The Rebbe saw that the woman would not give up, so he gave her a warm Brachah, and promised her that she would recover. After the woman had left, the Rebbe said to his Chasidim, "If she recovers, I will be overjoyed, but if she doesn't, it will be an embarrassment for me. However, the important thing is that I calmed her down for the time being. - After a short while, the woman indeed had a complete recovery! - The Kapischnitzer Rebbe said that it was due to her firm faith in Chachomim.

The Bais Yisroel ended off the story and said, "But I say that she recovered in the Zechus of the embarrassment that the Kapischnitzer Rebbe was willing to go through, just to relieve the pain of a fellow Yid!"

"More than all fasts and afflictions, nothing purifies as much as studying Torah." ~ R' Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l



The waiting room of the **Beis Yisroel** of **Gur**, **R' Yisroel Alter *zt"l***, was never lacking in action. There was always a constant hustle and bustle, all hours of the day and night, as many people waited for their chance to speak to the *Rebbe* and benefit from his wisdom. Some needed sagely advice, some a listening ear, and some didn't know what they needed until they received it from the saintly *Rebbe*.

Once, a grandson of a prominent *Chassidishe Rebbe* was waiting for his turn to speak to the *Beis Yisroel*. After waiting for quite some time, he approached the renowned *gabbai*, **Reb Chaninah Schiff *z"l***, and whispered, "When you bring me into the *Rebbe*, tell him who my grandfather is."

The *gabbai* replied, "It isn't our custom to do so."

But the young man insisted. He nudged and nudged the *gabbai* numerous times so that when he was finally accompanied into the inner sanctum of the *Beis Yisroel*, the *gabbai* hurriedly blurted out, "He wants the *Rebbe* to know that he is a grandson of a certain *tzaddik*."

The *Beis Yisroel* stopped what he was doing and looked up in surprise, "I should know? He should know!"

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Every Jew has greatness in him. He should know where he comes from and stand up for his heritage. This is a key to his personal growth. The same is true regarding our inner greatness. We should all know our *yichus*.

The *Torah* states: "*These are descendants of Terach, Terach gave birth to Avraham.*" In this way, we are taught where "it all began," with the great *Avraham Avinu*. We should know that we are descendants of the holy *Avos*. This awareness should fill our hearts with pride and joy and be a catalyst for us to reach greater heights, just as our forefathers led their virtuous lives.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Malbim explains a pasuk that we say every day.

**עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה בֹּאוּ לְפָנָיו בִּרְנָנָה – *'Worship Hashem in gladness; come into His presence with shouts of joy*.' (Tehilim 100)

The Malbim says something incredible:

What does the term **בֹּאוּ** (come before Him) mean?

The Malbim explains that when you want something from a human being, you don't approach him **בִּרְנָנָה** -joyfully, because you are not sure whether your wish will be granted or not. But when you leave and it has been granted, you are happy.

In contrast, by Hashem, it's **בֹּאוּ לְפָנָיו בִּרְנָנָה** – you already approach Him with joy, because He will certainly grant your request!

הבא לפני בשר ודם לבקש דבר יבא בבכי ובזעקה רק יציאתו תהיה ברננה, אם מלא שאלתו, אבל הבא לפני ה' יבא ברננה כי בודאי ימלא שאלתו

This is how a Yid should approach Tefilla – with absolute certainty! With unquestionable Emunah!

"Everyone in the world, from the most successful to the least, needs encouragement. Make it your career to give others encouragement." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l.



There is a famous story said over by **Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz Zt'l** in one of his Sichos:

During the six-day war, he was in the Mir Yeshivah during an air-raid in the dining room which was partially underground and qualified as an effective bomb shelter. The yeshivah was situated close to the border with Jordan, with bombs dropping and cannons firing shells all around. The whole area of Bais Yisrael was being targeted. There was so much damage with many houses being hit. So many people were in danger, and many were injured or killed.



The people in the local neighbourhood would come to the yeshiva bomb shelter in the dining room for protection. So, there were a variety of different people there. The bombs were falling left and right, and everyone thought that they were not going to make it out alive. And, in the shelter with everybody else was a woman and her children who had *nebech* been abandoned by her husband/father several years earlier. This lady suffered as an *aguna* something terrible. Everybody in the neighbourhood knew her, her story and her plight.

The bombs were falling with such regularity and severity that their situation was dire. And, Reb Chaim said that suddenly this lady stood up and she said, "Ribboino Shel Olam, You alone know the degree of suffering that I have been subject to, since my husband abandoned me. And therefore now, I publicly declare that I am publicly being

moichel him for every single thing that he has done to me – for all the pain and hurt. And in this zechus Ribboino Shel Olam, I'm begging You to forgive Your children for any pain and any hurt that they may have caused You with their actions! And, please let us leave here *b'Sholom* in peace and safety!" - And then she sat down and kept repeating it to herself in Yiddish – "Ich bin em mochel, Ich bin em mochel, Ich bin em mochel (I forgive him)." - She was reiterating it, and making it real, making it happen.

At that moment, Rav Chaim, who was with her, said, "I am certain that we will all leave here unharmed in the zechus of the *mechila* that this woman gave! I am certain, I am certain that we will leave here ok!" - And just like he said, nobody was harmed or injured.

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This year (5784), there was a woman in B'nei Brak near Kolel Chazon Ish who was niftar at the age of 110 – it was this *Isha Aguna*! Her oldest child is now 90 years old. She was surrounded by her children, her grandchildren, by her great grandchildren, and thousands of mourners. She left behind a blessed family of loimdei Torah and Yirei Shomayim – Ehlicher Yidden to a degree that you can't even imagine.

When a person is mochel others, you think to yourself, 'If I'm mochel, they will benefit, and I will lose.' – But it's not that way. When you're mochel somebody, you are the biggest winner. You're the one who will benefit more than anybody.



◣ Levels of Devotion - Reb Elimelech Lizensk

וַיִּוֹלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶת - "***And Noach had begotten three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yafes.***" (6:10)

Noach had three sons, three degrees of perfection: Shem, meaning "the name," stands for the first degree, which is to sanctify the Holy Name within us and to do repentance for our flaws. Cham, meaning "warmth," the second degree, represents the warmth in our prayers needed to do battle against the return of our former faults. The third degree, Yafes, meaning "beautifying" or "perfecting," offers Hashem a perfect devotion, which should burn within us.

◣ Shedding Light - Sefas Emes

צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה - "***You shall make a light for the Ark...***" (6:16)

The Mishnah uses the word teivah ("ark") to denote the Ark of the Torah. Accordingly, teivah implies the word of Torah and prayer, which can save us from drowning in the flood of grossness and materialism that has overrun the world. The above pasuk, then, may be interpreted to mean that "you shall shed light upon the word," i.e., that every Torah teaching and prayer we utter must be lucid and clear to all.

◣ By The Merit of Mitzvos - Maharal

יָבְשָׁה הָאָרֶץ - "*The land became dry*..." (8:14)

After the Torah describes the harrowing events of the flood - the incessant rain, the destruction of all living creatures, the receding waters, Noach's attempt to determine if the land was yet habitable, etc. - it concludes with the words **יבשה הארץ**- the land (finally) became dry.

The numerical value of these two seemingly redundant words adds up to 613, which teaches us that in the merit of the 613 commandments that would be given to Bnei Yisrael in the future, the world was finally dry and ready to be lived in again.



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● Why did Noach only have three sons?

וַיִּוֹלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָּנִים אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶת (6,10) "***And Noach begot three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yefes.***"

It seems to me that the matter of the three sons hints to what is written in the Midrash Eichah, concerning one who came from Athens to Yerushalayim and said that the children are the support of the house. That is, the children are called the pillars of the house. Now, Chazal said in Pirkei Avos, that the world stands on three things - Torah, Divine service and Loving kindness. Therefore, since the continued existence of the world came from Noach, Hashem gave as a sign these three sons, to hint to him that he will establish the whole world, and all the pillars of the world will be through him.

And therefore, Hashem gave him commands in connection with the ark, in order that he would be able to strengthen himself in the

three pillars that the world stands upon. Rashi explained on the posuk "from the pure animals you shall take seven of each", that from here we learn that Noach learned Torah, and this is the pillar of Torah. And that he took from these pure animals and offered sacrifices is the pillar of service. And that he sustained and provided for all the living creatures in the ark is the pillar of loving kindness.

This is what it means "these are the generations of Noach", because really he was fitting to have more children, so why did he only have these three? Because "Noach was a righteous, perfect man in his generations. Noach walked with G-d", and Hashem wanted that he will cause the continued existence of the three pillars upon which the world stands. And the words of the Ramban are well known, that the benefit of a sign that Hashem gives is because anything which is enacted on earth, symbolic of what has been decreed in the Heavens cannot be annulled, and no accusation of the Satan is effective against it. Therefore, Hashem gave him a sign and he gave birth to three sons, to allude to the three pillars that he will establish so that they will never in the future be annulled.

With this we can understand better that which Rashi explained "Noach walked with G-d", that Noach needed to be supported, but it is not readily understood what the support was. But according to our words the sign of the three sons which Hashem gave to allude to the three pillars of the world, this itself is the support with which Noach was supported, because a sign is something which can never be annulled.

When Yidden get up after learning Torah, they should be more compassionate and kinder, with more room in their heart for others. If that doesn't happen, then they didn't learn it properly, and should sit back down and learn it again." ~ Rabbi Dovid Feinstein (1929-2020).

● **Why did Hashem wait to destroy the world?**

וַיַּ֣רְא אֱלֹקִ֔ים אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ וְהִנֵּ֣ה נִשְׁחָ֑תָה כִּֽי־הִשְׁחִ֥ית כָּל־בָּשָׂ֖ר אֶת־דַּרְכּ֥וֹ עַל־הָאָֽרֶץ. וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֱלֹקִ֔ים לְנֹ֖חַ קֵ֣ץ כָּל־בָּשָׂ֑ר (6:12,13) - "***And G-d saw the earth, and behold it had become destroyed, for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth…And G-d said to Noach: The end of all flesh has come before Me.***"

Why did the Torah first relate that Noach had three sons, and only afterwards write that "G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupted"?

We can answer that Chazal taught that Noach was born barren, but his merit caused him to have children. And therefore as long as Noach had not given birth to children the world stood to be destroyed completely since they were all wicked. Granted if there were some tzaddikim, then Hashem would have preserved them and destroyed the wicked. But since they were all wicked, if so, they were all destined to be destroyed, and from whom could the world continue to exist? It could not be from Noach because he was barren. Therefore, Hashem made Himself as if He did not see.

But after Noach effected with his righteousness that he could have children, and after he had already begotten children, through them the world could continue to exist, and all the wicked could be destroyed. Therefore, at that time "G-d saw the earth, and it was destroyed", because now it was as if the world was already destroyed, and it gives the reason for this, "because all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth".

Until Noach it had not been possible to destroy them, because the world would no longer exist, but once Noach begot children, then "G-d said to Noach: The end of all flesh has come before Me", and all of them will be destroyed, and the world will continue to exist through you.

● **In whose merit was Noach saved?**

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֶּךְ־נֹחַ
"***These are the generations of Noach, Noach was a righteous, perfect man in his generations; Noach walked with G-d.***" (6,9)

Chazal teach that even Noach himself was only saved in the merit of his descendants. To this we can add that Noach's righteousness itself was only in the merit of his descendants. Because if Noach was a Tzaddik through his own merit his righteousness would have been ascribed to him. But he was not righteous entirely by himself, but rather Hashem helped him. Because Hashem sometimes helps a person against his evil inclination, as we see from the gemora in Yoma 22b which says: How little does he whom Hashem supports need to grieve or trouble himself.

Now, Chazal learned from the posuk "Noach walked with G-d" that Noach required Hashem's support to uphold him in his righteousness. Therefore, it seems that if not for the merit of his descendants he would not have merited to be a Tzaddik. Because if was not within his power to be a Tzaddik without Hashem's help, why did he merit this help? Perforce, it was through the merit of the descendants that Hashem helped him to be a Tzaddik, so that through this the world could continue to exist.

This is what it says "These are the generations of Noach", and therefore through them Noach merited to be "a righteous, perfect man in his generations". Because in truth "Noach walked with G-d", and he required support to uphold him in his righteousness, so how did he merit this support? It could only have been in the merit of his descendants.

You are a one-of-a-kind creation, crafted by Hashem with a purpose that only you can fulfil.

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA



The Last Lion

The Midrash Tanchuma says that the lion in Noach's ark injured Noach. Why would the lion be so brazen and impetuous? Didn't the lion appreciate Noach's efforts? Couldn't the lion wait patiently for his food? Let me share with you a powerful message that I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita: Rav Avrohom Kalmanowitz zt"l explained that the lion thought, 'I am the last lion. If I don't survive, there will never be another lion again! I am responsible for all future lions! All the lions, other than me, are extinct. I must be fed! I am the last lion!'

At the time of World War II, Rav Kalmanowitz, who was a huge activist for the Jews in Europe would say, "The Yeshiva students who escaped the Nazis are the last lions. They must be saved. They must be cared for and protected. They are the last of their kind! They will be responsible for all future generations of Torah. We must do everything in our power to take care of them!" Now, Today, tragically so many Jews are assimilating. How could this not affect us? How can we go on living our lives as our brothers and sisters are literally disappearing? We are self-destructing!

Too many unaffiliated Jews are assimilating and disappearing, never to be seen or heard from again. How could this not affect us? How could we go on living our lives as our brothers and sisters are literally

imploding? How dare we think that this isn't our concern or responsibility? It is dependent on us to realize that all these Jews are last lions, never to be replaced! Every Jew you encounter is a last lion. Respect your fellow Jew, no matter their background. Reach out to them with dignity and love! Your actions can affect eternity as well as future generations!

A young, poor Torah scholar once approached the great Imrie Moshe, and the young scholar expressed his deep desire to have a copy of the Imrie Moshe's sefer. The problem was that he wasn't able to afford it. The Torah scholar asked the Imrie Moshe if perhaps he could have a copy of the sefer.

The Imrie Moshe, known for his immense compassion felt a deep sense of sympathy for the Torah scholar. Despite the fact that selling his books was his sole source of income, the Imrie Moshe decided to give the scholar the book for free. Little did the Imrie Moshe know that this encounter and the act of kindness he had done would profoundly impact future generations.

In the midst of the war, most Jewish books and manuscripts were tragically destroyed. After the war, people wanted a copy of the Imrie Moshe's sefer but not one copy was able to be found! After the war, people assumed that the entire legacy of the Imrie Moshe was sadly lost. One day, a family member of the Imrie Emes met someone who had a copy of the sefer. Miraculously, the one surviving sefer that remained unscathed was the sefer that the Imrie Moshe had given to the young Torah scholar!

That young Torah scholar was the great Steiper Goan, Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky zt"l! That book that had been given away in an act of compassion was reprinted and continued the legacy of the Imrei Moshe! Imagine if the Imrei Moshe didn't give the Stiepler the sefer!

By doing this act of kindness little did the Imrie Moshe know that he was in reality saving his legacy for future generations! This story

serves as a timeless reminder of the profound and far-reaching effects that acts of reaching out and kindness can have in the world. After all, this sefer was the 'Last Lion!'



Let Go of Resentment; Learn from Hashem

In Parshas Noach we read about the Mabul, the great flood, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu brought upon the earth. Everyone knows, every little child knows, that wickedness and immorality were running rampant in the world. **כי השחית כל בשר את דרכו על הארץ** – "All flesh had perverted its way on the earth" (Bereishis 6:12). And therefore Hakodosh Boruch Hu was "grieved at His heart" and "He reconsidered having made man on earth" (ibid. 6:6) and He decided: **ומחיתי את כל היקום** – "I will blot out all of existence." And so, by means of a great flood Hashem erased all of life from the earth. **וימח את כל היקום**. All of Mankind, except for the family of Noach, was destroyed. And now there would be a new start for Mankind.

And therefore, if need be, if Mankind's behavior would warrant it, there would be no reason for Hashem not to bring the same destruction to the world again. We see that if Mankind is perverting

its way on this earth, so Hashem says, "I don't need you here. I can always start again."

And the truth is that such wickedness is being done today that was never done before in the history of the world. Once upon a time, when I was a young boy, the streets in America were kosher streets. The gentile streets; yes! They weren't holy, but they were kosher. You could walk in the streets.

Once upon a time a mishkav zochornik was put into jail. I remember! Ba'alei to'eivah were put in prison. And a vagabond, someone who didn't work and just wandered the streets, was arrested. If someone was just hanging around on the streets, the policeman would yell at him, "What are you doing?!" And if he was just loafing, he would be arrested. - Nowadays, they would arrest the policeman for yelling at him.

Wearing A Gas Mask To College

The world is crazy today. The literature is filthy. Filthy, disgusting ideas. The libraries, the high schools are dirty places. And the colleges? The colleges are worse than dens of the underworld.

I had to go to Brooklyn College recently. I went there to help protest against making this homeless shelter in our neighborhood. It was a community protest meeting and it was held at Brooklyn College. And as I walked in, I smelled a terrible odor. The place poshut had a rei'ach ra'ah. It stank! You really need a gas mask when you go into college in America. If you go pay a visit to the place of the mafia, a mafia den, it's perfume compared to a college. I mean it. It's not an exaggeration.

Is A Tsunami Headed Our Way?!

And I want to tell you that I'm very much worried. Will Hashem continue to keep quiet about America? Will He keep quiet about Medinas Yisroel? The whole world is becoming so wicked today, I

don't know what to expect. I don't know what's going to happen in the future. Hashem will not continue to keep quiet. How can He?!

Because when you look around and you see the great yeridah in society today, the increase in pritzus and immorality – things that are much worse than in the days of the Mabul – you have to know that there's no question that Hakodosh Boruch Hu could bring the same Mabul upon us today. Chas v'shalom, chas v'shalom! We should be sitting today in fear of the next Mabul; and all we would be able to say is **אולי ירחם, אולי ירחם**, maybe He'll have rachmanus and hold back the Mabul that's supposed to come on the world.

Saved By The Shevuah

And yet, we know that it won't come. Hakodosh Boruch Hu will never bring another Mabul! Because when the Mabul finally came to an end, Hashem swore that it would never happen again. **ואני הנני מקים את בריתי...ולא יהיה עוד מבול לשחת הארץ** – "And behold, I establish My covenant with you…never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (ibid. 9-11).

Now when we look to see why Hashem swore such a thing, why He swore that He would never bring a flood even if deserved, we find something very queer. Because when the great flood was finally all over, and Noach came out of the teivah, he took some animals and he offered them as korbanos to Hashem. **ויעל עולות במזבח**. He built a mizbayach, slaughtered animals and he burned them as olos.

The Good Smelling Roast

Now pay attention to what happened then. You know that a good piece of meat, as it's roasting on the fire, smells delicious. And so when Noach offered up these korbanos and the smoke went up, the pleasant aroma of the roasting meat wafted up into the sky. A very sweet smell. Ahh, was it delicious!

And there's an interesting statement in the Torah about that aroma: **וירח השם את ריח הניחוח** – "Hashem smelled the pleasant savor" (ibid.

8:21). Hakodosh Boruch Hu smelled the sweet fragrance of Noach's offerings! Isn't that a queer thing to say? Hashem smelled the wafting fragrance from the burning meat! And as soon as Hashem smelled this pleasing aroma, He said: **ולא אוסף לקלל עוד את האדמה בעבור האדם** – "No longer will I curse the earth because of man" (Bereishis 8:21). I will never repeat a catastrophe like the Mabul.

Now this we all know – Hashem promised to never again bring such a Mabul. But when we read the pesukim carefully we see the reason for this; we see exactly why He made this promise. Hashem smelled the sweet savor of Noach's offerings, and immediately, on the heels of that, Hashem said "No more Mabuls. I'm no longer going to curse Mankind in such a way." So we see openly why He's not going to bring the Mabul anymore. Even if it might be deserved, like today, why won't He destroy the world and make a fresh start with the righteous? It's because He smelled the enticing smell of Noach's offerings; He smelled the delicious fragrance of meat roasting on the fire and said "OK, no more floods."

Is Hashem So Fickle?

Now does that make any sense at all?! If Hashem was justified in His decision to bring the Mabul, and He surely was, why would it be that when He smelled the savor of Noach's offering that He changed His mind? Is Hashem such a fickle G-d that some sweet-smelling steak, could affect a change in His attitude? Could it be that merely because Noach brought up an offering, and "Hashem smelled the sweet savor," so He said, "Never again will I bring such a catastrophe on mankind"? This needs an explanation; a good explanation.

Hashem Is Our Model

Hashem is sublime, He is above all human concepts. Hashem doesn't smell. And He doesn't have any physical sensations, or emotions. And therefore we have to follow the great teaching of the Rambam (Hilchos Dei'os 1:6). And the klal gadol batorah is that whatever we are told about Hashem, it's for the purpose that **we** should begin

practicing that behavior. That's why He tells us His thoughts. Anything that He reveals about Himself is for us to know that's what we should do, as a model for us to follow. Hashem tells us things about Himself in the Torah only in order to teach us how to act. And that's why understanding the Torah is so important. It is full of advice for how to lead a truly successful life and for developing attitudes that Hashem wants you to have.

And so, this possuk, **וירח השם את ריח הניחח**, is supplying a most important lesson for us to follow. We sitting here are expected to study these pesukim describing how Hashem smelled the pleasant odor of the korban, so that we can learn to live according to the will of Hashem, and live successful lives. Here was Noach trying to persuade Hashem. A great catastrophe had just struck all of Mankind and now he was full of fear, hoping it would never occur again. After everything Noach had just gone through, everything he had seen, he wished for a guarantee that Hashem would never repeat this spectacle again. He didn't want to see his own grandchildren, his own descendants destroyed. So he brings korbanos and he's thinking, "Please Hashem, don't put the world through such a disaster again."

Now that's a very poor way of talking to Hashem, of trying to persuade Hashem. You bring Him some sheep – they're His sheep by the way – and you offer them to Him. You burn it up for Him so that He should change His mind, to convince Him to acquiesce to your wishes?! What's a roasted sheep to Hashem anyhow? It's a pitiful little gesture of Mankind to propitiate Hashem, a gesture that means nothing at all to Him.

Hashem Is Not That Haughty

But Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not that haughty, He's not that arrogant. He saw a poor, little human being down below who was trying, making an attempt to show his allegiance, his loyalty, his subservience to Him. So Hashem said "I smell the pleasant savor of your korban and I am persuaded by that." Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "That's good

enough for Me! I want to be a model for Mankind to follow; and so I'm going to say, because you, Noach, offered to Me a propitiatory offering; you wanted to win My favor, so I'm going to say, 'Yes, My dear Noach. From now on, just for that, I'm giving you My commitment, I'm giving you My word, that never again will the world be entirely destroyed.'"

That's what the Torah is teaching us here – that even an emotion that comes from the smallest thing, the most insignificant stimulus, should be used by us to become appeased. An emotion that comes from the smell of a good steak certainly should have no value as a stimulus. A good aroma is no rationale, it's no justification! But if you make use of that stimulus, no matter how negligible it might be, if you use it to become appeased, so you're considered as walking in the footsteps of your Creator.

Chazal point to our possuk: **וירח השם את ריח הניחוח** – "And Hashem smelled the sweet savor of the offering of Noach and became appeased"

So it's a good thing you came here tonight. Because it turns out that what you thought was silly and foolish, is really how Hashem wants us to act. And that will be our topic for tonight: how to follow the lead of Hashem, and learn how to smell the **ריח הניחוח**, how to become appeased from even the most minor and insignificant of things.

Driving Through Life Under The Influence

Now you people who come here have heard this many times already. If you come, let's say to a kiddush, and you come in a little late and there's only one empty seat in the whole room; there is no other place, so you sit down there. After you sit down you look, and you see that seated next to you is your neighbor whom you don't like – you definitely don't like him. You had trouble with the driveway with him, and other problems. But what could you do? You're stuck; there are no other open seats.

Now, once you sit next to him, he sees that you have no wine – you have to make kiddush; you can't eat before kiddush. And your neighbor is sitting closer to the bottle, so he reaches out and pours some wine into your cup. You make kiddush and you drink the wine, and you take another cup as well – and there's some alcohol in the wine. And so you become a little bit confused. Now you start forgetting about the driveway. All you're thinking about is the wine that he poured for you. And so you find yourself becoming persuaded to become friendly with him. So you raise up what's left in your cup and you say "L'chaim. L'chaim!" It's the first time – forty years you've lived next to him and it's the first time you've said a friendly word to him. "L'chaim!" And he answers you back "L'chaim," of course.

So the wine is getting to your head, and you're thinking, "What am I so upset about already?! What's the big deal? So he blocked my driveway. What's a driveway anyway? I'm not going to be able to take it with me to the Next World anyhow." You know that by the way don't you? They don't let you take your driveway with you. It doesn't fit into the aron, so you'll have to leave it behind. - So you drink a little more and become a little more confused. Maybe when they start dancing a little bit later, you'll take his hand too.

Rav Miller Plies The Oilam With Mashkeh

I saw it happen here in my shul, at our Purim mesibah. Two mispallelim who didn't see eye to eye, they didn't get along, accidentally sat down next to each other at the table downstairs. Here we drink a little on Purim; so now it's time to drink and they both are sitting at the mesibah, and they're sitting near each other, and drinking. I don't think they wanted to be near each other, but that's what happened.

Now, I remembered this gemara so I told the man, "Here, have another cup of mashkeh. One more cup of mashkeh." And then, when it finally got to his head, I told him to give his neighbor a big hug and to say, "I love you." And he did! - It was two grown men who

hadn't said a nice word to each other in years, and now they were hugging.

It's a silly thing, you'll say. Here, all year round you're sober, and your mind is working, and you decided not to like him. And now comes along Purim, or some wine at a kiddush, and because you're thinking under the influence of alcohol, you decided to like him, you want to be friendly? It's so silly! You'll change your mind because of alcohol?! Now that the wine has confused your mind, you want to forgive him? Does that make sense? Is that really the measure of a smart person; a person who can so easily yield the attitudes that he formed when he was sober, when he was still able to reason rationally?!

Getting Tipsy And Acting Like Hashem

So we say, Yes! It makes the most sense in the world. That's the best possible reaction a man can have to wine. Not only is it not silly, but it's thinking along with Hashem. "Oh," Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "That's what I like! **כל המתפתה ביינו**, if you allow yourself to be persuaded by such a silly thing like alcohol, then **יש בו מדעת קונו**, then you're like I am. I did that too," says Hakodosh Boruch Hu. "I allowed Myself to be persuaded by Noach's wine. You think that the tantalizing smell of roasted lamb means a thing to Me?! Of course not. But I allowed Myself to be nispateh, to be persuaded for the purpose of teaching you that you should do the same thing."

Hashem allowed the sweet savor of Noach's korban to persuade Him, solely so that you should learn to not be such a stickler, such a rough and tough arrogant fellow, and instead allow yourself to be persuaded, just like He did. If you can find anything, even the smallest thing, the silliest thing – after all alcohol is very silly, the sweet savor of roasted meat is very silly – but if you can take that silly thing and use it to persuade yourself into forgiving your fellow Jew, and now you're becoming friendly with that neighbor who you didn't even want to look at; that is the middah of Hakodosh Boruch

Hu. That's learning from the ways of Hashem! And you're a great success!

And if right now you're cordial to him and you allow yourself to be persuaded by your wine, look at that – you can like him after all! You liked him on Purim, didn't you? So, maybe you can like him all year round too! And if you have sense enough to do that, then you're really acting like Hakodosh Boruch Hu acts, you're really thinking like Hakodosh Boruch Hu thinks. **כל המתפתה ביינו**, if you let yourself become persuaded by wine, **יש בו מדעת קונו**, so you have the mind of your Creator.

Rav Miller Reminisces About The Litvaks

A woman called me up on the telephone this week. She's been married for thirty years and she says "For thirty years I've suffered from him." And it's true that she's suffered. I know him very well; I've suffered from him in the shul as well. He can be very difficult sometimes. But he's working; he works hard and he brings home the paycheck every week to his family. He doesn't go out to the pubs with his paycheck and waste half of it there.

You know, when I was in Lithuania, I watched how the goyim would take their weekly pay and drink it all up instead of bringing the money home. Every Wednesday was a spectacle in itself. Wednesday was the fair day, the market day, in the small town where I lived. So on Wednesday the peasants would come, the poor peasants; they were as poor as anything. They came and they sold their produce. They sold their chickens, they sold their sheep, they sold their wood, their lumber, they sold their linens. And they took their money and they went straight to the saloon and they got drunk. I can't say it was every single one of them, but I'll tell you what I saw. I saw a shocking sight. A heap of men and women, lying dead drunk, all on top of each other, like a pile of old clothing. And with vomit all over them. I was shocked, but people told me that this is the regular procedure every week.

So when I was speaking to this woman, I was thinking, "Was that the regular procedure by your husband? Did he drink away his paycheck and collapse on the sidewalk outside of a bar and spend the night wallowing in his own vomit? He didn't do that, did he? How about for thirty years he paid the rent; for thirty years he gave you his paycheck. He worked hard to support the family." So when he brings home his paycheck and gives it to her she should think, "I'm going to be like Hashem. With this paycheck I'm going to forgive everything." That's a wise woman who is walking in the ways of Hashem. That's **חכמת נשים בנתה ביתה**, a wise woman who knows how to build her home.

It's not an accident that people are different from one another. Hashem made every single human being different than the next one. Why? Wouldn't it have been easier if Hashem had made us all alike? And He could have done it. He could have! But that's not why Hashem brought you into this world. No; He wants you to make something out of yourself. What, are you going to remain the same bumpy clump of clay that you were born as?! Hashem wants you to smooth out your rough edges. Your rough edges, not your friend's rough edges! Not your wife's rough edges or your husband's rough edges! It's you that must change.

Guarantee: People Will Irk You

You're going to come in contact with many people in your life. And none of them are going to be perfect. Everyone has that little something, or that big something, that is going to bother you. People are going to irk you one way or another, I guarantee you that right now. Because that's how Hashem made this world. **בחכמה יסד ארץ**. And Hashem wants you to be able to overlook all the idiosyncrasies of your fellow Jew, to take in stride all those things that make him a little – or even a lot – different than you. That's the greatness of a person. To be pleased with everyone, and to get along with everybody, even those who rub you the wrong way.

And it's not enough to just tolerate or even get along with your fellow Jew. It says **ואהבת לרעך כמוך**, that you have to love your fellow Jew. And that means that you should have an ahavah, a love, a real affection for him. Now we see how far away we are from even beginning to achieve that. Of course we're willing to say that we agree with the idea. Maybe someday we'll even come around to it, we think. But you won't! You won't, unless you start doing something about it.

Look And You'll Find

But how can we accomplish this? How does one actually take steps to succeed at being nispateh, and becoming happy with everyone? The first step on the ladder is to make yourself aware of when others do favors for you, when somebody is nice to you; he helps you, or even if he just smiles at you, and use that as stimulus to love him. Even if it's the smallest thing, you have to be on the lookout for the good things that your fellow Jew is doing for you. You have to keep your eyes wide open! Because whatever it is, there is always something you can find.

Only that most people overlook everything. Now if your neighbor would give you a million dollars, or even if he would buy you a new car, then you'd have reason to love him. At least for a few days you would love him. But if he smiled at you and said "Good morning," if he did you a small favor, is that enough of a reason to love him?

Know What To Focus On

And the answer is absolutely! But you have to keep your eyes open; have to keep your mind attuned to what's going on around you. If you live your life, thinking only about yourself, **אני ואפסי עוד**, then you'll always be a failure.Your wife is doing things for you all the time. Your children. Your neighbors. Your coworker. The gabbai in shul and the grocer on the corner. You have to spend some time thinking about it, because it's happening all the time. People are nice; they're helpful

and kindly. Only that you're not paying attention. Or you're paying attention to the wrong thing.

Of course, there will always be people who you think have wronged you. And maybe they have. They might have done something to upset you, but you should still focus on the good they do for you and be nispateh from these favors. The fact that he once helped you with your package, or lent you his tools. He's polite to you; he's a nice quiet neighbor! You can love him just for that!

You have to train yourself to accept even the small things that others do, and look at them with a loving eye. Let yourself be **נתפייס** and become appeased by the silliest things. And the more you pay attention to the benefits that you are gaining from others, the more you will be appeased and the more you will be seduced to love them.

Everyone Has Good Qualities

Everyone has something good about them that can be appreciated, and used as a pituy to fall in love with. And it doesn't have to be something big, something exceptional. But you have to be willing to look and to think. And the truth is that if you'll try to think about a person's middos tovos, you'll be surprised that there isn't a person who doesn't have some good in him, some exceptional good in him. Among the shomrei Torah everyone has some good qualities.

One of my rebbehs once spoke b'rabim and he said that a person is not one middah – a person is a bundle of middos. And you cannot form an opinion in general about a person, because in this middah he can be excellent, while somebody else might be excellent in a different middah. A person is a big bundle of character traits; he's not just one thing. So in case you can't love the person entirely, you can learn to love at least one aspect of his personality. Let's say he davens well. So love him for that. Love that man because he davens well. There's a man who davens in our shul and I can tell you that I love that man for twenty years already. Just because of the way he stands shemonah esrei! Just because of that, I fell in love with him.

Another person learns well. He comes to the shul to learn and he doesn't waste any time talking. He opens his seforim and gets to work on the sugya. He doesn't know, but I'm watching him every day, and I love him. Another person gives tzedaka. And another one is quiet and polite. Find what you can in each person. There's a man I know who smiles at people! He smiles at everybody! A beautiful smile! I love him for that! You'll be surprised, you'll be very surprised! People are full of good things. And the wise man concentrates on a person's beautiful character traits and ignores the middos that are less appealing.

And you must use those good things that you see, as a pituy. Use them as opportunities to cover up his misdeeds, and still love him, notwithstanding what he's done. You're obligated to love your fellow Jew even if he leaves his dirty tissues on the table. You know that don't you?!

And the neighbor who blocks your driveway or the one who steps on your lawn. So what if he never lent you his hammer? And even if he saw you struggling with a package and was too busy to help. So what?! But he sets up for shalosh seudos in shul. Or maybe his children are gems; each one of them! He's doing a good job with his children. Or he puts his gemara back where he took it from. You see that he takes a sefer off the shelf and when he's finished he puts it back in the right place. - You know, some people don't do that. And he does!

Look for an opportunity to love him, any opportunity. Just for that, just for that, you can love him. Only, that in your mind, it's all covered up by that time he parked in your spot. And therefore, you must use all these good things to fall in love with him. You can't walk around harboring negative feelings about those around you forever. It's not a difficult avodah; it just takes some time and a little bit of persistence.

And the more you're willing to look at the good of a person, the more you're willing to think out of your own daled amos, you'll find things

to love about people. As much as you can, you should be using whatever possible to generate respect, affection and even love for a fellow Jew. Here's a man who's always dressed well. He wears pressed pants and a jacket. And a nice pressed shirt too. He's a neat fellow. Try to love him because of that. Even a person's eyeglasses – you can use them to fall in love with him.

Once you realize that it's not enough to just feel neutral about a person, it's not enough to even "get along", you'll see that you have your work cut out for you. When are you going to finally fulfill the mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew? It's always tomorrow or the next day. Maybe you'll wait till next Rosh Hashana? Maybe erev Yom Kippur, or even better, Hoshana Rabah? Or until you retire and finally have some time to serve Hashem? Loving the Am Yisroel, the individuals of the Am Yisroel, is one of the most important achievements you can make in this world. It's the klal gadol batorah because it's the foundation of kol hatorah kulah.

Therefore in the possuk, **וירח את ריח הניחוח**, Hashem offers us the secret to a program for how to climb this ladder of ahavas Yisroel and achieve the perfection that we're in this world for.

If you would only be willing to pay attention and look for the good things, you can find the ma'alos of all of the people you come in contact with during your life and begin seeing the good in everyone around you. And you'll be able to appreciate your fellow man like never before. But it will never happen unless you get working on it. If you're lazy and you're not willing to activate your mind, then you'll never get anywhere in this world. And the ideas we learned tonight will just be another ma'amar chazal that is almost worthless to you. Will you ever be **נתפתה ביינו** like Hakodosh Boruch Hu did? You're the reason why Hashem did it! You never even tried it?

That's why Hashem smelled the sweet fragrance of Noach's korban. Not because He liked the smell. And not because He appreciates being served by a human being. **וירח השם את ריח הניחח** because He

wanted to teach you this most important lesson, in how to deal with all the people around you.

Hakodosh Boruch wants you to follow in His ways and gain that attitude of always being willing to yield your attitudes already formed, and to accept even the most superficial actions, even the most superficial behavior, of your fellow Jew. And the more you do that the more you have acquired the attitude of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and the more you have achieved the perfection of being as similar as humanly possible to Hashem.

The Robots Rattle

I'd like to begin with a possuk that we say every morning in the davenen, זִכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה – Remember the wonders that He made (Tehillim 105:5). Everybody who prays, if they come to shul on time, says that. After all, it's in the siddur so you can't skip it. But even if you say it, the question is do you know what you're saying? We are in the habit of rattling off pesukim and we don't think about what they're telling us.

Too many Jewish congregations today are made up of frum robots. Early in the morning fifty flesh and blood robots walk into the synagogue, and at 6:30, on cue, they all begin shaking and rattling off words. A half hour later – in the better places it's forty five minutes – they're finished. They fulfilled their Shacharis obligation for the day. What they said, nobody knows. What daas they acquired from the davenen today, nobody knows.

But since we're not saying it merely for the words, just to be yotzei, it makes sense that we should take the time to study the words we say. It's important because we're being told now about a new mitzvah, a command that most of us were unaware of: זִכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו, Remember His wonders, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, that He did.

Purposeful Wonders

As soon as you think about this possuk just a little bit, you ask yourself a question: Why does it say "Remember the wonders אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, that He did?" If it's His wonders, certainly He did it. Why are the words "that He did" added? It seems superfluous.

And the answer is that it's telling us why He made the wonders. He did it for the purpose that we should remember them. זִכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו, remember His wonders, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, that He made for that purpose, so that we should remember it. That's why He made them – the remembering is a perfection on its own. The more a person fulfills זִכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו, the more his mind is transformed and the more perfect he becomes.

Now, included in this command to remember His wonders are many things. The truth is if we would be serious about fulfilling this possuk, we'd be busy the rest of our lives with just this one mitzvah – there are enough niflaos to keep us thinking non-stop. That's why it's a good idea to get into the habit of fulfilling this possuk; to spend some time thinking about His wonders and the lessons that each one is trying to teach us.

Mabul Memories

One of the greatest of the נִפְלְאוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, the wonders that He made in order for us to remember, is told to us in this week's parsha. And that's the Mabul, the great Flood that wiped out Mankind. There's no question that among all of the wonders, the Flood was one of the grandest and most terrible episodes in history.

But if nobody's thinking about it, then all of that was lost on Mankind. Such an event should go lost?! A once in history event, never repeated again, should go to waste?! The surface of the entire earth was covered by water. A remarkable thing! The oceans became shallow by means of great upheavals in the earth's surface topography and the waters poured out over the continents.

One time in history this happened. The waters were raging; **וַיִּגְבְּרוּ הַמַּיִם**. Suddenly, raging waters burst out from the bowels of the earth; lava too. There were thousands of volcanoes spewing forth rivers of hot lava. They find today extinct volcanoes in the thousands; it was a phenomenon we don't see today that thousands of volcanoes should be spouting out their contents at once.

Now it's been a long time since then and today the Mabul has been all but forgotten by the people of the world. Even the Jewish people have primarily relegated it to reading about it once a year in krias haTorah. And it's a pity because that's not enough. Krias haTorah was made to reinforce those memories, to inspire them and to sharpen them; but just to listen? And even then, when the baal korei is reading the pesukim, we're thinking about who will get the best aliyah or maybe what's for kiddush today. And meanwhile the lesson is entirely lost.

But you have to know that in the earlier times, in the generations that followed the Flood, it was spoken about all the time by Mankind. Such an upheaval, such a catastrophe, made a tremendous impression on all the nations. Fathers and mothers spoke about it to their children; grandfathers surely spoke about it to their grandchildren. It was a household subject that was constantly reiterated.

Changed Generations

And that was the purpose. "Remember His wonders that He made," means that the purpose of the Mabul was so that it should be remembered. The purpose was to create impressions on our minds, to create attitudes. And it did! People spent time thinking about the Mabul story and it changed them. For many generations people became better as a result.

Isn't that an original idea? When it says **זִכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו**,remember His wonders, it means to also think about the Mabul. So someday when you're sitting on the bus and you have nothing to do, let's say you forgot to take along your sefer, so think for a moment or two about

the Mabul. - You'll need many many bus rides for that. There are endless lessons to learn.



102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

One Kabbalah

Twenty years ago, Reb Chaim Shapira founded a non-profit organization in Netanya called Refaeinu Venevashea. Its goal is to assist patients and their families by providing medical counseling, support, food, and provisions in local hospitals. In his inimitable and modest way, Reb Chaim somehow gives each patient and his family the feeling that they are the ones doing him the favor instead of the opposite.

When once asked what had prompted him to found the organization, Reb Chaim told over the following story.

As a young avreich, I learned a full day in kollel and eked out a living daughter was running a fever, but we didn't think much about it. Only as a badchan at chasunos at night. One morning, my ten-month-old later that night, when her fever spiked dangerously, did we panic and take her to the emergency room only to discover that she had contracted a virulent case of strep that had entered her bloodstream.

Before long, our infant was in critical condition, and her body systems began shutting down, one after the next. The head of the PICU warned us that her chances were low; she was receiving huge doses of antibiotics, yet they apparently weren't having the planned effect. The strep had already reached her lungs and kidneys, and if it couldn't be stopped before it affected the liver, she wouldn't survive.

It was Kabbalas Shabbos when the doctor gently advised us to say

our goodbyes. Somehow, the little girl hung on throughout Shabbos, yet the doctors warned us again that it was only a matter of time.

At two a.m. on Leil Shabbos, I was at my daughter's bedside fervently reciting Tehillim. It had been nearly thirty hours since I'd last slept, and the dim lighting in the ward coupled with the monotonous drone of the machinery eventually lulled me to sleep. Through the haze of my dream, I glimpsed Rav David Abuchatzeira walking alongside his father, Rav Meir. Rav David turned to me and asked, "Why are you sad, my friend?" For years, I had been a close follower of Rav David and, previously, of his father, Rav Meir, and I replied brokenly, "Rebbi, I am here in the hospital, and my baby is dying. The doctors say it's only a matter of hours....

Rav David's gaze exuded ahavas Yisrael as he said, "Reb Chaim, you know that today is Shabbos. 'Shabbos transcends prayers, and healing is close.' Accept upon yourself one special kabbalah. Commit to doing some- thing to assisting your fellow Jews, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will help you in return."

I awoke from my dream, trembling. Without thinking, I simply announced out loud, "Ribono Shel Olam, if You give me back my daughter, I accept upon myself, with Your help, to found an organization that will facilitate and support the sick and their families." Thus resolved, I returned to my Tehillim until I eventually drifted off again.

Early Shabbos morning, the ward director roused me. He appeared unusually agitated, a marked change from his normally staid and distinguished appearance. "Mr. Shapira," he began, "I came especially for you.

This morning, I received the news that shortly after two a.m., your daughter began to stabilize. I told her doctor that it was a medical impossibility. The antibiotics had been ineffective, her systems had shut down, and it was only a matter of time. Yet my colleague urged me to come and see it for myself. Examining her now, the only thing

I can say is that it's a true miracle. I have never seen anything like it. All her systems are functioning again. It's as if she was revived from the dead.

"I'll confess to you, Mr. Shapira, that I am a born-and-bred atheist. I grew up on Kibbutz Beit Hashita, and I'm completely secular. I've never been to synagogue, and I've never fasted on Yom Kippur. I don't know what you did, but I've been watching you pray, and after seeing this miracle, I'm convinced now that there must be a G-d in Heaven. Your prayers brought your daughter back to life. "Yom Kippur is only several days away, and I intend to fast. I'd like you to please let me know when the day starts and ends so I can fulfill the law properly."

I quickly checked the hour and relayed the information to the doctor, who indeed fasted that Yom Kippur.

That Sukkos, I officially launched my organization, and Refaeinu Venevashea has been thriving for the past twenty years. And every year on Erev Yom Kippur, the doctor still calls me to inquire what time the fast begins and ends.

Had someone asked me a day before this episode how I envisioned my life in twenty years and what I imagined I'd be doing, I would never have dreamed that I'd be running a multibranch organization that counsels hundreds of patients and their families, provides transportation, and arranges Shabbosim and Yamim Tovim every year.

By nature, I'm a quiet, unassuming man, yet apparently, Hakadosh Baruch Hu had designated a very different tafkid for me. How awesome is the force of one kabbalah! - With one positive resolu- tion, a Jew can transform the fabric of his life and attain unfathomable heights of ruchniyus, tzedakah, and chessed! (Rav Goel Elkarif)



"Small Believer"

It is not easy to completely characterize the hero of this week's parsha. Avrohom Avinu was a *Tzadik*. Yitzchak Avinu was a *Tzadik*. Yaakov Avinu was a *Tzadik*. The characterization of Noach is less cut and dry. The *pasuk* does acknowledge his *Tzidkus*: "…Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations…" [Bereshis 6:9]. The fact that the Torah writes such about Noach is, of course, in and of itself, a great accolade. And yet, there is something very perplexing about the personality of this individual, whose family were the sole human survivors of the Deluge.

The *pasuk* states: "And Noach and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons came into the Teivah, because of the flood waters (*mipnei mei haMabul*)." [Bereshis 7:7]. Rashi infers from the words *mipnei mei haMabul* that "Noach, too, was one of those with little faith "**מִקְּטַנֵּי אֲמָנָה**" – he believed but he did not fully believe."

We may talk about a person who is a great *ma'amin* (believer). Noach was apparently not a great *ma'amin*! Despite what he was told by Hashem, he did not enter the Teivah until he had no choice but to do so because of the onslaught of the torrential rains. Up until the last minute, he was hedging his bets and hesitated to enter the Teivah.

How do we reconcile this status of being a "small believer" with the *pasuk's* earlier description of Noach as "*Ish Tzadik, Tamim haya b'Dorosav*"?

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in his *sefer* Kedushas Levi writes that Noach was a great *Tzadik*. He interprets the expression "*m'katnei Amanah*" (a small believer) to mean that Noach did not believe in **himself**. He did not see himself as a *Tzadik*.

As to the "complaint" against Noach – why did he *not* pray for his generation (as, for example, Avraham prayed for the salvation of Sodom) and ask that the decree of the Flood be annulled – Reb Levi Yitzchak explains, that is what is meant by "Noach was a small believer". He did not see himself as any better than the people of his generation. Simply, he did not realize that he had the credentials to petition the Almighty to annul this decree!

"On the contrary," writes Rev Levi Yitzchak, "he considered himself to be just another member of the "*Dor haMabul*." Consequently, he reasoned – "if I am going to be saved from this Flood, the other people in the generation will be saved as well, because I am no better than they are!"

"*M'katnei amanah*" does not mean that he had insufficient faith in the Word of G-d, but rather that he did not have the confidence and *Emunah* in himself. That is why he waited when the water was up to his ankles and then up to his knees and up to his thighs before entering into the Teivah at the last minute.

This attitude on his part explains many of Noach's actions, that might imply criticism:

Why did he not pray for his generation? It is because his attitude was "Me? The Master of the Universe should listen to me? Why would my prayers be worth anything? Who am I?"

This approach reconciles how Noach could at the same time be an "אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו" and on the other hand also be מִקְּטַנִּי אֲמָנָה

"When a person thinks about what happened until now; that is the Yetzer Hara. When a person focuses on the present and the future; that is the Yetzer Tov." ~ The Kesav Sofer

Compliments



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה - *'And Hashem said to Noach, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen as a righteous man before Me in this generation.'* (7:1)

Hashem could have merely told him "Come inside the Ark". The sentence could have ended there. But the Almighty adds: "For you I have seen to be a righteous person before Me in this generation." This superfluous expression teaches us something new: "From here we see that it is part of the Attributes of G-d to give compliments."

No matter who one is, no matter how successful and how acclaimed a person may be, everyone likes a compliment. A compliment does something for a person. It strengthens him.

It could in fact be that this "compliment" of the Almighty to Noach was the key to Noach's salvation. The Talmud in Sanhedrin teaches that really Noach himself should also have died in the Flood, based on personal shortcomings. But Noach adds that G-d did him a favour and therefore "I — due to the magnitude of Your kindness — will come into your house" "Because", Noach says, "You told me that 'You I have found to be righteous before me in this generation', I was motivated to be righteous." "What made me change," says Noach, "is that You, Almighty, complimented me. That is why I changed — because of the 'partial praise' I heard You say before me."

Rabbi Gissenger of Lakewood, New Jersey, was a student of **Rav Pam**. Several years ago, his shul honored him at a dinner and they invited Rav Pam to come speak about his disciple.

Rav Gissenger was given the honor of introducing his Rebbi. He said, "When I was 16 years old in Rav Pam's shiur, before we left for the summer, Rav Pam encouraged us to try and write him our Chiddushei Torah over the summer." Rabbi Gissenger in fact did that and sent his Torah insights to Rav Pam in the mail.

Rav Pam sent him back a postcard in which he wrote, "I enjoyed your Chiddushei Torah very much…" whereupon Rav Gissenger whipped out the postcard that Rav Pam had sent him 30 years earlier!

He kept that postcard. Why did he keep it? He was so inspired and thrilled by the fact that Rav Pam stated he enjoyed his Chiddushei Torah that it made his decade! It inspired him for life! This is what a compliment can do.

"We see that one says partial praise of a person to his face" — it is a good, advisable, practice to engage in! This is teaching us a mitzvah. It is the behavior of the Almighty and it is worth emulating.

When someone davens for the amud, if he is half decent tell him "Yasher Koach! I enjoyed your davening! Good job!" Give a person a compliment. It won't cost you anything and it is emulating the ways of the Ribono shel Olam.

Definition of Tzadik Tamim

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 51a) interprets the term *tzadik tamim* that is used to describe Noach as *tamim* (perfect) in his ways and *tzadik* (righteous) in his activities. Rashi interprets the expression "*tamim* in his ways" as connoting "modest and humble of spirit" and the expression "*tzadik* in his activities" as connoting "without *chumus*" (violence/theft).

We see from this Rashi that the yardstick for proclaiming a person to be a *tzadik* is his level of honesty regarding *dinei mamanos* (monetary matters).

The Kav Hayashar (Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kaidanover (1648-1712); Frankfurt) makes this point even more explicitly and dramatically. He writes: "Remember this rule: A person who does not wish to get benefit (even legitimately) from his friend's money, and certainly a person who goes out of his way to avoid misappropriation of money or theft, and whose business transactions are faithful – is certainly a righteous person and a man of integrity, because the essence of fear (of G-d) and *tzidkus* relates to money, and someone who is careful about *dinei mamanos* is a *tzaddik gamur* (completely righteous person)."

Thus, according to the Kav Hayashar, a *tzadik gamur* is not defined as someone who davens a long *Shemoneh Esrei* or someone who refrains from speaking *Lashon Harah*. Of course, those are very important things. But according to the Kav Hayashar, there is ONE measure of a *tzadik gamur* and that is a person who maintains his righteousness regarding *dinei mamanos*.

These statements carry a lot of weight in our day and age.

Improving Our Own World

Towards the end of the flood Noach sent out a raven to see whether the waters had subsided. However, the raven circled the ark and did not fulfill his mission of seeking dry land [Bereishis 8:7]. Rash"i informs us (based on Sanhedrin 108b) that the raven suspected Noach of having "improper intentions" towards its mate. The raven felt it had to keep an eye on the situation and therefore just circled the ark so that Noach would not steal his wife.

I heard a true story on a tape from Rav Wolfson, who is a faculty member at the Ohr Somayach Yeshiva in Israel. Rav Wolfson met a student who had just started learning in Ohr Somayach and was a Chozer B'Teshuvah [a recent returnee to studying and practicing Judaism]. Rav Wolfson asked the student what material he was

learning and how he was doing. The student replied that he was learning Chumash with Rash"i and everything was fine — except for one Rash"i that he found to be 'ridiculous'.

Rav Wolfson asked, "which Rash"i is that?" The student pointed to the Rash"i quoted above and labeled Rash"i's comment "patently ridiculous!"

At best, this seems to be a strange Rash"i. Rav Wolfson, however, gave the student a beautiful answer:

The trouble is that we fail to appreciate the distinction between Halacha [legal texts] and Aggadah [homiletic texts]. The latter are written in a different style. The words may be the same words, but, in fact, they are written in code. In order to understand what our Rabbis mean in Aggadah, one requires the 'keys' to interpret the code. Chazal [Our Sages] are not teaching us something about ravens here. Chazal are teaching us about human beings. In the context of the world of Aggadah, they used the raven.

Of course the raven's fear was ridiculous! But why did the raven have such a ridiculous thought? Because the raven was paranoid! When one is paranoid, one thinks the most ludicrous and ridiculous things in the world. Certainly the raven was crazy. But, when a general picks a soldier to go on a risky spy mission, the soldier can think one of two things: (A) The general picked me because I am the bravest, the smartest, the fastest; or (B) The general picked me because he wants to get rid of me. Someone who is paranoid can come up with the most unbelievable theories in the world.

People are paranoid and think in these terms because they are egocentric. They think that everybody is talking about them, as if those people have nothing better to do with their time. A person whose world revolves only around himself is bound to think like that. Such a person can only view the world in his own terms.

We tend to analyze the actions or reactions of other people in terms of ourselves. (Why did that person in the supermarket answer me so coldly? Why is he angry with me? What did I do to him?) In fact, the reactions of others are best explained in terms that are related solely to themselves. (He is upset because he just had a fight with his wife or boss or any of fifty other reasons. The most unlikely reason in the world is related to the person who he answered coldly.)

Someone once told me that until age 20 one is totally preoccupied with what others think of him of her. From age 20 to 40, when one's ego is more developed, one's attitude becomes "I don't care what they say about me. Let them say whatever they want about me. I am my own person — I'll dress the way I want, I'll drive the way I want, I'll look the way I want, I am going to do what I want."

Sometime after age 40 — I do not know exactly when — a person realizes that people are not thinking about him at all. "I don't occupy such an important place in everyone else's world. People don't even care how I dress or look or what I drive or what I say."

If we can take the focus off ourselves, we will be less paranoid and less compulsive and less concerned about what others say. We can then become more interested in improving our own world.

Noach Did Not Become Wicked, He Just Became Plain

Following the emergence of Noach and his family from the Tayva [Ark], the Torah teaches: **וַיָּחֶל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּטַּע כָּרֶם** - *"And Noach, the man of the earth, debased himself and planted a vineyard."* [9:20]. Rashi explains that the word vayachel comes from the root of chulin (profane or secular). Rashi states: He should have occupied himself with some other kind of vegetation as his first planting (after emerging from the Tayva).

The parsha begins with *"Noach was a perfectly righteous person (tzadik tamim) in his generation"* but at the end of

the parsha, Noach is on a lower spiritual level. He had become regular, plain, or mundane — depending on how exactly we translate the word chulin. Rather than possessing lofty goals, he became a mundane person. What was his crime? He planted a vineyard.



We might speculate why he planted a vineyard. He had been in the Tayva for a lengthy period of time. When he left the Tayva, he found a world that had literally been destroyed. Is there a more disheartening and depressing scene than to realize that humanity has to begin all over again? It is so surprising then that Noach planted a vineyard?

"Give wine to the bitter of soul" [Mishlei 31:6]. It is natural for a depressed and bitter person to look for ways to cheer himself up. *"Wine will gladden the hearts of man"* [Tehillim 104:15]. Noach's actions were very understandable. He felt lonely and forsaken. It was about time that he did do something for himself!

Rav Simcha Wasserman says that this is exactly the definition of *"he made himself profane (chulin)"*. It was not a crime. It was not a sin. It was simply chulin — not holy, but rather the mundane and pedestrian approach. Noach should have continued on what had been his mission during these many days in the Tayva.

What did he do in the Tayva? He fed the animals. He took care of that which remained on the face of the earth. Therefore, as tired as he was, his goal should have been: "I need to carry on for humanity. I need to feed the rest of the world. I need to make sure that humanity continues."

If a person saw his mission as feeding the rest of the world, he would plant wheat or at least vegetables. Planting a vineyard for one who is depressed might be understandable, but it is chullin. It is not continuing on the path of greatness that Noach had been following until now. This is the essence of the comment of Chazal: He made himself profane.

It is ironic that in the life story of Avraham, we find that he also planted. Avraham planted an "Eishel" [Bereishis 21:33]. According to one interpretation in Rashi, "Eishel" is an acronym for Eating (Achila), Drinking (Shtiyah), and Lodging (Lina). Avraham's inclination was to do for others. He wished to provide an inn and take in guests.

Noach was different. He did not sin by planting the vineyard. He merely highlighted the difference between himself and Avraham. He made himself chullin.

A Treifah Olive Branch?



I saw an interesting insight in the sefer Mikdash Mordechai. The Torah says וְהִנֵּה עֲלֵה־זַ֣יִת טָרָף בְּפִיהָ – 'an olive branch was torn off in the mouth of the dove'. [8:11].

This is an interesting use of the verb 'taraf' [to tear]. Normally, 'taraf' is used in connection with something which has been killed, usually violently. For example, the primary definition of 'treifah' is a living animal that was torn apart in the field.

It is peculiar to refer to an olive branch as being killed. The Torah is certainly not saying that ripping off an olive branch is murder.

The Mikdash Mordechai comments that when a person has seen the destruction that Noach witnessed — all forms of life had been erased from the world — he attaches a new importance to even the smallest form of life.

An olive branch that has been ripped off from its source is not just dismissed as a few leaves that fell off a tree. It becomes something very precious. We know what happened to all forms of life. Human, animal and plant life had all been killed. A person who has seen total destruction gains a new appreciation for all forms of life.

As such, Noach viewed the olive branch as if it had been "killed" by the dove, ripping it off the tree.

Eliyahu Was Taught a Lesson by The Ravens



The rains finally stopped and the waters began to recede. Noach wanted to assess the situation so he sent out the raven to seek out dry land. The Medrash states that the reason why Noach chose the raven was because the raven seemed to be a species of minimal value: "What does the world need you for? You are not fit either for eating or for a sacrificial offering."

In fact, the Medrash indicates that Noach was angry at the raven and sending him on this mission was somewhat of a "punishment". The raven was the only occupant of the Teyva [Ark] to mate during the flood. Both humans and animals were warned not to have relations with their mates during the time in the Teyva. The raven violated this prohibition. In fact, the raven's mate was now pregnant, so

Noach felt that he would not be violating his mandate of saving all species by risking the life of the 'father' raven at this juncture.

However, the Medrash says that G-d told Noach to accept the raven back into the Teyva because in the future the world would need his services. There would come a time when a righteous person would make the land dry (Eliyahu the prophet). There would be a tremendous famine in the land and the ravens would bring him food and meat (from the house of Ahab, King of Israel).

There is a fascinating Baal HaTurim that reads an allusion to this Medrash into a pasuk in our Parsha [8:7] **וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יְבֹשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ** - "And he sent out the raven and it went back and forth until the water dried up from upon the land". The Baal HaTurim points out that the word **יְבֹשֶׁת** [dried up] has the same letters as the word 'Tishbi' which refers to Eliyahu who was known as the 'Tishbi'. This allusion hints at G-d's admonition to Noach not to be so hard on the raven, since the raven will be needed when there is a drought in the time of Eliyahu the Tishbi.

However, the question needs to be asked — why did G-d chose the ravens from among all other birds or creatures to sustain Eliyahu? If, in fact, ravens have a reputation of being cruel creatures, and if, in fact, the raven was the only creature to violate the rule of no relations during the time in the Teyva, why were the ravens specifically chosen to be the 'angels of mercy' for Eliyahu?

The Succas Dovid answers that G-d was trying to teach a lesson to Eliyahu by specifically using this 'delivery service'. The lesson was that good things can even come out of ravens, and so too good things may even emerge out of wicked people.

This was the message of the ravens delivering Eliyahu his food. No wicked individual is beyond hope. He can always come back and prove himself a worthwhile member of society — even the raven! This especially applies to the Jewish people. They may have done terrible

things, they may have worshipped idolatry in the time of Ahab, but do not write them off.

Retirement: A Concept Introduced by Noach



Noach was to be the *Tzadik Yesod Olam*. Noach was saved. He saved the world. He repopulated the world. Those who came after him are not called "Children of Adam," they are called "Children of Noach". We are direct descendants of Noach because all other descendants of Adam were destroyed. Noach, after saving the world, emerged from the Taiva and "And Noach, the man of the earth, debased himself (*vaYachel Noach*) by planting a vineyard." [Bereishis 9:20]. Rashi quotes Chazal that the word *vaYachel* implies debasement. Rashi points out that out of all the things that someone could plant, Noach should not have planted a vineyard.

Noach did plant a vineyard, he drank the wine, he became drunk, and Noach also failed in his mission to be the *Tzadik Yesod Olam*. Once again, it was not destined that the whole world should come to perfection during the days of Noach.

That which Noach failed to do, Avraham Avinu accomplished. The question is – this Noach, with which we begin the parsha – "Noach, was a completely righteous man in his generation" does appear to have the makings of a *Tzadik Yesod Olam*. And yet he went from being "*Tzadik Tamim*" [completely righteous] [Bereishis 6:9] to be coming an "*Ish Adamah*" [man of the earth] [Bereishis 9:20].

Chazal point out that Moshe began as a shepherd and he ended his life as an *Ish haElokim* [a man of G-d]. Noach, somehow, went in the other direction. How did this happen to Noach? How did this person who had such potential, and in whom the Almighty saw such potential – how did it happen to him that the first thing he did after leaving the Taiva was planting a vineyard and getting drunk?

There is a Sefer on Chumash called *Chikrei Lev* from a Rabbi Leibel Hyman Z"L (an old-time Baltimorean who was a Rosh Yeshiva in America, and who later moved to *Eretz Yisrael* where he was a Rav). He suggests a theory as to what happened to Noach:

During the whole period of the Flood, Noach had a horrible time. He was not enjoying life on a cruise ship. Besides the fact that the whole world was destroyed, and he was aware of that, Noach literally could not sleep. There are animals that eat during the day and there are nocturnal animals that eat during the night. Just feeding the animals – every single species that was in the world – by the time Noach came out of the Taiva, he was a broken man to say the least. He was, however, a man who felt that he accomplished his mission. He literally saved the world. From now on, everyone is going to be a *Ben Noach* – one of his descendants! What more can people accomplish in this world than what Noach accomplished? He saved the world and he saved it at great personal stress and pain. The experience was horrible!

When a person feels "I have done my job in this world" certain emotions go with that feeling: It is time for me to relax, to take off my shoes, put my feet up on the table, lean back, and enjoy myself. It is time for me to call it a career, call it a lifetime. The way Noach envisioned doing that was to plant a vineyard and drink the produce thereof and enjoy life. His attitude was: I have it coming! I earned it! I did what I was supposed to do! What else do You want from me?

Herein lies Noach's tragic mistake. There is no such thing as "I did my job. Now I can go and retire." One can retire when he is in the

grave. Until that time, we have a mission to complete. No matter how great the accomplishment that we have had in this world thus far, this world is "today to do it; and tomorrow to receive reward." [Eruvin 22a]

The *Chikrei Lev* makes a very interesting sociological observation. There is a common—almost universal—opinion in the world that after a person completes his job he retires. That, he says, is a concept for Children of Noach. It started with Noach. This was Noach's gift to the world—the idea of retirement. Therefore, his descendants—Bnei Noach—follow in his footsteps. If you are lucky, you can do it at 62, if you retire on full Social Security, you can do it at 66, if you become a millionaire, you can do it at 54, and so forth. But at some point, you retire. And then what do you do? I don't know. You can travel the country, you can read the paper, etc.

That's not what the *Hashem* expected from human beings. Retirement is something a Jew should never think about. That does'nt mean that a person should never stop working. - No one should have the attitude "I'm finished. I can sit back and relax now."

A person does not need to practice medicine—or accounting or law or computers or whatever it is—for his entire life. People should live and be well! But a person must do something. A person needs to do something worthwhile and fulfilling.

That was Noach's mistake. "I already did what I was supposed to do. What else do You want from me? Now I am going to sit back and enjoy myself." That is a *Bnei Noach* attitude—not a *Bnei Yisrael* type of attitude.

The legacy of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov – the legacy that no matter what we have done in our lives, it is not over until literally the *Chevra Kadisha* comes or until we are physically unable to continue.

Again, this is not suggesting that we need to die in our offices. No one in the history of mankind ever said on his death bed in regret, "I wish I spent more time in the office." However, we must remain productive. When we reach the "Golden Years," while we can perhaps "sit back" and take it easy from our work, we must remember that the Jewish approach remains, "It is today when it must be done; and tomorrow when the reward will be received."



The Raven Tells Noach, "Send The Guinea Pig on This Mission"

The pasuk [8:7] tells us that Noach sent out a raven to check whether land could already be seen. The Medrash says that the raven complained to Noach that, of all the animals and creatures in the ark, he was singled out for this mission.

The Medrash continues that Noach answered him back, "What does the world need you for? You are not edible nor are you fit to be offered as a sacrifice." [The commentaries on the Medrash point out that although there were other non-kosher birds on the ark, the raven was the least appetizing of all such birds.]

G-d, however, told Noach that he should not have been so harsh with the raven, for there would come a time that the world would need the raven. There would come a time when a Tzadik would arise who would make the whole world dry (referring to the decree of Eliyahu in the time of King Achav that there would be a drought) and this Tzadik would need the ravens to bring him food [Kings I 17:6].

By keeping Eliyahu alive, the ravens ultimately kept the world alive, because the world needed Eliyahu to remove his curse. Hence, the ravens would literally be responsible for sustaining all of mankind.

We have to understand a number of things. First of all, why did Hashem in fact use the ravens to sustain Eliyahu?

The Menachem Tzion quotes the Talmud in Pesachim [113b] that there are three who love one another, one of whom is the raven. Thus, ravens do have a redeeming social value: Other animals, as well as human beings, do not get along. They fight and argue. Ravens, however, love one another.

This is why G-d picked the ravens to feed Eliyahu. Eliyahu felt that the generation of Achav was worthless. They were idol worshippers. He saw no purpose in their existence. Yet, the Gemara says [Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1:1] that in the generation of Dovid, when even children were well versed in the laws of purity and impurity, at times when they went out to war there were casualties — because there were slanderers among them; however in the generation of Achav, even though they were all idolaters, they were victorious in their battles because there was unity and love of Israel among them.

This is the lesson that G-d wanted to hint to Eliyahu: These ravens will feed you. These birds, who you think, and who Noach thought, have no redeeming quality — they in fact have a tremendous quality. They love one another. This is a quality which is redemptive for the ravens and redemptive for the generation of Achav as well.

The generation of Achav should not be thought of as worthless. Although no one should ever minimize the sin of idolatry, the generation of Achav did have outstanding merit by virtue of the fact that they practiced Ahavas Yisroel. Through the z'chus of this Ahavas Yisroel, when they went to war, they were always victorious.

Thus, G-d is again teaching Eliyahu not to discount Achav and his generation. No human being can be discounted. Every creature has

its purpose and has to be treated as such. Nothing in creation is without purpose. Even a raven and even an Achav have their purpose.

Captain in a Stormy Sea

Even though Noach tried to have an effect on his generation, for whatever reason, he was not successful in saving the generation. The Zohar points out this is why the flood is referred to as "the waters of Noach" [Isaiah 54:9], because Noach was to blame for not being able to save his generation.

The Ponnevitzer Rav was a tireless worker and labored for Torah causes throughout the world. He built the Ponnevitz Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, that is not only a Yeshiva but is an entire city. He spread Torah throughout the world. He was indefatigable. He could not be stopped. Even when he was already an older man, when other people of a much younger age would fall from exhaustion, the Ponnevitzer Rav would continue on his mission.

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky addressed the question, "What motivated the Ponnevitzer Rav? — What kept him going?" Rav Rozovsky said that he heard many times from the Ponnevitzer Rav that he was haunted by the fact that he himself was saved from the Holocaust of Europe but he wasn't successful in saving his generation. From the Lithuanian Rabbinate, the Ponnevitzer Rav was one of the very few that made it out of Europe alive, but he was constantly plagued by the fact that he had not been able to save his generation.

The Ponnevitzer Rav would accuse himself of the Medrash's accusation of Noach, "Myself I have saved, but my boat I did not save." Instead of sinking into depression, however, this thought motivated him. He became 'obsessed' with the idea that, "If I couldn't save that generation in Europe, there is a new generation that I can save." When I go to the Heavenly Yeshiva, I want to be able to say, "I saved myself and I saved my generation."

We live, Baruch Hashem, in a time where we have the freedom and the ability and the opportunity to do mitzvos without limit. But we also live in an era of a Holocaust. If not an era of a Holocaust of gas chambers, Rachmana l'tzlan, one in which Jews are being lost spiritually. I am afraid that one day we will also have to answer to an accusation that "We have saved ourselves, but we have lost our ship." We, with all our mitzvos, and our charity, and our learning Torah — all very fine — have, thank G- d, been able to withstand the "tests of America." But that is not enough.

There is always an accusation of "You have saved yourself, but not your generation." Therefore, whatever our walk of life, whether it's in teaching, or in community service, or whether it's in business or medicine or law or accounting or anything, there is always the challenge to not merely look after our own spiritual needs, but also those of our generation.

If we do not have the holy soul possessed by the Ponnevitzer Rav, and we live normal lives and are not 'obsessed' with this idea, as he was, at least we have to be motivated into some kind of action so that in the future, we will also be able to say "We saved ourselves, and we also saved our generation."

Rav Meir Shapiro Analyzes the Symbolism of the Rainbow



Following the *Mabul* , Hashem gave a sign that He would never again flood the entire world. That sign, as we all know, is the rainbow. Rav Meir Shapiro, *z"l*, gives a beautiful comment as to why specifically the rainbow was made the

Heavenly sign that the *Ribono shel Olam* would never again destroy the world with water.

Rav Meir Shapiro comments on a question that many people ask. It took Noach 120 years to build the Teiyva. During that entire period, he apparently did not have an effect on anyone in his entire generation. The only people that were saved were his immediate family. He had an extremely unsuccessful career as a "*kiruv* worker." After 120 years, for not even one person to become a believer in the Almighty and the principles of universal morality is a dismal career in "outreach."

Many commentaries take note of this and try to explain why this was the case – particularly in terms of trying to reconcile that with the Torah's description of Noach as "*Tzadik, Tamim*" [righteous and perfect]. Such people usually **do** have an impact on their generation.

Rav Shapiro speculates as to why in fact Noach was **not** successful. He suggests that Noach believed that the people of his generation were beyond salvation. He had no faith in the people and felt that they sank to such a low level of spiritual darkness that there was no hope for them. In any endeavor, a person must believe in what he is doing and believe in his ability to have an effect. If, in his heart of hearts, a person does not believe that he can have an effect, then he cannot make the case. For this reason, Noach was never successful in bringing anyone "under the wings of the *Shechina*."

Rav Shapiro says that with this hypothesis, we can understand why the Divine sign that the world would never again be totally destroyed by flood was the rainbow. As we all know, a rainbow occurs when there is a beautiful day and suddenly it becomes terribly cloudy and terribly dark. There follows a downpour, and shortly after the downpour, the clouds dissipate. It becomes light again, it becomes bright again, and when the sun hits the rain, a rainbow is formed, which is a beautiful multi-colored illumination in the heaven. The message of the rainbow is that no matter how dark the world may

be, after the darkness, the light can shine and can in fact make a beautiful image that brightens the world.

This was the pointed message to Noach: Your assessment of your generation — that they are living in such darkness that light cannot help – is wrong. The rainbow is a metaphor which teaches that this is not necessarily the way things work. The message to Noach was to never give up on people. No one is beyond redemption. Every single *neshama* is pure at its base. There is a "*pintele Yid*" or a "*pintele* of spirituality" in every single person. As a result of that, there is hope for seeing the light of the rainbow at the end of the period of darkness.

The Primary Offspring of A Person Is Not His Children

The two thoughts I would like to share this week are from the Maharal in his sefer, Gur Aryeh.

"These are the offspring of Noach — Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d. And Noach had begotten three sons: Shem, Ham, and Yafes." [Bereishis 6:9-10]. Rashi is bothered by the glaring question that the *pasuk* seemingly interrupts the introductory clause "These are the offspring of Noach" (*Eleh Toldos Noach*) with a description of Noach's character traits and only in the next *pasuk* does it resume the thought and tell us the names of Noach's three sons. Logically, the list of the names of his children should immediately follow the statement "*Eleh Toldos Noach*".

The famous Rashi states: This teaches that the primary offspring (i.e. — creations) of the righteous are good deeds.

If we think about this statement in the context of Noach this is nothing short of mind bogging! If there is one individual in the history of the world his greatest accomplishment are his children, it is in fact Noach. We are all *Bnei Noach* [descendants of Noach].

We happen to be Jews as well (descendants of Avraham), but Noach populated the entire planet. All the billions and billions of people who walk the face of the earth are here because of one individual — Noach.

We would certainly be tempted to say that the greatest accomplishment of this individual is that humanity populates the planet and the members of humanity are all his offspring! Nevertheless, Chazal say about this person that his primary accomplishment and creation in this world is his good deeds. This is a mind-boggling statement!

Why is that? The Maharal gives two reasons. First, the Maharal says, the reason we say the main accomplishment of the righteous in this world is their good deeds is because they were accomplished by the righteous person alone, whereas their children were created only in partnership with the Almighty. Chazal says that there are three partners in every human being — the father, the mother, and the *Ribono shel Olam*. The *Ribono shel Olam* is really the prime partner. That is why the Maharal explains the main accomplishment that a person has on his own in this world are his righteous deeds!

The second reason the Maharal cites is the main idea I wish to share. In his second reason, the Maharal explains that a person's children are something external to him whereas his good deeds become an internal part of him!

When we look at a human being, we should look at the individual **and** look at his potential. When we see a newborn baby, we should not merely think "look how cute it is," but rather we should think "look at the great potential that lies in this baby!" - Human beings are all about the potential they can bring forth. That is their greatness.

In his manner, we can understand the statement of Chazal cited by Rashi — the main offspring of the righteous are their good deeds. This is because "good deeds" are what the perpetrator of those good deeds becomes — they become part of him. A person's children are

only his offspring. They are external to him. Children are certainly an accomplishment. However, a person's children are not "him". A person's good deeds, on the other hand, become part of him. A person is defined by what he can accomplish in this world — what he can become. A person's good deeds are the fruition of his potential. They define the true person and trump even the accomplishment of children.

This is a lesson for all of us. We should not satisfy ourselves by saying that we can live vicariously through our children. As important as children are and as important as is the effort we must put in raising them, we are put on this earth for another reason as well — independent of our roles as parents. We must view our primary challenge in life as bringing forth to realization the great potential to do good that the *Ribono shel Olam* gave us. Fulfilling that potential is the "primary offspring" of a person — namely, his good deeds.

The Rainbow's Reminder Is For The Sake of Mankind

After the flood, the pasuk says, "I have set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth… And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant between G-d and every living being, among all flesh that is on earth." [Bereishis 9:13-16].

The Torah herein states that after the flood, G-d made a promise that He would never again destroy the world through a flood. Apparently, the Almighty needed a reminder that He made such a promise. Therefore, He created the phenomenon of a rainbow. Whenever He gets very angry at the world and is tempted to destroy it again with another flood, He has — as it were — this "string around His finger". He looks at the rainbow and reminds Himself of His promise.

This simple reading of the pasukim is both patently ridiculous and heretical. G-d does not need reminders or strings around His finger, as it were. What is the true meaning of these pasukim?

Rashi and the Seforno explain what this really means. The Almighty is doing the world a tremendous favor. He uses the rainbow to send a message to humanity that He is once again very angry at the world. The Almighty does not need a rainbow in the sky as a reminder - We need a reminder.

We look at the rainbow and we are supposed to take note that it is a time of Anger before the Almighty. At such times, we should think that the Almighty is so angry at the world that were it not for His Promise, He would again destroy the world. Therefore, we should hasten to repent and do Teshuva.

The Seforno writes that when the righteous see the rainbow and are therefore motivated to pray and repent, they stand in the breech so that they may appease the Almighty's Anger and temptation to destroy humanity.

The Ramban cites a passage from Tractate Chagiga [16a] that one should not stare at a rainbow and one who does so, it is fitting that he not have come into this world. What is the meaning of this Gemara? The rainbow is a beautiful thing. What is wrong with looking at it? In the "Confession of Rav Amram Gaon" one of the items for which we "confess our sins" on Yom Kippur is that "we stared at a rainbow". What is the problem with looking at a rainbow?

Rav Simcha Zissel – in his writings – says a very interesting thing. When we see a rainbow, our reaction is "beautiful". We admire the colors, the shape, the impact, and so forth. We admire the rainbow and are inspired by it.

Consider the audacity of this typical reaction. G-d is Angry. He is placing a rainbow in the sky as a message to us to get serious, to

repent, and beseech His Mercy. What is our reaction? "Beautiful!" This is the great chutzpah of staring admiringly at a rainbow.

Rav Simcha Zissel compares the situation to a father who was terribly angry with his child and who raised his hand to strike him. The father is livid and his expression manifests extreme dissatisfaction to his child. The kid looks up and is amused or entertained by his father's facial expression. Such a reaction will anger the father even more. That is the situation with our reaction of admiration and pleasure at the rainbow's beauty.

Rav Simcha Zissel takes issue with a comment of the Mishneh Berura who quotes in the name of Chayei Adam that one who sees a rainbow should not tell this to his friend. Rav Simcha Zissel says he does not understand the logic in this. If one sees a rainbow, he argues, that should inspire us to repent and to get others to repent as well. On the contrary, one should alert as many people as possible to the presence of the rainbow so that they too will be able to take proper spiritual action.

The Gemara [Brachos 59a] says that the purpose of thunder is to put the fear of G-d into people's hearts. When the Chofetz Chaim used to hear thunder, besides making the appropriate blessing, he used to say, "What does Father want?"

A rainbow should generate an even more dramatic action on our part. In our lifetime, we have seen many more dramatic "klaps" in terms of historical occurrences than both thunder and rainbows put together. Under these circumstances, it is our responsibility to emulate the Chofetz Chaim and say: "What does Father want from us?"

"We Jews are proud that we have lived to see thousands of Jews who have not given up, who will never give up, and who are living

proof that one day we will rebuild anew." ~ Bluzhever Rebbe, Reb Tzvi Yehudah Spira (1936-2015).

First A Mensch, Then a Tzadik Tamim

This week's parsha begins with the words **אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו** "These are the chronicles of Noach. Noach was a righteous faultless man (Ish Tzadik Tamim) in his generations" [Bereishis 6:9].

Rav Giftar once visited Ner Israel for Parshas Noach and made the following observation:

We see from this pasuk that Noach possessed three qualities. He was a Tzadik (righteous person). He was a Tamim (a completely faultless person). And he was an Ish (a 'person'). However, notice that the sequence of the adjectives is Ish, Tzadik, Tamim. We thus see, said Rav Gifter, that before a person can be a Tzadik or a Tamim, he first has to be an Ish — a Mensch (one who acts like a proper and dignified man).



Perfection

This week's Parsha opens with the verse, "Noach was a righteous man, **perfect** in his generation, and Noach walked with Hashem".

The Sokotchover Rebbe points out that although the same word is used to describe Avraham Avinu – "Perfect" – it is clear that Noach did not approach the same level of perfection that Avraham did. This can be seen by virtue of the fact that Avraham was one of the forefathers of the Jewish people and Noach was not. Why then would the Torah use the exact same word to describe the two of them? Furthermore, the verse implies that Noach's perfection was achieved much quicker then Avraham's. The verse only ascribes perfection to Avraham when he is about to circumcise himself, after he was passed many tests, whereas Noach seems to achieve this title immediately. Why then was Avraham considered so much greater then Noach?

The Sokotchover explains that one cannot compare the achievements of a righteous person which he attains based on his good qualities that he is born with, to the accomplishment which he attains through toil and hard work. Rashi tells us that Noach was born circumcised which is evidence to us that he was born into a state of near perfection and G-dliness. Although this is certainly a lofty position to be in, it does not compare to one who reaches that same position through arduous labor and hard work. Avraham Avinu reached the same level of Noach ultimately – perfection – but the major difference was that Avraham went through ten gruelling tests before he could do so and Noach was born there.

This is also alluded to by the fact that Noach is compared to Shabbos in the Zohar, and Avraham is compared to Pesach. The major difference between Shabbos and the Jewish holidays is that Shabbos comes every week regardless of what is going on in the rest of the world, whereas the holidays are dependant solely on the Jewish people sanctifying the new moon and declaring when the holiday should be. Avraham therefore is compared to the holidays in the respect that he had to work to get where he was whereas Noach was compared to Shabbos in the respect that he was born there.

The Sokotchover Rebbe concludes by saying that based on what we have said, it is readily apparent why Avraham Avinu is our forefather and not Noach. Although they both are referred to as "perfect", Avraham's perfection is clearly the type of perfection that we are striving for as Jews, one which comes through strenuous labor and constant focus. Hashem will not give a whole lot of credit to a person who was born perfect, whereas one who works to perfect himself his whole life, and tries to overcome his weaknesses, and build up his strengths, is certainly doing what a Jew strives for.

In this week's Parsha, Noach warns the people that Hashem is going to bring a flood. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (ק"ח) says that for 120 years, Noah rebuked the people of his generation, yet all this didn't help — the people didn't do *teshuva*. And so G-d brought the flood, causing mankind, animals and plant life to perish.

It's very hard to understand why the rebuke of Noah didn't work. Picture it: every single day, for 120 years, Noah warned everyone passing by his football-field-sized ark, "You must change your ways! Look at yourselves! You must stop robbing, worshipping idols, cheating and doing immoral acts! You're bringing destruction upon yourselves!" And yet, not a single listener was persuaded to change his ways.

The passuk says he was a **צדיק תמים** – a perfectly righteous man – who "walked with G-d." Why would anyone be reluctant to hear the words of such a holy man? Moreover, Noach was an expert in public relations.

The Sforno says he excelled in all mitzvos **בן אדם לחברו** – between man and his neighbor. The *Medrash Tanchuma* relates that Noah was Avraham Avinu's role model in all matters involving *chesed*: The *Medrash* says Avraham once met Noah's son Shem and asked him, "Through what deeds did you merit to be saved from the flood?" Shem responded, "It's because day and night, we were

doing *chesed,* feeding all the animals in the ark. We didn't have time to sleep, eat or rest. In this merit, we were saved."

Avraham said, "If this is what *chesed* can do, I am also going to do *chesed*." Noach's kindness was the inspiration for Avraham to open up a hotel for all mankind to eat, drink and sleep.

So again, we must ask: If Noah was such a *tzaddik* and such a big *baal chesed,* why didn't his rebuke have any effect, such that not one person was *chozer b'tshuva* because of him? How could this be?

The Sforno sheds light on this difficulty. He answers that Noach truly did rebuke them, but it was not the type of rebuke that would cause them to change their ways. By scolding them that they were deficient in **דרך ארץ** – that their ways were not proper for people to act – Noach himself was giving deficient rebuke.

Why is this? It's because when you rebuke someone based on what you claim is improper behavior, that person can easily claim that his behavior is, in fact, proper and that it's completely ok to act this way. It's your word against his — which is why this type of rebuke doesn't work.

Contrast this with the rebuke of Avraham Avinu. When he wanted to change people's actions, he started by telling them, "There is a G-d, and He sees all what we do. He controls the whole world and all that happens in the world — and He holds people accountable for their actions." This type of *tochacha* takes hold, since when a person considers that there is a G-d who tells us all how to act, who expects certain behaviors from us, he is open to feeling truly ashamed of his actions and motivated to make real changes in his life.

Rav Moshe Schwab provides a deeper insight into this difference between Noah and Avraham Avinu. He points out that said Noah's outlook was based on proper manners, whereas Avraham's was based solely on Hashem. Noach was willing to influence others using secular means, yet Avraham employed only Divine methods.

We see from this week's Parsha how important it is to be a true *ben Torah*. A real *ben Torah* is not only someone who puts all his strength into Torah learning at every moment, but he is also someone whose entire outlook — everything he says, does and thinks, as well as all his mannerisms and interactions with people — is wholly based on Torah. All his ideas in life, he gets from the Torah. Such a person is complete in his *Avodah*. Anything external — whether it's a newspaper, secular radio, or the Internet — takes away from his being a *ben Torah*. - May we all be *zoche* to be true *b'nai Torah*, controlled totally by the Torah!

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- The Perfect Fish



1) The Maharal asks why fish don't require Shechita?
2) Why were the fish not destroyed by the Mabul as all other animals?
3) Why didn't the fish corrupt their ways just like all other animals. After all, if the animals corrupted their ways because of the human behaviour back then, the fish should also have been affected.

Water is that which is in Hashem's domain as it says **אשר לו הים** Similarly, we say **קול ה' על המים** - the voice of Hashem is upon the waters. For this reason, the name **אלה-ים** consists of the letters **א-ל הים**.

It is not coincidental that it is on Shemini Atzeres- the 8th day- that we say **תפילת גשם**. This is because "8" symbolizes supernatural and water is in Hashem's (who is supernatural) domain. Where do we see a hint to this? When the world was created, there was only water. Only later did the land come about. We also see this idea illustrated in the fact that a human can't live in water. However, a baby in the womb of its mother lives in a world of water and that is where he learns all the Torah with the Malach and his existence there is supernatural. Chazal teach us that the key of rain is not sent through a **שליח** as it comes directly from Hashem. Analysing the word **מים** we notice its hidden and revealed letters have the same equivalent- 90- (מ- מם . י- יוד . ממ) symbolizing perfection. This explains why Hashem punishes the wicked with water- tidal waves, tsunamis, floods and so on.

Similarly, Pharoh was punished through the **ים סוף** and **סיסרא's** army was punished through water as it says **נחל קישון גרפם** - *the Kishon stream swept them away*. Indeed, Titus said to him it seems that the power of the G-d of the Jews is only in water. With this we can understand why **מים** has the same Gematria as **מלך** *(90)* since through water Hashem shows that He is the king of the world and as we say- **ה' למבול ישב וישב ה' מלך לעולם**

It is fitting that fish live in water since that is the world of Hashem and therefore, they didn't corrupt themselves by the **מבול**. Consequently, they do not require **שחיטה** since no rectification is necessary to eat them. For the same reason, we have no **קרבנות** from creatures that live in water. This also explains why we eat fish on Shabbos since Shabbos completes the lack of the creation- **באת שבת באת מנוחה**; *when Shabbos comes, rest comes*- just as fish are complete.

It is obviously no coincidence that the word **דג**; fish has a numerical value of 7 as this is what we eat on Shabbos- the 7th day.
Comparing a fish to other creatures we notice that it doesn't have a **קול**; sound. A cat meows, a dog barks but fish have no sound. This is because fish are in a world of water, a world of beyond. People do not communicate with their pet fish in contrast to other pets such as dogs etc since they are in a different category. With this we can grasp on a deeper level why we don't eat fish and meat together since they are two different classes. Another interesting characteristic about fish is that they don't sleep. This is because sleep is 1/60 of death, so to a certain extent they do not have death because they are complete, perfect. It comes as no surprise that **דג** consists of the same letters as **גד** since **גד** was born circumcised; complete, just as a fish is complete without blemish.

Pure Ways of Man



The six days of the week parallel the 6,000 years of the world and as it says **כי אלף שנים בעיניך וגו'** - 1000 years are like a day. This is indicated in **כי ששת ימים** 6 days of creation, as **ששת** yields a Gematria of 1,000. Consequently, the sixth day lines up with the 6th millennium.
In this generation, we see those who have problems in the area of relationships that are corrupt and the like. It is specifically on the 6th day of creation that it says **נעשה אדם**; *let us make man*, as it hints to the command of be a man- be normal, not a corrupt being. For this reason, the Mitzva of **פרו ורבו**, is in that section of the Torah. A lack of this was a cause of the Mabul as people were corrupt as **מין בשאינו מינו**.

How old was Noach by the Mabul? 600 years old- the same unit of six as he was a man- normal.



"Hashem derives greater pleasure when people are good to each other than when they are "good" to Him but not to each other." ~ Rabbi Yosef Telushkin.



The Cause of The Mabul

During the Yomim Noraim we say:
תשובה ותפלה וצדקה מעבירין את רע הגזירה
In the Machzor, above the word Teshuva is written **צום**; fast. Above Tefila it says **קול** and above Tzedaka **ממון**. The collective Gematria of **צום , קול** and **ממון** is 408, the same sum as **זאת**. In this way we can interpret **בזאת יכופר עון יעקב** as these can atone and remove an evil decree. Rashi tells us the decree was sealed because of **גזל** theft; as it says **ותמלא הארץ חמס**; the earth became filled with robbery as **חמס** refers to money; **ממון** . With this we can comprehend **קץ כל בשר**; end of all flesh, as the first letters of **קץ** hint to **קול** and **צום** since the cause for **קץ כל בשר** was the lack in the area of **ממון**; money.



All About Eating



Eating affords us a special opportunity to connect to Hashem as it says **ויחזו את האלקים ויאכלו וישתו** - ; *they saw Hashem when they ate and drank.*

In this light **R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa** explains **אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה**; Kiddush must be recited in the place where the meal is eaten. He says engaging in the physical act of eating with the right intentions elevates the physical eating to Kedusha. We need to ask ourselves what are we eating, how we eat, how much we eat and why we eat?

It comes as no surprise that **מאכל** is an acronym for
מה אתה אוכל, איך אתה אוכל, כמה אתה אוכל למה אתה אוכל

The Spiritual תיבה



It is not for naught that it took 120 years to build the **תיבה**. People were saying to Noach- why are you wasting your time with constructing the **תיבה**? Come have a good time with us! People nowadays say the same- why waste your time with spiritual pursuits? Enjoy your time on this world!

Just as in the time of Noach the Mabul ensued, the same is waiting for one who does likewise in this world- after his 120 years. This is in contrast to one who utilizes his time in this world properly.

The word **תיבה** means an ark as well as a word. Just as when one enters a **תיבה** he is saved from a physical Mabul, so too when we enter into the words of Torah and Tefila we are saved from a spiritual Mabul. This can be compared to the following: One can be in a country such as Egypt. However, when he is in the embassy of the United States there, it is as if he is in the United States. We can apply the same to one that is in the Beis Midrash, although there is a whole other world out there. So, the physical **תיבה** also alludes to a spiritual **תיבה**. This is shown in the following:

A) The dimensions of the **תיבה** - 300 by 50 by 30 Amos is the sum of the letters of the word **לשן**; tongue (**ל** is 30 in Gematria, **ש** is 300 and **נ** is 50) hinting to us that we should use our faculty of speech appropriately- for Torah, Tefilla, encouraging others and so on.

Similarly, an allusion to this is found in the words **צהר תעשה לתיבה** - we should make our words (translating **תיבה** as a word) light. It comes as no coincidence that the first letters of **מַות בְיד לָשון וְחיים**; *death and life are in the power of the tongue*, spell **מבול** - as real life is one filled with spirituality.

B) The word **תיבה** is an abbreviation for **תְפלה יְשרה בְכונת הַלב** proper Tefila with Kavana.

C) Let us take the letters of Hashem's name **י- ה- ו- ה** and multiply it with the letters of **אדנ- י** - since that is the way it is pronounced. Multiplying the **י** of **י- ה- ו-ה** - with the **א** of **אדנ- י**, we get 10x1 (10). **ד** with **ה** is 4x5 (20). Together this totals 30. **ו** and **נ** is 6x50 (300) and **ה** and **י** is 5x10 (50).

These are the exact dimensions of the **תיבה**, as the length was 300, width 50 and the height 30. Not surprisingly, the word **תיבה** is comprised of the letters **בית ה'**.

D) In Maariv we say **נשיח בחקיך...תורתך...** ; we will discuss your decrees, we will rejoice in the words of your Torah and with your

Mitzvos. This can also be a reference to the **תיבה**, as it represents spirituality. **נשיח** is an acronym for those who were in the **תיבה** - **נח, שם, חם, יפת**

Deeper Dimensions

We are told the dimensions of the **תיבה** were 300 Amos its length, 50 its width, 30 its height and its roof sloped upward to an Amah. Is there anything deeper behind these numbers?

The Malach named **סמא-ל** - and the **נחש** represent the evil in the world. Every evil must have some element of Kedusha, good in it in order to exist. This can be compared to bacteria (evil) as it needs to be nourished for it to grow. The names of Malachim end with the letters **מיכא- ל , רפא- ל , גבריא -ל, שננדיא-ל א- ל** and so on), Kedusha- as this forms the name of Hashem.

The **א- ל** of **סמא -ל** gives it its existence. The impure of **סמא- ל** is represented by the letters **ס** and **מ** .The evil of the **נחש** is symbolized with the **ח** . Together this (**ס, מ** of **סמא- ל** and **ח** of **נחש**) spells **חמס** as in **ותמלא הארץ חמס** ;the earth had become full of robbery, as it is because of this that the judgement then was sealed.

The pure/holy letters are represented by **א,ל,ש,נ**,the remaining letters from **נחש** and **סמא- ל**.

Is it any wonder that the numerical value of these letters are the dimensions of the **תיבה – א-1, נ- 50, ל-30, ש-300**! Building the **תיבה** - the rectification- was through the holy letters.

Adding the sum of **סמא -ל** - (131) with **נחש** (358), we come to a total of 489. Noach overcame the evil of the **נחש** and **סמא- ל** - and was saved from the Mabul, as he was **תמים היה בדרתיו**; perfect. What is the Gematria of **תמים**? (490) one more than 489, alluding to that he overcame the evil thereby being saved through the **תיבה**.

Is that Hebrew or English?



R' Reuvain Margolis in his Sefer **מרגליות הים** quotes the **Shela** that when the world was created, there was only Loshon Hakodesh. As a result of the Dor Haflaga, where languages got mixed up, Loshon Hakodesh got mixed into other languages. In light of this we can comprehend why there are many similarities in English to Loshon Hakodesh. The following is a sample of the many instances:

The term **אשם**; guilt, sounds similar to ashamed. **כפול**; double, twice when pronounced sounds identical to couple. How about halo (circle of light) and **בהלו נרו**; lamp shining. **גורן**; granary, sounds like grain. **פרט**; part, piece sounds similar to part. **סתירה**; contradiction, sounds like mystery. What about **מטר**; rain, and meteorologist. **הדר**; splendour, sounds alike to adore. **איכר**; farmer, reminds us of agriculture. How about Davening and Divine.

Here some other words: Gematria and Geometry. **קול** and call. **פרדס** and paradise. **לב** and love. **אהלה** and Aloe. **דרך** and direction. **ישן**; old, *ancient*. **בטח** ; certainty, and bet. **כמו** and common. **נפל** and fall. **עול** ; sin, and evil. **ארץ** and earth. **דיו**; ink, and dye. **עוד** and add. **שום**; estimate, and assume. **ככר** and cake. **קרן** and corner as **קרן זוית** is a corner. **עיקר**; the main part, and core. **מפטם** and fat. **טעם**; reason, taste sounds like theme, which is what a theme is. **בבל** and babble. **רגיל**; to do by rote, sounds like regularity. **מוביל**; to bring forth

sounds like mobile. **ערב רב** and Rif-Raf. **יין**; wine, and vine. **שטופי זמה** and steeped in immorality. **גמל** and camel. **בית** and base.

Here are some more:

1) The words ... **לגד שלחן** refers to a deity. Is it any coincidence that **גד** sounds the same as god.

2) Skin is called **עור** which also means blind as in **לפני עור**.This is just as we find in English that hide means to conceal (like blind) as well as skin (as in the hide of an animal).

3) The word G-d in English comes from the word good. This stems from the Pasuk **טוב ה' לכל**; Hashem is good to everyone.

4) The term goodbye is a contraction of 'G-d be with you.' This sounds familiar to what the sages instituted that one should greet his friend with Hashem's name as Boaz greeted the harvesters **ה' עמכם**; Hashem is with you.

5) The word elevate sounds akin to the letter **א** when pronounced. This is because **א** refers to that which is higher, as is shown in the following: A) **א** spelled out is **אלף** -; 1,000 the highest number in the decimal system. B) **א** refers to Hashem, the **אלופו של עולם** C) The word **אלוף** is translated as a chief.

6) **בגד** means a garment as well as a traitor (**בוגד**). Another word for traitor is turncoat (which is an article of clothing- coat).

7) Saying Abracadabra, we see a relation to **אברא כאדברא**; I will create with my speech. This is how the world was created- with 10 utterances.

8) There is a saying in English "look into it." We see a parallel between **עין**; eye and **עיון**; look deeper.

The following are some connections of English to Aramaic (language of the Gemara), another language that has holiness. **ממון**; money, and money sound the same. **דילמא**; maybe, perhaps- and dilemma. **ארעא**; land, and area.

In light of what we have mentioned, we have fulfilled **קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה'** as we took these words and returned them to Hashem, their source- tracing back these words to their genuine language.

Languages

We know that Loshon Hakodesh created the world and as the Midrash says that Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world. Consequently, Loshon Hakodesh is unlike other languages in that the word tells us about the object. For this reason, **דבר** means a word and an object.

The following are some of the many examples: (1) a hand which contains 14 joints is called **יד**. Is it any coincidence that **יד** has a sum of 14. Furthermore, 1+4 is 5, referring to the 5 fingers. (2) The word **שן**; tooth is related to **שנוי**; change, since the food goes through a changing process while it is in one's mouth as the food enters the mouth whole and is then ground up by the teeth. **שן** also means to repeat since it repeats the grinding process until the food is ground. It also means sharp as in **שיננא** since a tooth is sharp enabling it to grind up the food. (3) We know that a firstborn son gets a double inheritance. Thus, the letters that compose the word **בכר** are double in its numerical value of its previous letter.

Thoughts Creating Reality

The story is told of two Chassidim who went to their Rebbe for a Bracha to have a child. One year later, they both returned to the Rebbe. Being that only one of them had a baby since receiving the Bracha, the childless Chassid was astonished. The Chassid with the child asked the other what he did after he received the Bracha. He responded that he waited for it to become fulfilled. The childless Chassid inquired: what did you do after receiving the Bracha? He

replied that he bought a carriage as he believed the Bracha would come to fruition. Believing in something can cause it to happen.
Rashi tells us Noach was a **מאמין ואינו מאמין**, he believed but didn't believe fully that the Mabul would come. How could we say this if we know Noach was a Tzadik?
The Ohaiv Yisrael answers: of course he believed what Hashem said that the Mabul would come. However, what one believes makes it become a reality. If Noach believed the Mabul would come, he may bring it about. Therefore, although he believed Hashem, in a certain way he actively doubted it so as not to bring it about.



A woman who wanted a natural birth after a caesarean was instructed by a Rav to go to a doctor who believed this can happen. After following this advice, she had a natural birth.
To be happy when you are in a trouble, see the desired outcome. For example, if you are in need of a Shidduch, see the salvation. See the kind of spouse you want with the life you desire. If you desire to have a child, picture it happening. Look forward to it just like you look forward to the sun rising. We must imagine the good we are seeking.
Recently, at a **סעודת הודאה** someone made from being cured from a deadly sickness, he said that the following was the secret to his recovery: "One day, lying in the hospital, the doctors convened near my bed, assuming I was asleep since my eyes were closed. One doctor

said that according to statistics, he barely has a chance to live. Yet, I'm certain he will survive because he has a strong desire to live.
After hearing those words, I made a strong commitment to remain strong and pull out of the illness. I constantly thought, 'I have the willpower to live, and I will survive.' That is what pulled me through the road until recovery."
The man then introduced the doctor. In his speech, the doctor related the following: "Everything the patient said was true. I remember that meeting at his bedside, when I said that the patient will recover due to his strong desire to live. **However, I was speaking about a different patient, not about him**! His illness was so severe that I didn't imagine he could survive, even with a strong desire.
I learned from his recovery that when one has a strong desire to live, he can recover even from the most severe illness. Also, encouragement goes a long way, even when the patient only imagines that it was intended for him."
The Pasuk says **רבות מחשבות...היא תקום**, man has many thoughts, the counsel of Hashem will prevail. This can be understood that we think many thoughts daily, yet we have the ability to cause **עצת ה' היא תקום** . That is to say, if we choose positive thoughts that are favourable in Hashem's eyes. Then we can cause those thoughts to fulfil themselves, to come true in a constructive way.

Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport

ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישימו על שכם שניהם וילכו אחרנית

ויכסו את ערות אביהם ופניהם אחרנית וערות אביהם לא ראו *(9:23)*

After the waters of the flood subsided and Hashem commanded Noach and his family to leave the ark, Noach encountered a desolate wasteland, a reminder of the year of unprecedented destruction the world had just endured. Overwhelmed by the sheer amount of rebuilding which was necessary to render the world once again

inhabitable, he chose to begin by planting a vineyard. The Torah criticizes Noach's actions, noting that he desecrated and sullied himself by doing so. The end result was that he became drunk after drinking from the wine and passed out naked in a drunken stupor.

When Noach's sons Shem and Yefes became aware of his humiliating and degrading condition, they approached him with a garment to cover him, an act for which they were praised and rewarded. However, what is interesting to note is that the Torah emphasizes that when Shem and Yefes approached Noach, they walked backward and turned away their faces so as not to see their Noach in his disgraced state. This is difficult to understand. Even if they were ashamed to personally witness their father's degraded state, why did they approach him while walking backwards? Why didn't they simply walk in a regular fashion and close their eyes, which is significantly easier?

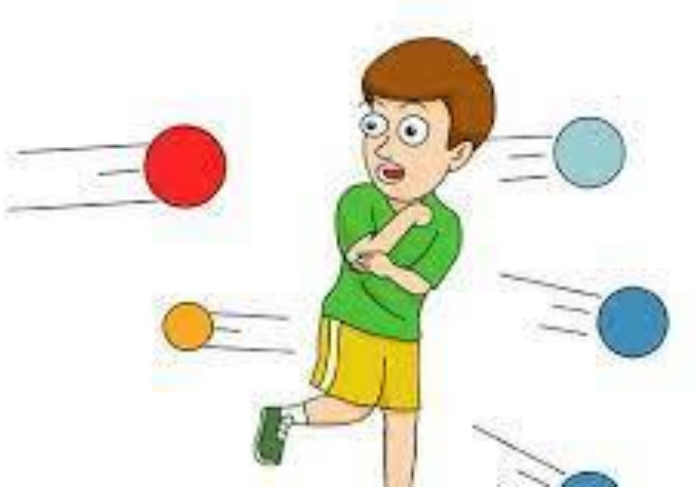
The Alshich HaKadosh explains that although the motivation for Shem and Yefes's action was their father's honour, the reason that they covered him in this manner was not for his sake, but for theirs. They understood that exposure to impurity has a deleterious effect on one's soul. Even if he finds the immoral item repugnant, contact with it inherently causes damage. In particular, a person's face is part of his Tzelem Elokim – Divine Image – and whatever it is exposed to automatically leaves an impression.

For this reason, Shem and Yefes felt they had no choice but to approach their uncovered father in this unnatural manner in order to protect their faces from coming into contact with such impurity.

Similarly, Lot and his family were warned by the angels that although they merited being saved from Sodom, they were forbidden to turn around while escaping to look back at the destruction. In spite of this, Lot's wife turned around when they were fleeing and immediately turned into a pillar of salt (19:26). Although she

transgressed the command against looking back at Sodom, for what was she punished so harshly?

Rav Don Segal explains that when a person looks at something, he becomes spiritually connected to it. In this case, when Lot's wife turned around to gaze at Sodom, she became connected to the city and was punished with destruction as if she were part of the city.



In a modern application of this concept, Rav Don Segal relates that he was once driving his teacher **Rav Chatzkel Levenstein** in a car when Rav Chatzkel suddenly and abruptly ducked down as if somebody was shooting at him, and he needed to protect himself. Startled, Rav Don asked what the problem was. Rav Chatzkel explained that they had just driven past a large movie theater which was shining down spotlights in order to attract attention and encourage people potential patrons to come inside.

Rav Chatzkel, who was aware of the powerful influence exerted even by something with which our face and eyes come into temporary and unintentional contact, felt that he had no choice but to duck and protect his Tzelem Elokim from the impurity latent in the spotlights of the theater.

"There are many paths to become closer to Hashem (through chesed, tefillah, mitzvos), but the safest path, from which one will not fall off, is through Torah study." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe

Measurements of The Ark



The Zohar teaches that prior to the sin of eating from the tree of knowledge, the serpent was known merely as the letter "chet." After it successfully enticed Chava to sin, Adam added to its name the letter "nun" from G-d's name of L-rdship (Ado-noy) and the letter "shin" from G-d's name Sha-dai, calling it "nachash" to mitigate its potential to bring evil into the world. Similarly, the accusing angel was initially known by the letters "samech-mem," but to counteract its wicked powers Adam added one of G-d's names and called it Sama'el.

The Meged Yosef writes that for a time Adam's plan worked successfully. The additions from the Divine names kept the evil powers in check, and the world functioned reasonably for nine generations, but in the generation of Noach the world was filled with chamas - robbery. They sinned so greatly that they allowed the serpent and the prosecuting angel to regain their initial strength, as chamas is a combination of their original names (samech and mem).

In order to restore justice to the world, G-d had no choice but to once again diminish the power of this dastardly duo. He commanded Noach to make an ark which would measure 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits tall, with the roof of the ark sloping upward to one cubit so that the rain would run off. Although one could mistakenly view these dimensions as arbitrary, the **Meged Yosef** explains the depth and precision of every detail in the Torah.

As each letter in the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value, we may re-express the dimensions of the ark as shin cubits in length, nun cubits in width, lamed cubits in height, and an aleph cubit finish on

the roof. The length and width are precisely the two letters needed to once again transform the chet back into nachash, while the height and the finish on top are exactly what were needed to reduce the mighty samech-mem into Sama'el.

The ark which was built with these dimensions allowed Noach to combat the "chamas" which was rampant in his generation and be saved from the flood brought to destroy it.

צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה "Make a window for the Ark . . ." (6:16)



Why? It was so that Noach would be aware of the destruction that was taking place around him. In this vein, **R' Menachem Ben Zion Sacks z"l** writes that this verse calls to every Jew to open his window and look out from his comfortable life at the suffering of his brethren.

He continues: Noach is compared unfavourably to Avraham. Avraham said about himself (Bereishit 24:20), "Elokim before whom I walked." Noach, in contrast, only "walked with Elokim" (6:9). This refers to the fact that Noach never extended himself beyond the four cubits of his own Divine service, while Avraham constantly reached out to the world around him.

Our Sages say that one should always pray in a room that has windows. The greatest tragedy is that people insulate themselves and pray for their own needs, oblivious to the needs of the world around them. (Menachem Zion)

וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה
"Then Hashem said to Noach, `Come to the Ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation'." (Bereishis 7:1)

R' Yaakov Yosef z"l (maggid / preacher in Vilna and Chief Rabbi of New York; died 1902) asks: This verse explains why Noach was saved, but why were his sons–especially Cham–saved? He answers: We see here an example of a son benefitting from the good deeds of his father. Indeed, the Gemara (Berachot 7a) says that if you see a wicked person living a life full of good things ("rasha ve'tov lo"), it is very likely that his father was righteous. This is why we repeatedly invoke the merit of the Patriarchs in our prayers. Nevertheless, we should not expect the merit of our ancestors to outweigh our own deeds.

Thus, for example, the Torah says about Yishmael (Bereishit 21:17), "G-d has heeded the cry of the youth in his present state." Our Sages explain that Yishmael was righteous at that moment and was judged accordingly. However, the implication is that had Yishmael been unworthy, even the merit of his father Avraham could not have helped him. Where, then, is the line drawn? After all, Noach's merits did save his wicked son Cham!

R' Yosef explains that the merit of a person's forefathers can protect him so long as he does not reject that for which his forefathers stood. Noach possessed fear of G-d, says R' Yosef, but he did not serve Hashem in a way that allowed his children to inherit his beliefs. It follows that Cham did not reject Noach's beliefs, which were never really offered to him. Thus, he was able to enjoy the fruits of Noach's good deeds. *(L'bet Yaakov: Drush 11)*

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

כִּי־מֵי נֹחַ זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעֲבֹר מֵי־נֹחַ עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ כֵּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקְצֹף עָלַיִךְ וּמִגְּעָר־בָּךְ: *For this is to Me [as] the waters of Noah, as I swore that* ***the waters of Noah*** *shall never again pass over the earth, so have I sworn neither to be wroth with you nor to rebuke you. (Yeshayahu 54:9)*



All the Meforshim ask, why is the mabul called **מֵי־נֹחַ- *the waters of Noah?*** **Reb Chaim Kanievski** also asks this and says it is because it his own fault. Why didn't Noach Daven for the people that Hashem should have rachmonus on them? That they should do teshuva and not have to suffer in such a fashion? Doesn't a Tzaddik daven for other people? So, because he didn't daven, it was his fault, and this is why it is called **מֵי־נֹחַ**.

Noach didn't daven for the people because he realised that he and his family were going to be saved. Noach didn't think that he was worthy or a tzaddik and he thought that Hashem was doing so much good for him that how dare can he ask Him for anything else. He had done Noach the greatest favour by taking him and his family onto the Taivo. It would not be right to ask any more from Hashem.

Reb Chaim says that Noach was wrong. Even though he thought that Hashem had done the ultimate for him, this shouldn't have stopped him from being humble and davening for the rest of the people. He should have helped them in any way he could.

This is why it is called מְנִיָּחַ. ***Hashem is a father who loves us and from a father you can ask for anything. Let us daven and continue to care for other people.***



Torah Anytime- Rabbi M Becher - Bound Together

Our Sages teach, "All of the Jewish people are responsible (areivim) for one another" (Shavuos 39a). As it pertains to mitzvah performance and all other aspects of life, the Jewish nation is inextricably bound to each other and responsible for each other's welfare. Allow me to share with you one example of what it means to be an areiv, guarantor, in the very literal sense for someone else you never met and will never meet again.

Shortly after I had gotten married, my wife and I managed to find an apartment in Kiryat Moshe, Israel, for $200 a month. After a little back and forth, the government was willing to give it to us for even cheaper, $180, as both of us were new immigrants. The only caveat was that we needed four guarantors to sign us off. While it was a slight hassle, we managed to pull it off and track down four individuals who were kind enough to be our guarantors.

As my wife and I arrived at the bank, we were called over by one of the tellers. After briefly looking through our paperwork, she looked up at us and said, "Where is the fifth guarantor?" I looked back at her with a confused stare. "Fifth guarantor? I was told by the agent in Australia that we only needed four, which was difficult enough to get." "Well," the teller said, "you are now here in Israel, and I need to stamp the paper to approve it. You need five guarantors, though."

As I began to see that I was not going to get by with anything less, I panicked. "We need to have this paperwork finalized and signed by this afternoon!" "Otherwise we will lose the apartment." But all my pleading fell on deaf ears. We needed five guarantors, and she was not going to budge.

I quickly started looking around the bank in a semi-frantic daze, until my eye caught sight of a gentlemen walking nearby. He approached me and politely asked, "Is everything alright? Is there a problem?" "Well," I said, "there is a slight problem. I need a fifth guarantor to sign this paperwork or else I will lose the opportunity to purchase the apartment my wife and I are trying to move into!"

"I will sign," the man said. I was baffled to hear such words from a complete stranger. "What do you mean?" I asked. "I will be your guarantor. Doesn't it say 'Kol yisrael areivem zeh ba'zeh'? 'All of the Jewish people are responsible for one another. What difference does it make if it is in writing?

Right then and there, this man, who I had never met and have never met since, signed his name. And he did it all because of one reason. All of the Jewish people are bound together and care for one another. When one Jew is in need, all Jews are in need and are ready to help. There is nothing more comforting and reassuring than that.

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Like Grandfather, Like Grandson

כי בצלם אלקים עשה את האדם ***For in the image of Hashem, G-d created man*** *(Bereishit 9:6)*

Sometime ago, I was invited to speak at a conference of various organizations in America dealing with children at risk and in crisis. After I spoke, I took a seat at a nearby table, only to shortly thereafter be approached by Dr. David Pelcovitz, Professor of Psychology at Yeshiva University and a renowned therapist for decades. "Rabbi Jacobson," he said, "let me share a first-hand story with you." Sitting up in my chair, I leaned over in eager curiosity of what Dr. Pelcovitz had to say.

"One day, a fifteen-year-old yeshiva boy from Brooklyn came to see me. He went on to explain how his family was quite renowned and successful in the Torah world. Each of his brothers graduated from

top yeshivos with honours and his sisters were extraordinary girls with fine husbands. Yet, for the boy personally, he referred to himself as "the black sheep in the family." He had already been kicked out of a handful of yeshivos and struggled to excel, prompting his father to send him to me for therapy.

I could sense, however, that the boy was very special. From the very moment he stepped into my office, it was clear that he was fully of energy and intelligent. After speaking to him for a few minutes, I said, "I don't see a real problem here. What I think we should do is ask your family to come to therapy next week. Have your father, mother, siblings, and even your grandparents come here." While from a professional standpoint, I usually do not jump right away to include the child's entire family in therapy unless needed, this case was an exception. I had a feeling that bringing in the grandparents would be of help to the boy, to which he consented.

Next week, in walked the boy accompanied by his father, mother, brothers and sisters and bubby and zaidy. My office was quite crowded. After a few minutes, I turned to the father and said, "You suggested that your son come to see me. Perhaps you should speak first and tell us what you believe the issue is."

The father proceeded to get up and say, "You see, doctor, I am broken-hearted. Look at my children here. Baruch Hashem, my sons have graduated from esteemed yeshivos and gone on to become successful in learning and business. My daughters are wonderful and married superb husbands in their own right. I am tremendously blessed. "But this son of mine is different. He has unbelievable potential and is very bright, yet he has been wasting his time. He has gone from one yeshiva to another, and it hurts for me to see that he is failing and not matching the same standards of excellence his siblings have reached. I did not recommend that he come to therapy for my sake, but for his sake. I want him to dedicate his life to

something meaningful and productive, and the way it is going now, that doesn't seem to be the case."

After the father finished saying his part, he sat back down. Silence filled the room. On everyone's mind was who would be the next one to speak. Finally, the grandfather broke the tension. A man well into his years, he said, "I would like to say a few words." And with that, he began.

"As you all know, I am a very wealthy man with a successful business. But after what I just heard from my son, I don't know if I should include him in my will." While I started thinking that maybe this group session should be moved into the lawyer's office as it seemed to be veering towards discussions of wills and legal considerations, the grandfather turned to his son. "Have you forgotten the story I shared with you when you were a child? Didn't you tell it to the grandchildren?" It was now the grandfather's turn to tell his own story to the family, with me included.

"I grew up in Poland as part of a beautiful and large family. All my brothers were learning in yeshiva and excelling at a rapid pace, yet there was one black sheep in the family. And who was that? Me. If the diagnostic terminology had been around in those days, I would have been diagnosed with them all. I couldn't sit still in school, I couldn't read and I was out on the streets. My father had tremendous agony from me. I was not a source of nachas to my parents at all.

But one thing I did have was a good sense of intuition and shrewdness. And so, one day in 1938, I picked up a book entitled Mein Kampf and began reading. When I finished the book, I came home and approached my father. "Tatty," I said, "Germany and Poland share a border. This man is serious. Every Jew is going to be wiped out. We must escape before it is too late." But all my father could do was look at me and say, "Stop speaking nonsense. You know why you are saying this? It is because you are not in yeshiva. If you

would be in yeshiva like your other brothers, you wouldn't be filling your head with all this rubbish written by some crazy anti-Semite."

Looking back at my father, I said, "Perhaps you are right that I should be sitting in yeshiva, but crazy I am not. I am clever and savvy, and I can tell you that this man is serious and will act on his convictions. We have to flee before it is too late." But my father wouldn't hear from it. Chastising me and saying that what I was saying was illogical, I just stood there. Yet I knew what I had to do. If my family was not going to run away, that didn't mean I wouldn't. And so, I painfully told my father, "I am sorry, but I will have to run away alone." And that's exactly what I did. Saying goodbye to my father and mother, I left Poland and crossed the ocean. But, as you all know, I was the only survivor of my entire family.

And then the grandfather pointed to his grandson under discussion. "The only reason our family exists today is because of a boy like me and him. I was different and not capable of what my other brothers were capable of, yet I still went on to become very successful. And that boy of yours is exactly like his grandfather." And then the grandfather made his point. "So, I nicely tell you, please don't denigrate your son. Don't put him down and make him feel worthless. The whole reason we are all here now studying Torah and attaining success in our respective endeavors is because of a boy like him."

After hearing this story from Dr. Pelcovitz, I was profoundly moved. But I just had one question. "Doctor," I said, "what is the end of the story? You cannot leave me stranded. What happened to the boy? "You should know," said Dr. Pelcovitz, "that the boy was hired by his grandfather to run his own business. And today, he is the one in charge and all of his brothers work for him. He helps support each and every one of them."

Sometimes, we look at someone – a child, a friend, a student – and only see blackness. We see a black sheep who has little potential and will seemingly amount to nothing special. But then we look again and

realize that we have made a terrible mistake. Within every child lies a world of promising greatness. It is precisely those individuals who we at times expect the least from who go on to produce the most and make us the proudest. Every child is precious. All we have to do is look closely and see their hidden beauty awaiting to shine.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Ask Why



If you would ask what it takes to become a leader and change the destiny of a nation and even the world, it would come down to one word. Literally, one word. It is the word that engenders extraordinary breakthroughs and leads to incredible results. Moshe Rabbeinu, when noticing the Burning Bush not becoming consumed, turned aside in intrigue and asked, "Why will the Bush not be burned? (Shemos 3:3). **His question was why**. Yosef HaTzaddik, after being thrown into prison alongside the butler and baker, noticed them downtrodden one morning and asked, "Why do you appear downcast today?" (Bereishis 40:7). **His question was why.**

Moshe Rabbeinu's question led him to become the leader of the Jewish people. He turned aside to notice the pain of his Jewish brethren, represented by the consuming bush, and asked why. Yosef HaTzaddik's rise to leadership too began when he saw his fellow inmates depressed and he turned aside to take note. He didn't ignore what he saw. He looked straight at the problem and, despite every reason to turn away, turned towards it and asked, "Why is this happening? Why do you feel this way?" **It is that one word – why** – which holds the key to opening people's hearts and paving the way

for personal and national salvation. It is the "why" which will open reservoirs of willpower and motivation to help others and heal the world.



Rabbi Mashiach Kelaty - The Reunion

It was during those dark and difficult war years that a young girl named Ida was deported from Czechoslovakia to Auschwitz. That train ride was the last time she saw her family, aside from her sister, who joined her in the camp. For Ida, she was assigned a job which kept her alive, yet was painfully sad to carry out. Day after day, she would sift through the clothing and belongings of those who headed to the gas chambers.

Every night, Ida and her sister would return exhausted to their tiny barracks, which just barely fit them and thirty-six other girls. Life in the dirty and deteriorating barracks was beyond uncomfortable, but there simply was no other option.

One night, the girls heard an unusual ruffling noise emanating from what seemed to be under the bed. They assumed it was a rat. Nervous and suspicious, they immediately began to panic. Yet within moments, the source of the commotion became clear. It was a tiny, little girl, who must have been two years old. Hesitantly and cautiously, she crawled out from under the bed.

After some inquiring, it was discovered that her name was Esther, and she had escaped for her dear life to the barracks. She had no idea where the rest of her family was; she was alone and helpless.

With both pity and compassion, the girls welcomed her into their living quarters. Yet there was one girl who took a particular interest and liking to Esther. And that was Ida. She decided she would look after her, and ensure her safety and well-being. Ida did just that. She gave little Esther special attention and essentially became her

surrogate mother. Ida, though, faced a daily challenge. Esther was too young to work, and as such, would not be needed by the Germans. Her chances at survival were slim. Ida, though, had a plan. The blockhova, the Jewess who overlooked the inmates and was responsible for keeping them in line, knew a Jewish boy who had falsely assumed Aryan identity. Perhaps he could allow Esther to remain in a safe and private room throughout the day while everyone else was working. The blockhova agreed, and Esther survived.



Then came January of 1945 and Ida along with thousands of others began the Death March from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen. Ida was separated from her sister, yet not from Esther. She in no way was willing to leave Esther behind. Fortunately, and surprisingly, Esther was small enough for Ida to wrap in a blanket and fit in a knapsack. And so, on walked Ida carrying Esther for miles until they arrived in Bergen-Belsen.

Although life in Bergen-Belsen was even more difficult for Ida than in Auschwitz, she carried on with courage and conviction. She knew that if she maintained the hope that she would make it out alive, perhaps she would. Otherwise, the pangs of suffering would get the better of her, and that would be the beginning of the end.

Shortly after arriving in the camp, Ida surprisingly came across her sister, who at the time had become sick with typhus. Despite the wretched state her sister was in, she was alive, and that was all Ida

needed to muster the strength to devotedly tend to her with love and care. At last, Ida, her sister and Esther were together again.

After the Jews in Bergen-Belsen were liberated on April 15, 1945, the two sisters headed back to their home in Czechoslovakia in search of other relatives who had perhaps survived. Esther too travelled back home to Bratislava in the hope that her parents or siblings had made it out alive. Separating ways was difficult for Ida and Esther, although they planned on reuniting two weeks later in Prague. And with that, they bid each other goodbye.

Two weeks later, Ida and her sister were in Prague, but Esther was nowhere to be found. All inquiries to local residents and refugee centres as to Esther's whereabouts were to no avail. No one recalled seeing a young girl with the likeness of Esther, and there was nothing else which could be done. Their search would need to come to an end. Ida and her sister went on to get married and head their separate ways, with Ida moving to America and her sister to Israel.

Years later, during one summer in the early 1950s, Ida decided to visit Israel and catch up with her sister. Yet during her stay, as she walked down the streets of Tel Aviv one blazing afternoon, she fainted. Thankfully, two soldiers were at hand, who helped transfer Ida to the hospital where she was stabilized. The two soldiers continued to monitor and look after Ida, ensuring that all her needs were met, and she was provided the best care possible.

When Ida was ready to be discharged, she was without words to thank the soldiers for their care and kindness. "How can I ever repay you?" "You know," one of the soldiers said, "I am getting married in a few days and it would be an honour to have you there." Although Ida would know no one else aside from the chassan, she happily agreed to attend.

It was a beautifully arranged outdoor wedding in Jerusalem. Ida was present, looking around to see if she could spot a familiar face

anywhere. Within a few minutes, however, all heads turned in one direction. "The kallah is on her way!" someone murmured, quieting the crowd down.

Ida slowly and carefully squeezed her way through the crowd, trying to gain a glimpse of the kallah. And then she saw. The kallah looked familiar. Very familiar. It was Esther. Unfortunately, though, Esther didn't appear to have any mother or father to walk her down to the chuppa. But now she would.

As Ida approached Esther and their two faces met, it was an unforgettable moment in time. A day neither Ida nor Esther ever dreamed of had arrived. Taking Esther by the hand, Ida walked her down to the chuppa with tears of joy. The very woman who had carried Esther on a death march for miles amid pain and fatigue would now walk with her on a living march to marriage amid joy and elation.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro - The Roots of Responsibility

ויעש נח ככל אשר צוהו ד' And Noach did according to everything that Hashem commanded him *(Bereishit 7:5)*

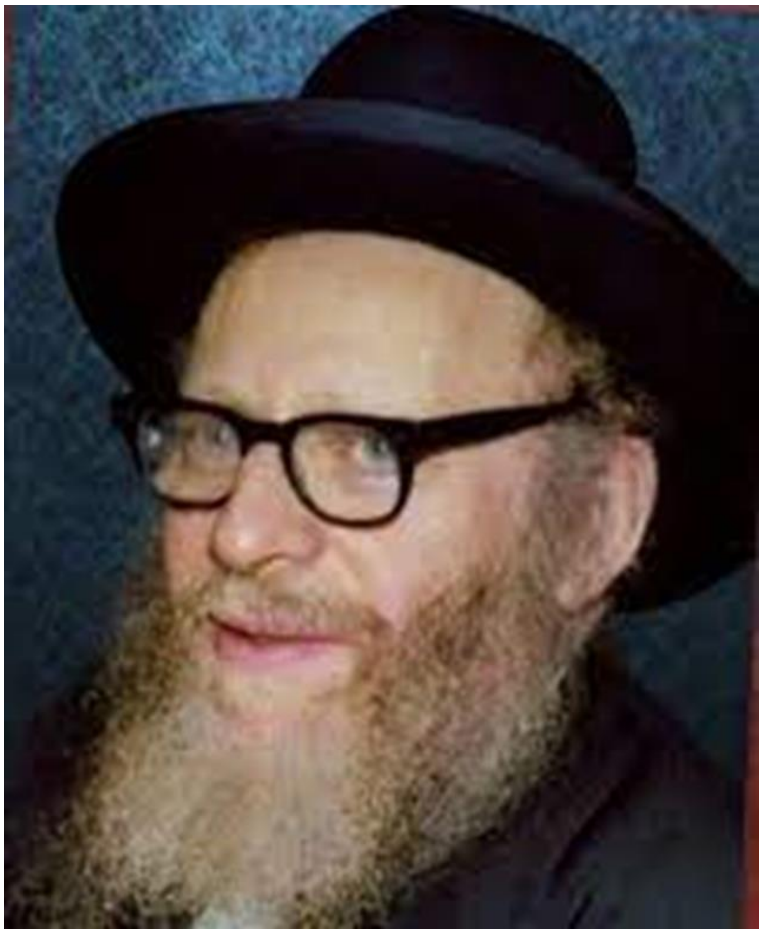
We all can appreciate the importance and value of responsibility. Whether as a parent, spouse, sibling, or friend, caring after the needs and burdens of others stands as one of the most important endeavours and attitudes we can embrace. Yet, when it comes to being a member of the Jewish people, even as large and diverse as our nation is, *achrayos* (responsibility) takes on profound and expansive meaning.

The year was 1955 in Boro Park, New York. Chaim Schwartz who had survived the flames of the Holocaust had made his way over to America, yet without his family. His wife and children had unfortunately not made it out. While Mr. Schwartz was

understandably heartbroken, every day one fellow Jew would warmly greet him and extend a hearty "Shalom aleichem!" Giving Mr. Schwartz encouragement and support, life moved on slowly but with the prospective hope of rebuilding a new future.

One day, the man said to Mr. Schwartz, "I am giving you a *beracha* that you should remarry and have a daughter, and I will dance at the wedding. You have a long life ahead of you. Don't give up!" Although Mr. Schwartz had his doubts about how significantly life could improve given his present situation, the words of this man nevertheless rang in his ears.

And sure enough, as the man had said, Mr. Schwartz went on to remarry. And indeed, he had a daughter.



When the daughter was ten years old, the world experienced the loss of one of the greatest Torah leaders of the time, **Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l**. Why that meant anything to Mr. Schwartz and his family was because the "man" who had uplifted the spirits of Mr. Schwartz and provided him with hope and determination was none other than Rav Aharon Kotler.

Ten years later, Mr. Schwartz's daughter met a wonderful boy who she planned on marrying. And so, the wedding date was set as the families prepared for the exciting and momentous day to arrive.

As the wedding celebrations and dancing began, shortly thereafter in walked **Rav Shneur Kotler zt"l**, son of Rav Aharon. He was already an older man at the time, yet that did not deter him from grabbing hold of the father and *chassan* and energetically dancing full of joy and enthusiasm.

While the father was certainly thrilled to have the great Rav Shneur at the wedding, he could only wonder why in fact he had made the extra effort to attend. "Rebbe," Mr. Schwartz said, "it's so nice that you came. Thank you so much. If you don't mind me asking, though, why did you go out of your way to be here?"

"I am here for a very good reason," replied Rav Shneur. "When my father was on his deathbed ten years ago, he called me over and said, 'There is a man named Chaim Schwartz who lives in Boro Park and has a daughter who is now ten years old. I want you to watch over this man and his family. After he came to America, I promised him that he would get married, have a daughter and I would dance at her wedding. Yet, clearly, I will be unable to attend the wedding. And so, I would like you to go in my stead."

With Rav Shneur looking ever so gently at the father, he said, "That is why I am here. I am here wishing you and your family a Mazel Tov along with the blessings of my father."

That is *achrayos*. That is what it means to personally look after a fellow Jew and view him as your brother who you care for under all circumstances. Just imagine what Rav Aharon Kotler had on his mind during his last moments in this world: a fellow Jew.

We all can lead lives where we show the same responsibility and compassion for every member of Klal Yisrael. It all begins with looking beyond ourselves and peering into the heart of another Jew and saying, "He is my brother and I am here to help."

Rabbi Paysach Krohn

What in fact is the etymology of the word "shidduch"? **The Ran** in his commentary to Meseches Shabbos (5b in dapei HaRif), cites the verse in Shoftim (3:11), "**ותשקט הארץ ארבעים שנה**" – "And the land was quiet for forty years." Targum Yonasan ben Uziel renders the word **ותשקט** as "**ושדוכת**," a word similar to **שידוכים** (shidduchim).

The Ran explains that the word shidduchim relates to the word **ותשקט**, peace and tranquillity, for that is what a woman finds after she gets married. She experiences serenity and contentment with her husband and enjoys a blissful marriage.

Rebbetzin Aviva Feiner - Many Colours, One Light

את קשתי נתתי בענן ***I have set My rainbow in the cloud*** *(9:13)*



The Gemara (Chagigah 16a) tells us, "He who does not pity the honour of Hashem will stare at a rainbow."

As implied by this statement of our Sages, the rainbow represents the glory of Hashem to such a degree that one who fails to appreciate such honour will look at the rainbow. Yet why, in fact, is the rainbow singled out? In what way does it, over any other magnificent part of nature, bespeak the greatness of Hashem? Why not choose any other grandeur of creation to highlight? Niagra Falls and the Swiss Alps are as well breathtaking sights. What is so unique about the rainbow as it relates to G-d's honour in the world?

In truth though, explains **Rav Gedalyah Schorr**, true G-dliness manifests itself in none other than the beauty and colours of the rainbow. But not merely because of its spectacular array of colours, but what underlying science goes into their formation. In the creation of a rainbow, sunlight refracts in water droplets, resulting in a spectrum of beautifully arranged colours.

But herein lies the very point. The creation of the multi-coloured rainbow results from one light, namely the sun. It is ultimately one light source which produces many different colours. And that is what we are meant to learn about the greatness and grandeur of Hashem. Many times in life it appears as if we are seeing many different colours, yet at the very root of it all, it is one colour. One day may go great, another may be very bitter, another so-so and on and on. Our perception of our relationship with G-d and our life may seem to be multi-coloured, but in truth, everything stems from one G-d. Sometimes we may need to see different colours in our life, but it all comes from one light, from one sun, from one G-d, the Rock of Klal Yisrael.

Hashem is well aware of what He is doing. He placed us into this world and gives us our very lives. All that we must do is inculcate the message of the rainbow and remind ourselves, "I know that Hashem is in charge, and if He is showing me blue today, then I need to react to blue. And if He is showing me purple, or red, or green, then I need to react to that specific colour." The beauty of the rainbow is what lies behind it: the true source of light, our beloved Father in Heaven.

There is a famous story in which the Kaiser asks Bismarck, "Can you prove the existence of G-d?" Bismarck replies, "The Jews, your majesty. The Jews."

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת **נֹחַ נֹחַ** אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקים הִתְהַלֶּךְ־**נֹחַ**



The Medrash Tanchuma notes that Noach's name was repeated three times in the first posuk alluding to the three different worlds he experienced. He first saw the world when it was complete; then during the destruction of the Mabul and again when it was resettled.

R' Simcha Wasserman zt"l commented that he too saw three worlds: He saw pre-war Europe, with its great Yeshivos; then he witnessed its destruction, including the murder of his illustrious father, **R' Elchanan zt"l** Hy"d, and then was able to witness the rebirth of Torah in America, continuing his father's dream, to replant Torah on this side of the ocean. Perhaps the most striking thing about Holocaust survivors was their ability to pick up the shards of their shattered lives and re-establish a world that has been growing stronger ever since. It took much courage for those select survivors who had witnessed the destruction of whole families, communities and Torah institutions and still have the fortitude to rebuild. Noach was originally referred to as **איש צדיק** , but after the Mabul, he was derogatorily called **איש אדמה**. Why?

Because he debased himself by planting a vineyard, drinking the wine and becoming drunk. Noach, one of the only survivors of the flood,

was depressed with his lot. Unlike Avraham Avinu at age 137, Noach did not pick himself up and start over. Instead, he got drunk!

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו



Rashi tells us: Some Sages viewed Noach favourably; he was a Tzaddik in his time - how much more so if he had lived in a generation of righteous people. Others viewed him negatively; in his generation he was righteous, but if he had been in Avraham Avinu's generation, he would not have been considered of any importance.

R' Yehuda Yosefi shlit'a makes a fascinating observation. A Tzaddik is considered righteous compared to the people of his time. If one is living in a generation where everyone is on a high level. it is more difficult to be considered a Tzaddik in the eyes of Hashem. But if one is living in a generation that is full of immorality, indulging in pleasures and sinking sadly into the depths of materialism, then it is much easier to be considered a Tzaddik! All you have to do is raise yourself up, a little bit, out of the mud! You don't have to be as brilliant as the Rambam, as saintly as the Chofetz Chaim, or as learned as the Shaagas Aryeh. You have to watch that you don't fall from the pitfalls of the generation that you are living in!

R' Chayim Vital zt"l writes in the name of the **Ariza'l,** that a small deed in his day is worth more than big mitzvos of previous generations because the tumah is much greater in his time!

Noach was surrounded by immorality and theft. But he stayed far away from these sins, and the Torah calls him a Tzaddik! We, too, are living in a generation that is steeped in immorality. We are drowning in a world that is indulging in every form of pleasure, entertainment and nonsense imaginable!

You want to be a Tzaddik? It's not so hard! Look around and see where people are going astray and make sure you stay far away from those activities! Don't fall into the trap of being like everyone else. Don't do it just because "everyone is doing it!" Raise yourself above it, even just a little, and you too can be a Tzaddik!



וְלֹא־מָצְאָה הַיּוֹנָה מָנוֹחַ לְכַף־רַגְלָהּ But the dove found no resting place for the sole of its foot *8:9*

Once there was a wise old man and a smart little boy. The boy could not stand the fact that people thought the old man was wise. "I am smart," thought the jealous boy, "the old man is a fool." He was driven by a desire to expose the old man as a fool.

The boy had a plan. He went out and captured a small, fragile bird. With the bird cupped in his hands, the boy's scheme was to approach the old man and ask him, "Old man, what do I have in my hands?" to which the wise old man would inevitably reply, "You have a bird." Then the boy would ask, "Old man, is the bird alive or is it dead?" If the old man replied that the bird was dead, the clever boy would open his hands and allow the bird to fly off into the forest. But if the old man replied that the bird was alive, the boy would then crush the tiny little bird in his cupped hands, until the bird dies. Then the boy would open his hands and say, "See, old man, the bird is dead!"

And so as the story goes, the smart boy went to the old man and he said, as planned, "Old man, what do I have in my hands?" The old man replied, "You have a bird, my son." The boy smiled. Looking at the old man, his voice dripping with disdain, he said, "Is the bird alive or is

it dead?" Whereupon the old man looked at the boy with his kindly old eyes and replied, ***"The answer, my son, lies in your hands.":***

Noach was a righteous man in the eyes of Hashem. He understood that life is precious, and a person must take his own actions and responsibilities in his own hands. As a result, Hashem gave him the responsibility to rebuild the world.

In essence, the lives of every living creature were placed in Noach's capable hands, and through him, the world began anew after the destruction of the flood. Each one of us, has this very same ability and responsibility to nurture life and allow it to grow. We all take our lives in our own hands, and we make the most of it. For if we don't, the world will begin to wilt and die, and we will have ourselves to blame for it.

Torah Tavlin

R' Yisroel Alter zt"l (Beis Yisroel of Ger) would say:

ויזכר אלקים את נח - Rashi tells us: 'This name (**אלקים**) represents the Divine Attribute of Justice, which was converted to the Divine Attribute of Mercy through the prayer of the righteous.' Where do we see that Noach davened? There is no mention of it in the Torah.

The **Rebbe, R' Bunim zt"l** in Kol Simcha says that there are many silent prayers that are not uttered from one's lips, but rather emanates from a broken heart. These emanations are prayers. When Noach saw how the whole world was destroyed, he was broken-hearted that only he remained, and this itself was his tefillah."

"If you only knew how Hashem looks at you, you would never stop smiling." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky (1921-2014).

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָה מֵאִתּוֹ לִרְאוֹת הֲקַלּוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה

The Torah elaborates how, after the Mabul, Noach made numerous attempts to ascertain whether the ground was sufficiently dry to allow him and his family to go outside. First, he sent the raven (**עורב**) who refused to go.

Rashi cites the Medrash that the raven was destined for a different mission in the times of Eliyahu HaNavi. Noach then proceeded to send a dove (**יוֹנָה**) who did not come back on the third try. Noach then realized the earth had sufficiently dried out. - The question is, the Torah is always so careful not to use extra words, so why is there a need to elaborate on this drawn-out process?

A person may attempt to try something new and it doesn't seem to take off. A parent may have certain aspirations for a child and will get frustrated when the child doesn't seem to succeed at it. A ben Torah tries to start a new and difficult masechta but it doesn't go, or a new business venture fails.

The Torah's lesson for us here is that this child may be destined for something else. The entrepreneur may be destined to succeed at his next undertaking. Don't think he is a failure. Rather, give him support, love and time to find his own unique destiny. Don't give up on the endeavour; the time just may not be ripe yet. With perseverance it will take off, B'ezras Hashem, as did the **יונה** on its third attempt!

The parsha concludes by listing the names and years of all of Noach's descendants. One of them was **יקטן** - a man who merited having thirteen children. Rashi tells us that in the zechus of his humility (the name **יקטן** means small), he was zoche to such progeny.

The idea is that sometimes, the smaller child, the unassuming and quieter one who you think cannot do anything, may in fact be your

greatest source of nachas! So let us not underestimate ourselves, our spouses and definitely not our children. Have tolerance and love and enjoy the eventual nachas.

מי נח

Just as Hashem promised Noach that he will never bring a flood over the entire earth, so did He promise to never allow his anger to impact the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people. Interestingly, the **Zohar** points out that while the Navi was clearly referring to the waters of the Mabul, he called them the waters of Noach. Why is this so?



In **Toras Tzvi** he explains that we learn from Chazal that Noach's generation was a fully immoral and murderous one and as a result was slated to be destroyed. Thus, Noach - who was a member of this generation - was also slated to be destroyed, however, since Noach was "favoured" in the eyes of Hashem, he was spared his generation's fate. As the "favoured" one, Noach should have stepped up and prayed for the salvation of the rest of the world, just as Moshe Rabbeinu did when His people, Bnei Yisroel, were facing annihilation from Hashem.

The righteous in each generation have a responsibility to ensure that everyone upholds all that which is important. Since Noach failed to plead on behalf of his generation, thus the destructive waters are called "**מי נח** " - which teaches us that these waters are referred to as if Noach himself was responsible for them.

While one thinks that if he remains complacent, he will stay out of trouble, it is important to remember that just as there is a time to be quiet, there is also a time to speak out!



The Chazon Ish, R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l was very conscious of maintaining one's health, as he viewed the human body as a wondrous gift from Hashem. He would often take walks in the fields around Bnei Brak in order to breathe the fresh air and allow his limbs and joints to stretch and move.

Many students found this a fortuitous time to talk to the Tzaddik in learning or ask questions of halacha. The Chazon Ish enjoyed these walks for the health component, as well as the company who came with him. Early one morning, after davening Vasikin, as was his custom, the Chazon Ish set out on a stroll down the main boulevard of Bnei Brak, a street that used to be called Rechov Ezra. Today, that street has been renamed, Rechov Chazon Ish.

He took with him a young student named Shmuel Tzvi Kovalsky and they walked the full length of the street where it ended in a series of orchards and fields. The two continued walking and speaking of Torah topics, seemingly lost in the conversation.

Suddenly, and without warning, the clouds opened up and a torrent of rain poured down from the heavens. The Chazon Ish and Shmuel Tzvi were caught in the heavy rainstorm and were far from any

building or shelter to wait out the storm. Instead, they quickly became drenched and hurried back to the end of the main road from where they had come. They stood there, their hats and clothing soaked through and through.

At that early hour of the morning, there was almost no one on the street. Within seconds, though, good fortune smiled upon them. A taxicab was spotted coming down the main road, driving right towards them. The cab slowed down and the driver instantly recognized the celebrated Tzaddik standing in the rain. He quickly opened the passenger side door and called for the Chazon Ish and the young bochur to get in. "I am anyway going to Bnei Brak," he declared, "so I can take both of you along - of course for no charge."

The scene was surreal. The darkness of the early hour, together with the multitude of overhanging black clouds cast an eerie glow on the sky. A deluge of rain cascading down on the quaint Israeli street, a taxicab with its passenger door opened wide - and the Chazon Ish just stood there, waiting, hesitant. "Rabbi, please get in. You and the boy are getting soaked." But the Chazon Ish was a man of halacha, a man of principle. His integrity and the wholesome truthfulness of his very fibre would not allow him to get in - until he ascertained whether it was permitted by halacha.

"Do you own this cab or do you work for a chevra (taxi company)?" he asked the driver. The question hinged upon whether the free ride that was being offered was a gift and gesture of the vehicle's owner, or if the driver leased the vehicle from a taxi company and therefore, was offering a free lift that was unsanctioned, and possibly misappropriating time and money that belonged to the owners.

Shmuel Tzvi's sighed with relief, and even the face of the Chazon Ish brightened considerably, when the driver quickly responded, "No, I own this vehicle." Immediately, the Chazon Ish took a step toward the cab and with a slight, almost imperceptible nudge, pushed

Shmuel Tzvi toward the open front door. The boy paused in mid-step: he was not going to sit in the front seat, a more honourable place in the cab, than the Chazon Ish! But the Tzaddik kept nudging him to move; Shmuel Tzvi stood his ground.

A few seconds passed in this manner. Meanwhile, the rain was pouring down on both of them.... The Chazon Ish looked at boy and explained, "I must show my gratitude to the one who accompanied me on my walk ...."

R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l - וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה׳

The Torah tells us that Hashem intended to destroy the whole world and everyone in it. However, He changed His mind and saved Noach. Why? Because "וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה׳ ".

The Seforno explains that because of his "chein" (lit. favour), Hashem saved Noach and his children. Not because they deserved it, but because of their father's "chein."

Ordinarily, when a gezeira is issued against an entire society, it is applied even to the righteous minority. Hence, the degree of annihilation should have included Noach as well, despite the fact that he was a tzaddik. But because Noach found **חן בעיני ה׳**, he and his family were saved.

How does one achieve this special chein? One way may be found in the posuk in Mishlei (3:34 - *Hashem grants chein to the humble;* those who do not boast or call attention to themselves. There is an additional method of acquiring chein. Through Limud HaTorah, as the Gemara tells us from R' Zeira that when a person learns Torah at night, he is endowed with special chein the following day.

Why did Noach find favour in the eyes of Hashem? Pesachim 113b says that one who doesn't become angry and remains humble receives chein from the Ribono shel Olam. Ultimately, it was Noach's sterling

middos and humility that saved him from the Mabul. Perhaps this is why in Birchas Hamazon, we ask Hashem, **ונמצא חן.. בעיני אלקים ואדם** - Ribono shel Olam, please send me Your chein and all the berachos that come with it.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

One of the specifications of Noach's "**תיבה**," was that he build a **צהר**. Rashi tells us that some say this means a window and some say it means a precious stone.



R' Nachman M'Breslov zt"l explains the difference between the two. A window has no light of its own. It receives light from the outside. A precious stone does the exact opposite. Even if there is no light coming from outside, it itself illuminates even the darkest place.

In all generations, and most certainly in ours, life is stormy. I have heard people who have married off all their children say that they are happy that they do not have to raise children in our generation because it is extremely challenging to navigate children through the turbulence of our times. The only way to succeed is by making our homes into arks! We must block out and seal our homes from the negative and dangerous influences of the world. And in our Teiva, we must make sure there is a tzohar! On the one hand we must seek the advice and illumination of Rabbanim and educators who can give us insights and practical suggestions in chinuch and other important

areas of life. Their clarity and objective opinions can shed so much light on issues that we would not have considered otherwise. But at the same time we must not disregard the precious intuition and understanding that shines within ourselves!

Why do so many children not respect their parents? Because their parents do not respect themselves! They are either unsure what to do for their own children or they follow the popular opinion of others on all matters. They don't look inside themselves to find the answers to their questions, even though there is great light and wisdom that lies right there inside!

We are too often afraid to take a firm stand on what we believe is right! But the Torah is teaching us here that we must make a tzohar for our home. Sure, we can use the wisdom that is illuminated by others, but we must be sure to trust the special light and clarity that is found within ourselves.

Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Asher zt"l (Tur Ha'aruch) writes:
וַיִּקַּח֨ שֵׁ֜ם וָיֶ֗פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָה֙ וַיָּשִׂ֣ימוּ עַל־שְׁכֶ֔ם שְׁנֵיהֶ֖ם וַיֵּלְכ֣וּ אֲחֹרַנִּ֑ית וַיְכַסּ֕וּ אֶת עֶרְוַ֖ת אֲבִיהֶ֑ם

According to Rashi the mitzvah of tzitzis is a reward for the Jewish people for what their forefather Shem had done with the cloth he used to cover his father's nakedness. Later, Rashi picks up this thread when he explains that as a compensation for Avraham refusing the king of Sodom's offer to keep the spoils of war, his descendants were rewarded with both Tefillin and the mitzvah of tzitzis.

In other words, although it was clear that Shem had acquired the merit of the mitzvah of Talis, it was not clear to which of his children this commandment would be bestowed until Avraham refused to be enriched by the King of Sodom."

Noach's Taivoh



Noach received very specific instructions on building the ark which would serve as his haven during the flood. It had to be made of a certain wood to withstand the scalding waters of the flood, covered with a protective coating, and built to size.

As the meforshim point out, however, there were many large animals on the ark as well as millions of different species. There was no way the ark could have contained them all without a miracle. Why, then, did Noach have to make it so big? If Hashem was going to perform a miracle, why not let all the animals fit in a rowboat? Furthermore, the idea of using materials and coatings as a protection against the weather is preposterous, as the sulfuric waters melted even stones! Why was Noach instructed to take these actions if they were pointless anyway?

These instructions teach us about Hashem's interaction with Mankind. Rather than perform open miracles, Hashem minimizes the ones He performs. Open miracles erode our ability to exercise free will. If we saw that every time we did a mitzvah our income jumped and we felt great but every time we committed a sin we became ill and lost our money, we would lose the ability to do anything BUT Hashem's will. Therefore, Hashem commanded Noach to build an ark with some semblance of security. It was large, so elephants and bears - and much of the animal kingdom - could fit naturally. The

pitch was used for the same reason. True, all the buildings made with pitch melted away, but this particular pitch would be able to withstand the maelstrom.

As always, Hashem was giving non-believers their chance to exercise free will, while one who is truthful and looks at the facts will come to the only possible conclusion - that Hashem is running the world and it is He who determines who will survive the flood and who will not. His miracles don't cease, even when He camouflages them as "natural."



R' Chaim Volozhiner zt"l in his sefer Nefesh HaChaim writes the following: "*In truth, it is a great thing and a wondrous segulah, to remove and nullify all judgments and desires of others from ruling over him, and they will not have any effect on him, when a person fixes it in his heart, saying, 'Hashem is the true G-d, there is no power besides Him in this world or any other , and everything is filled only with His simple unity, may He be blessed.' (He should) nullify in his heart - with a complete nullification - all powers or desires in the world, and pay no attention to them at all, and enslave and attach his pure thoughts only to the One Master, Blessed be He. Thus, Hashem will cause all the powers and desires in the world to be nullified automatically, and they will be unable to affect him in any way.*"

One day, a man by the name of Reb Moshe Rachov arrived at the home of the **Rav of Brisk, R' Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l** (Beis Halevi) in an awful state. He was clearly terrified, wailing bitterly about the trouble that was to come upon him. "Rebbe! The police are here in Brisk! They have come looking for smuggled goods and are making a thorough search of all the stores in the city. My store is full of black-market goods! This is how I make a parnassa and feed my family. If they catch me, I could sit behind bars for years. Rebbe, what should I do?" he cried desperately.

The Beis Halevi took the man into a private room and locked the door. They stayed there for about half-an-hour until Reb Moshe's wife arrived with the news that the police had passed by their store without searching it. She had no idea why. During the entire time that R' Moshe was in the room with the Beis Halevi, the Rav had continuously spoken to him about the words of the Nefesh HaChaim, urging him to concentrate on the idea that nothing exists but Hashem, and to focus his belief on the fact that there is no power in the world that can affect a person but the will of Heaven.



What happened? The policemen had been busy searching the stores in the large square courtyard where the man's store was located, but just before they reached his store, they decided to break for lunch. Before they sat down to eat, however, they thought it best to make a reminder for themselves of how far they had progressed in their search, so they marked the man's store in red.

The problem was that when they finished eating, they couldn't remember whether the red mark meant that they were finished with this store, or it was the next store to inspect! After thinking about it for a while, they concluded that they had probably already checked this store and they continued on to the next establishment, totally skipping it. Thankfully, the man was spared from punishment for his black market activities and the segulah of the Nefesh HaChaim stood by him.

The Brisker Rav, R' Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik zt"l, another descendant of R' Chaim Volozhiner, would attest to the fact that

this statement of faith literally served as a guide throughout his life. When he was a young man, "Reb Velvel" - as the Brisker Rav was fondly known - was commanded to appear before the Russian draft board for induction in the Czar's army. This fate was tantamount to both a spiritual and physical death sentence.

As the date of his appearance neared, his father, **R' Chaim (Brisker) Soloveitchik zt"l**, instructed him to concentrate on the above passage from the Nefesh HaChaim. To R' Velvel's great relief, his meeting with the draft board was a mere formality and he was exempted from the draft.

In 1939, when the German army quickly conquered and occupied Poland, the Brisker Rav fled from Warsaw to Vilna. The roads were filled with German troops, and Nazis were everywhere. The danger was intense. Yet, R' Velvel travelled along undaunted, for he never stopped reviewing the pledge of the Nefesh HaChaim: ***"If you always think of Hashem, He will cause all the powers in the world to be nullified automatically."***

Just once, the Brisker Rav became distracted and his mind wandered away from this all-important thought. Suddenly, a group of German soldiers appeared and began shouting and shoving R' Velvel with their rifle butts. Immediately, R' Velvel collected his thoughts and focused intently on the Nefesh HaChaim. A high ranking Nazi officer seemed to materialize out of nowhere and for no reason, ordered them to leave the Rav alone. Miraculously, the Germans let him go and moved on!

"If the Torah obligates us to return lost objects, how much more so must we return them their lost souls!" ~ The Chofetz Chaim zt"l.

Tzedakah

The Medrash (Tehillim 37) describes the famous meeting between Avraham Avinu and Malki-Tzedek (found in next week's parsha). Chazal teach that Malki-Tzedek was in fact Shem, the son of Noach, and he told Avraham that it was in the merit of tzedakah (charity) that they survived in the ark.

"With whom did you do tzedakah?" asked Avraham. "With the animals and the birds," Malki-Tzedek answered. "We did not sleep at night. We went from one animal to the next making sure they had enough to eat. Once we were late, and my father was injured (see Rashi [7:23] who says it was by a lion)."

Avraham said to himself, "If they were only saved by the charity they did with animals and birds, and the one time Noach was late he was 'repaid' and injured, then if I perform charity with people, who are formed in the image of the angels, surely in this merit I will be protected from injury!" Immediately, Avraham pitched a tent, and provided his guests with food, drink, and lodging.



A man by the name of Reb Nissim rented out an apartment on the ground floor of a building that he owned in Tel Aviv. The previous tenant was not observant and had lived in this apartment for two years. However, problems had already started within the first month of her lease, when she had complained about seeing mice in her apartment. Reb Nissim was perplexed, since he had been renting this apartment for a very long time, and nobody ever had such a complaint. True, it was located on the ground floor, but mice? There had never been

any mice there before. Whatever the case, he certainly wasn't going to argue the point. If the tenant was claiming that there were mice in her apartment, then the solution was simple: he would call the city and ask them to carry out a pest control sweep of the area.

When he called, the city sent someone down and swept the area. Yet to Reb Nissim's surprise, the procedure wasn't successful! Within a few days, the tenant was calling him once again with the same problem: "There are still mice in the apartment!"

After another pest control sweep also proved ineffective, Reb Nissim offered to tear up the tenant's lease without penalty. She refused, however, preferring to stay in the apartment, brave the mice, and continue to complain. One day, Reb Nissim came up with a novel idea. When the tenant called the next time to complain, he told her the story of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair (Yerushalmi, Demai 1:3), whom all the inhabitants of a certain city went to see. They sought his help because of an epidemic of mice, which was threatening their entire harvest and could lead to a famine.

After investigating the matter, Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair discovered that these people did not give tzedakah (a tenth of their harvest for ma'aser), which is why their harvest was being attacked by mice. "I don't know if this will help, but perhaps if you gave tzedakah, the mice will leave," Reb Nissim said to the tenant. In fact, from that day on, she never called him about the issue again.

Of course, as the relieved landlord, Reb Nissim himself never called to find out what happened in her apartment. As long as she wasn't complaining, he preferred to steer clear of any potential problems and not contact her. A few months later, however, she called him because she had decided to move. At that point, she described all the changes that had taken place in her life since their conversation, the one in which he had encouraged her to give tzedakah. "My friends here in the big city, view the poor as 'parasites' and 'opportunists' and there certainly isn't any reason to help them!

At first, I disagreed with them but little by little, their words wormed their way into my heart, and I began refusing to help people, eventually followed by no longer giving money to charity. That was the day when the mice started to appear!"

By bringing up the subject of tzedakah, Reb Nissim had triggered something within her and she knew she must change her ways. A miracle happened, and when she started giving charity, the mice vanished as if they had never existed! The story doesn't end there. The tenant left the apartment and someone else moved in.

After a short time, this new tenant called Reb Nissim with the same complaint: Yes, there were mice in the apartment. This time, Reb Nissim knew just how effective municipal services were, and so he did not try contacting them to solve the problem. Instead, he directly advised the tenant to give some money to tzedakah, all while explaining what had happened to the previous tenant. As expected, once the new tenant gave money to tzedakah, the mice vanished as if they had never even been there!



The Chasam Sofer would say: את קשתי נתתי בענן - Chazal tell us **:ברכות לב** that from the day the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed, the Gates of Prayer have been closed, as it says (**איכה ג-מד**), '*You have enveloped Yourself in a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through.*' However, there is a way to break through.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that one who recites these four things - **עשה למען שמך עשה למען ימינך עשה למען תורתך עשה למען קדושתך** at the end of Shemona Esrai, will merit to greet the Face of the Shechina .The first letter of all four spell the word **קשתי** and the remez is here in the posuk, **את קשתי נתתי בענן** - one who recites the words of **קשתי** - Hashem will bring close into His cloud."



6:19 וּמִכָּל־הָחַי מִכָּל־בָּשָׂר שְׁנַיִם מִכֹּל תָּבִיא אֶל־הַתֵּבָה לְהַחֲיֹת אִתָּךְ



The Ramban addresses the obvious question of why an ark was necessary to rescue Noach and the animals. Why was Noach ordered to build an enormous boat, if it in any event would be unable to accommodate every species without a miracle from Hashem? In that case, Hashem could have saved them in any other way.

The Ramban suggests that this project was perhaps intended as a means of drawing the people's attention to the ark, which could potentially have had the effect of inspiring the generation to Teshuvah.

R' Chayim Elazary ZT"L (Shvilei Chayim), offers a beautiful insight here. Ever since the second generation of mankind - Kayin and Hevel - relations among people have been characterized by envy, greed and violence. Indeed, the sentence against the generation of the flood was issued specifically on account of **חמס** - violent theft (Rashi). The ongoing prevalence of theft and violent struggle, which began early on in human history, could lead one to believe that such is the inescapable lot of mankind; that people - like animals - will forever be engaged in incessant and bitter conflict. To dispel this disheartening notion, Hashem saw to it that for the year of the deluge, representatives from all the earth's creatures will live together in perfect peace and harmony. As He flooded the earth,

Hashem sowed the seeds of its reconstruction by demonstrating the ability of people and even animals to live together amicably in the cramped, crowded confines of an ark.

This served as a precedent to the possibility of peaceful relations among people and even between man and beast. It proved that the world is not necessarily condemned to a state of chaos; violence and conflict are not essential ingredients of the human condition. It is possible for mankind to lead a peaceful life and build and cultivate the earth with mutual respect and cooperation.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה - "*A window you shall make for the Ark.*"



The posuk uses the word **לַתֵּבָה** to refer to "the ark" that Noach built, but homiletically, **תיבה**, can also mean "word" - referring to the words of Tefillah, prayer, that a Yid says three times a day.

צהר means "brightness" or a shining lustre, similar to the word **צהרים** which reflects the shine of the bright afternoon sun. Indeed, when a person pours out his heart in prayer to Hashem, he should make sure to pronounce each and every word with his full heart and total concentration, so that his prayers will shine like the sun.

Interestingly, three words – **צהר רצה צרה** - are all comprised of the same letters and it occurred to me that the similarity in these words teaches us that if a person's tefillos shine brightly to Hashem, it can have the immediate effect of changing his **צרה** (pain) to **רצה**

(appeasement) in the form of a plea, "Hashem, please help me." As we say in bentching on Shabbos, **רצה ה׳ אלקינו..שלא תהא צרה** - We ask Hashem that He should be **רצה** - "appeased" in order that there should not be any **צרה** - "suffering."

The **צהר** - "brightness" of our tefillos can change our situation and answer all of our prayers, and thus, we recite the tefillah of **רצה ה׳ אלקינו בעמך ישראל** three times a day in Shemona Esrai, to further signify the (three-fold chain) of these three aspects of prayer. May Hashem bentch us with **געזונט נחת פרנסה.**

11:4 וַיֹּאמְרוּ֮ הָבָה֩ נִבְנֶה־לָּ֨נוּ עִ֜יר וּמִגְדָּל֗ וְרֹאשׁוֹ֙ בַּשָּׁמַ֔יִם וְנַֽעֲשֶׂה־לָּ֖נוּ שֵׁ֑ם

And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make ourselves a name.



Construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa began on August 9, 1173. Originally designed to be a bell tower, the structure actually stood upright for over five years, but just after the completion of the third floor, it began to lean. The citizens of Pisa were shocked to see it leaning ever so slightly.

The foundation of the tower, only 3 meters deep, was built on a dense clay mixture and impacted the soil. As it turned out, the clay was not nearly strong enough to hold the tower upright, and so the weight of the tower began to diffuse downward until it had found the weakest point. A century later, construction on the tower continued, but the 5.5 degree tilt was still there. The builders tried

to straighten it out it by making the stories on one side taller than the side with the tilt. This didn't work, but it did give the tower its infamous curve. Construction stopped again. The Tower of Pisa was finally completed in 1372, over a period of 199 years! And it is still crooked till this day!

Luckily, a restoration phase between 1990 to 2001 helped strengthen the foundation and touch up the building's surface. Human beings make mistakes, after all, no human is perfect. One mistake made in the 12th century resulted in a 14,500-ton leaning tower. This miscalculation would later become a symbol of Italian civic pride, but tell that to the man who designed it!

On the other hand, the Biblical Tower of Babel, never actually "got off the ground"! It wasn't an actual miscalculation in the design but rather a severe under -estimation of the "Designer of the World"! The wicked people thought they could build a tower to rise up and fight against G-d!

Little did they realize that a "leaning tower" would have been infinitely better than what they were left with!



וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֵת כָּל־הַחַיָּה וְאֶת־כָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה וַיַּעֲבֵר אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיָּשֹׁכּוּ הַמָּיִם: 8:1 ***And G-d remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and G-d caused a spirit to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.***

After forty days and forty nights of torrential flooding rain, followed by an additional one-hundred-fifty days of swelling water, the Torah tells us: "And the Lord remembered Noach and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the Ark."

Why does it not mention Noach's family - his wife and children - or the birds that were with them in the Ark? Why just the animals?

And if the purpose is simply to be brief, then why does it mention the wild and domestic animals separately?

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"L answers based on the words of the gemara Sanhedrin 108b): "*Three were promiscuous in the Ark, and all three were punished: the dog, the raven and Cham*

(son of Noach)." Because Chazal say that Cham and the raven were unrestrained in the Ark, therefore, all the children of Noach are not mentioned and likewise, the rest of the birds are not discussed because of the raven. However, regarding the dog, there is a dispute between Rabbi Meir and the other Rabbis as to whether a dog is considered a domestic or wild animal. Thus, the domestic animals were able to tell the dog to go to the wild animals, and the wild animals could tell the dog to go to the domestic animals. Hashem rewarded each group for pushing away the untempered dog to the opposite group, thereby mentioning them separately in the posuk. Furthermore, the Mabul occurred because, "*all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth*," with unbridled immorality.

The dove, which Noach sent out to determine if the water had receded, is a paragon of chastity among birds, while the olive tree, from which the dove took a branch, is a tree that cannot be grafted to create a hybrid.

R' Yosef Sherashevsky ZT"L of Slonim says that the combination of the dove and the olive branch illustrated to Noach that not only had the flood waters receded, but the cause, the perversion of nature, had also been corrected.

"Do not fear the climb; the steeper the mountain, the more beautiful the view." ~ The Ishbitzer, Rav Mordechai Yosef Leiner

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ֙ תֵּבַ֣ת עֲצֵי־גֹ֔פֶר קִנִּ֖ים תַּעֲשֶׂ֣ה אֶת־הַתֵּבָ֑ה וְכָפַרְתָּ֥ אֹתָ֛הּ מִבַּ֥יִת וּמִח֖וּץ בַּכֹּֽפֶר
6:14 ***Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with compartments, and you shall caulk it both inside and outside with pitch.***

Soon after **R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT"L** accepted the position, in 1851, as Rabbi of the "Israelitische Religions Gesellschaft" or IRG, in Frankfurt-am-Main, the Reform community attempted to woo him over to their side. When the Reform community celebrated the opening of their new temple, its members invited the new rabbi to view the majestic new edifice. R' Hirsch was given a guided tour of the building and his escorts enthusiastically described the new practices and innovations they intended to introduce into the service.

A grand organ was to accompany the cantor and the mingling of men and women in the gallery would bring unity to the community, they maintained. After walking around for some time and viewing the temple's many rooms, halls, and elaborate entrances, the gabbai (beadle) asked, "Well, what does the rabbi think of our grand new building?" R' Hirsch looked around for an extra moment and then exclaimed, "This building is nothing short of a modern version of Noah's ark. It, too, is lined, **מִבַּ֥יִת וּמִח֖וּץ בַּכֹּֽפֶר** - full of kefirah (heresy) both inside and outside!"

An amazing story is told that when the Nazis arrived in one Polish town and rounded up the local population, one Jew barely escaped their evil clutches and ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the nearby forest. He hid there for a number of days until his food supply ran out and he was forced to emerge from his hiding place and forage for nourishment.

As it turns out, he walked out of the forest and right into the yard of a house that, unbeknownst to him, had been converted into the

local Gestapo headquarters! He tried to turn around and run but it was too late! He was caught, much to the glee of the S.S. man who collared him. "What are you doing here, Jew?" spat the Nazi. "And how did you get past my dogs?" As he looked, there in the front yard of the house was a howling pack of wild, mad dogs, who were trained to tear apart any trespasser they encountered.

The Nazi was surprised. "Tell you what," he said. "If you can get past my dogs, I will let you walk right out of here!" The Jew turned around and offered up a prayer to the Almighty. Then, to the amazement of all, he walked right down the path and out of the yard. The dogs just sat there wagging their tails docilely, not harming a hair on his head!



After Noach and his family emerged from the ark, a new reality took effect in the world. Hashem decreed that since every living creature owed their lives to Noach, they were to subjugate themselves to their saviour, even for the purposes of food. But in order for an animal to recognize the superiority of a human being, the person must behave as true **צלם אלקים** - a holy and virtuous image of Hashem. When a Jew reaches this level, no animal - no matter how wild or crazed - will have any control or power over him.

"A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up." – King Solomon, Proverbs, 24:16

R' Yisroel Meir Lau



As part of his duties as Chief Rabbi of Israel, **R' Yisroel Meir Lau** was often called upon to address audiences to defend the Jewish position vis-à-vis historical and current world events. With his impressive gift of always knowing what to say, where to say it and to whom to say it to, R' Lau was - and continues to be - a great ambassador on behalf of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

But even he was taken by surprise when he received a message in 1993 that Pope John Paul II, leader of the Catholic faith, wished to meet with him. He was well aware of the strained history of relations between the Vatican and the Chief Rabbinate, as well as the blind eye turned by the previous Pope during the Holocaust and his refusal to help the Jews, amid pleas from all sides to use his influence to stop the atrocities. R' Lau knew all this, but he wished to convey a message - one that all the world will hear.

Thus, a few days before the planned meeting with the Pope, he attended an interfaith conference of Saint'Egidio in Milan, Italy, and was asked to address the conference. His words focused on the vision of the Navi Yeshaya (Isaiah) about the end of days: ***"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid."*** R' Lau spoke without written notes, because he wanted to see the eyes of his listeners and read the expressions on their faces. "To our ears, this prophecy sounds exaggerated, like an impossible

dream," he said to the group in Milan. "But I want to tell you what a relative of mine said about this verse.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro was a rabbi in the city of Lublin, Poland, and I bear his name. 'Why,' he asked, 'do we consider such a situation untenable? Indeed, such a thing has happened, and the vision of Isaiah the prophet already came true once - in Noah's ark. Two by two, the animals entered the ark. Inside it was a huge assortment of animals, yet they behaved themselves. Not one of them bit, stung, or devoured a weaker one. When the flood ended, the animals left the ark. Each one went to its own habitat, and there they remain until this day. If so, what is so special about Isaiah's prophecy?'"

He continued. "The answer Rabbi Shapiro of Lublin gave was brilliant in its simplicity. In Noah's ark, wolf and lamb, leopard and kid, lived together because they had no choice. Outside raged a common enemy - the flood. They knew that any inappropriate or unpleasant behaviour on their part meant they would find themselves outside the ark, sentenced to destruction. With no other option, they controlled their instincts and cooperated against their common enemy. Isaiah the prophet is not talking about a situation of no choice. Rather, he is speaking of free will. He is discussing a time when the animals will have the option to devour, crush, trample, and bite, and still they will not hurt or destroy each other.

One day, and this is the ideal dream of the peace we long for, human beings will understand and recognize that we must live and let live, and that we must do so with maximum mutual respect. "Ladies and gentlemen, after hearing this question and answer, let us take a look at our own times. We have yet to reach the days of Isaiah. Yet we have the responsibility to adopt the basic concept of Noah's ark. Let us live together as in the ark, at least because we have no choice. The animals faced the common enemy of the flood. Today as well, humanity has many common enemies. I, as a Holocaust survivor, suffered in the flesh the true meaning of a common enemy to all of

humanity. I experienced the evil, the hatred, the bestiality, the descent to levels where no preying animal ever stood.

In nature, a lion does not devour a cub; a tigress does not prey upon the cub of another tigress. Yet with my own eyes, I saw what were known as human beings destroying their own kind. I saw them attack and dismember other human beings who were weaker than they. We all have common enemies: the atom bomb, cancer, heart disease, poverty, ignorance, crime, violence, and terror. We must unite to conquer these common enemies.

As religious leaders, can't we understand that we are all living inside a Noah's ark?" His words made such an impression that it was carried in all the media the next day. The Pope was impressed with him and referred to him respectfully as "Naczelny Rabin" - the "Chief Rabbi." He pledged to do what he could to fight anti-Semitism. One year later a formal apology to the Jewish people on behalf of the church was issued.



וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶל־נֹחַ לֵאמֹר. צֵא מִן־הַתֵּבָה אַתָּה וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וּבָנֶיךָ וּנְשֵׁי־בָנֶיךָ אִתָּךְ 8:16-17

At the funeral of the **Ponovezher Rav, R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman ZT"L**, one of the maspidim (eulogists) spoke and compared the life of the deceased to that of Noach in the days of the flood.

R' Shmuel Rozovsky ZT"L explained that Hashem specifically told Noach and his family to leave the ark. The Medrash teaches that Noach reasoned: Just as I entered the ark only after I was told to do so, so must I exit it only when I am told to do so. Had Noach not been so instructed by Hashem to leave he would have remained in there indefinitely for since he had been instructed to enter the ark, those instructions would remain in force unless and until he received instructions to the contrary.

R' Shmuel then provided a further explanation of Noach's actions. Before the flood, Hashem needed to instruct Noach to enter the ark, not once but twice. The first time was when Hashem told him, "I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark." (6:18) Later on, Hashem once again tells Noach, "Come you and your family to the ark." (7:1). Why indeed was this repetition necessary?

It was because Noach could not bring himself to turn his back on an entire world that he knew was about to perish. Their fate was sealed; Noach was distraught; and thus Hashem had to reinforce his command a second time to enter the ark and leave the world to its fate. When the flood was over, Noach knew that a destroyed world was waiting for him outside, and he couldn't bring himself to step out into such a world. Only when Hashem directed Noach to leave the ark did he have the strength to face up to it.

The Ponovezher Rav knew first-hand of the great loss Klal Yisroel had suffered during the Holocaust and the destroyed world waiting outside. Perhaps what gave him strength was that he felt he had a mission, to rebuild Jewry and to rebuild Torah from the ruins. This enabled him to be active long into his very old age.

The Mahara'l, R' Yehudah Loewy ZT"L (Netzach Yisroel) would say: "After the Torah describes the harrowing events of the Mabul; the incessant rain, the destruction of all living creatures, the receding waters, Noach's attempt to determine if the land is habitable, etc., the Torah concludes the entire affair with the words **יבשה הארץ** - *'the land (finally) became dry.'*

The numerical value of these two seemingly redundant words adds up to 613, which teaches us that in the merit of the 613 commandments that will be given to Bnei Yisroel in the future, the world was finally dry - and ready to be lived in again."

The Ohr HaChayim

The governor of Sali, where **Chacham Chayim ben Attar ZT"L (Ohr HaChayim)** lived, was marrying off his daughter. The entire family bought expensive clothing and sent them to Chacham Chayim, a master weaver, to weave gold threads into the material. But he refused saying, "I have already earned enough money for my livelihood this month and now I must devote the rest of the month to Torah study." They explained that the wedding was a few short weeks away, but he still refused the job, and returned to his studies. The governor was incensed and sent the Chacham a dire warning that if he does not accept the job he will be cast into a den of lions.

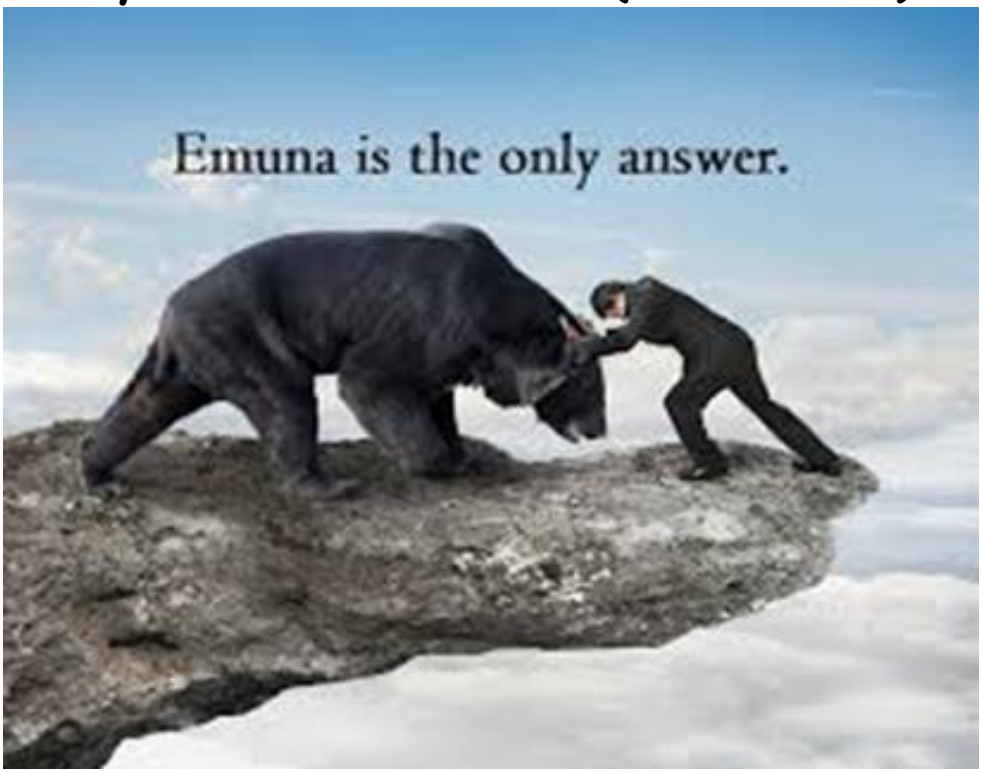


The Ohr HaChayim ignored the warning and continued learning. The governor's henchmen eventually took him from his home and pushed him into the lion's den. A miracle occurred and the lions formed a circle around him, watching and listening as he sang chapters of Tehillim in a sweet, pleasant voice.

Everyone was amazed and even the governor came to see with his own eyes. As soon as he looked into the den, he ordered that Chacham Chayim be lifted from the lion's den. He begged the rabbi for forgiveness entreating him with gifts and words of praise. Hashem told Noach, "Your fear and intimidation will be cast over all the beasts of the land."

Chazal teach us that anyone within whom the image of G-d rests in totality instils fear upon the animals, "and no animal attacks (overcomes) a person unless he appears to the animal as another animal." How careful one must always be to never lose his "Tzelem Elokim" - image of G-d.

R' Elya Meir Bloch ZT"L (Pninei Daas) would say: "Chazal



tell us that Noach was lacking in emunah, for he only entered the ark once it started raining, rather than relying on Hashem's prediction of the coming flood.

Surely Noach believed in Hashem - in fact he spent 120 years building an ark out of trust in the Lord's word. The lesson here though is that beyond the simple knowledge of Hashem's existence, there are many more levels in Emunah. When the rain of the Mabul actually began to fall, the reality of the flood became increasingly clear in Noach's eyes. This was considered a fault in accordance with his spiritual level, for true faith in Hashem requires that the Emunah itself be the absolute reality and that it leave no doubt or room for clarity."

"Do not be wise in words – be wise in deeds."

The Chasam Sofer



It was Friday afternoon, and the Jewish residents of Pressburg, Czechoslovakia, were winding down their Shabbos preparations. The food was cooked, the children bathed, and it was now time for the men to begin heading out to the great synagogue for the special Friday night prayers.

As the great Rav of Pressburg, **R' Moshe Sofer Zt'l (Chasam Sofer)** put on his rabbinic coat and stepped through the doorway of his home, he instinctively placed his right hand on the mezuzah to kiss it, as he was careful to do whenever he walked through a door. This time, however, as he placed his hand on the mezuzah, he paused for what seemed like quite a while and appeared to be deep in thought.

His attendant and family members watched him curiously, and just as they were about to ask him why he had paused by the mezuzah, the Chasam Sofer spun around and hurried back into his inner study chamber where he kept his wallet and valuables. The onlookers continued to watch as he opened his pouch and removed some coins. "Here. Take this money," the Chasam Sofer said to his attendant, holding out exactly eleven gold Thaler coins. "Run, quickly and deliver these coins. Do not tell the recipient who sent these coins - and then come right back!" The Chasam Sofer then told him the name and address of the person to whom the coins should be delivered. The attendant did not hesitate or question his master's command and sprinted off to fulfil his duty.

Within minutes, he arrived at the address and found the young man to whom the Chasam Sofer had referred to standing in the street

amidst a heap of clothing and furniture. Without another thought, the attendant handed him the money, wished him a good Shabbos and ran off in the direction he came.

He met the Chasam Sofer along the way, and together they walked to shul. Minutes after Shabbos ended the following evening, found the young man seeking out the attendant who had brought him the money the day before. "Please tell me," he begged, "who sent you with this money yesterday afternoon?" Of course, the attendant refused to divulge his secret benefactor and told him that he was not authorized to tell. "Well, I must know," said the man excitedly, "for if it wasn't an angel sent from heaven who directed you to me, then you surely possess Ruach Hakodesh to have known what absolutely no one could have known!"

The attendant's curiosity was piqued and the young man explained. "I am a student in the yeshivah here in Pressburg and like many other students, I rent a room in town. Unfortunately, I do not always have the means to pay my rent and for quite a few months now, I have been stalling my landlord with excuses. When I do come into a bit of money, I pay her what I can, but it is not nearly enough to cover my debt. As of yesterday afternoon, I was in arrears in the amount of eleven gold Thalers, and my poor landlord was at her wit's end. The fact of the matter is, she is almost as poor as I am and when she came to my room in the afternoon demanding that I pay her what I owe, she was frantic. She did not even have enough money to buy candles for Shabbos and she blamed it all on me. I tried to come up with some excuse, but she wasn't having any of it. 'Get out,' she finally told me, 'and take your stuff with you!'"

The young man's eyes were shining with the recollection. "I begged her to let me stay just a few more days, that I was expecting money from a relative. Instead of allowing me to stay, she grabbed my few belongings and threw them out the door. 'I could have rented this room to someone who would pay me what he is supposed to,' she

screamed. 'Now, all because of you, I don't even have a few pennies to buy candles for the holy Shabbos!' With that, she broke down in tears, but not before throwing me out and slamming the door, leaving me and my possessions stranded out in the street."

"What can I tell you?" said the young man smiling. "At that exact moment, you showed up and handed me eleven Thalers! It was like money falling from Heaven! You should have seen the look of pure joy on my landlord's face when I gave her the money!"

His smile faded and he looked suddenly anxious. "But now, my dear man, I must know. Who was the angel who sent you at that exact moment?" The attendant smiled inwardly. His Rebbe may not be an actual angel, but he clearly possessed Ruach Hakodesh!

R' Aryeh Leib Tzintz of Plotzk ZT"L (Melo Haomer) would say: "Chazal tell us "The Master of Mercy (Hashem) does not go after the soul (of a sinner to kill him) first. First, he punishes a person by 'attacking' his possessions and if this does not help, only then will he 'attack' the person.'

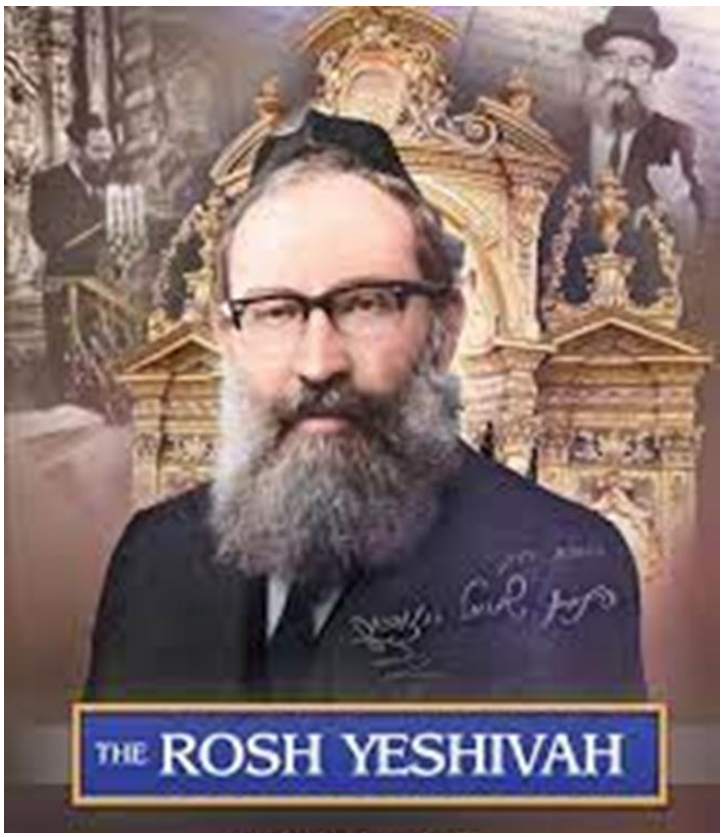
Based on this Medrash, why did Hashem immediately wipe out the Dor HaMabul, and not first punish them through their belongings? The answer is that Hashem 'goes after' one's possessions when they actually belong to him. But as we know the Dor HaMabul was steeped in גזל (thievery) and thus, no item truly belonged to its holder. As a result, Hashem could not attack their possessions first and thus destroyed them outright!"

A single prayer with intention can transform the entire world for good -Midrash Tanchuma.

Chesed – The Secret Weapon

Chazal tell us that Noach used a "secret weapon" with which he was able to rebuild the world anew after the destruction of the flood: **עולם חסד יבנה**.

R' Mordechai Gifter ZT"L explains that the fact that Noach was locked inside a floating ark for 120 days with nothing to do but chessed - kindness for his family, kindness for the animals - was for the sole purpose of entrenching the ideal of chessed into his very fibre so that when it would be time to come out and start all over again, he would do so with the attribute of kindness. This was - and continues to be - the only way the world can exist.



One day a Yid from Yerushalayim travelled to Bnei Brak to ask the Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevezh, **R' Shmuel Rozovsky ZT"L**, about a boy in the yeshivah for his daughter who had reached marriageable age. He arrived at the yeshivah and entered the Rosh Yeshivah's home during the break between learning sessions. R' Shmuel greeted him cordially and asked why he had come. He explained to the Rosh Yeshivah that he was inquiring about a particular boy and R' Shmuel told him to ask what was on his mind. The man wanted to know, first and foremost, how many hours a day did the bochur learn? Was he punctual in arriving to Seder and did he spend his time diligently? Does he come to davening on time and does he actively participate in the Shiur? Does he ask relevant questions and does he understand the answers?

R' Shmuel knew the boy well and was able to answer each and every question satisfactorily. After receiving a favourable report in regard to his questions, the man thanked R' Shmuel for his time and began to get up to leave.

At this point, R' Shmuel in his gentle and noble manner, turned to the father and said, "Until now, you've asked me a number of questions. Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?" Of course, the man agreed. R' Shmuel looked at the man and said, "It seems to me that you are inquiring about the boy for your daughter, and you seem happy with the report I gave you. You obviously think that all your daughter needs to know is whether he comes on time and if he is a lamdan, a boy who is studious and well-versed in the intricacies of the Talmud." The man nodded his head in agreement. "Did it ever occur to you," asked R' Shmuel, "do you think it is entirely possible that your daughter would like to know if this boy is a mentch? If he is a Baal Chessed?"

R' Shmuel continued. "It would seem fitting that you should ask me: How often does he brush his teeth? Is he pleasant to sit next to? How does he behave in the company of others? Does he arrive first to the dining room and take the biggest portion, or does he linger after mincha for a few minutes to learn with his study partner and eat whatever portion is left?"

The man began to answer but R' Shmuel just continued speaking. "I'm sure your daughter would be curious to know what does he do when the pitcher is empty on the table; does he wait for someone else to fill it up or does he run to fill it up himself? Does he ever go into the kitchen to thank the staff for preparing the food? Does he eat the food even if he doesn't like it and thanks them graciously for preparing it or does he just go to the nearby kiosk to buy something he likes?

"You came to the conclusion that he is a masmid; did you ask what he does when he finishes learning late at night and his roommates are

sleeping? Does he take off his shoes and tiptoe in so as not to wake them or does he walk in noisily? Does he make his bed and keep his things neat? Does he think about others and want to do chessed for them or does he just think about himself?"

R' Shmuel concluded, "I think that you need to check these things out. If he is spoiled and he arrives home in the afternoon and does not like the food your daughter will work hard to prepare, will his face crumple in obvious dissatisfaction?

Will your daughter then be happy that her father checked the boy out with the Rosh Yeshivah who told him that he knows every Ketzos and Rabbi Akiva Eiger? Will you daughter say, it's true that he has no manners and no social skills, but I respect him anyway because he knows the sugya of the bees and the mustard in Bava Basra?"

The man hung his head in shame - but he got the message. This is was R' Shmuel's approach to finding the proper shidduch for a bas yisroel.

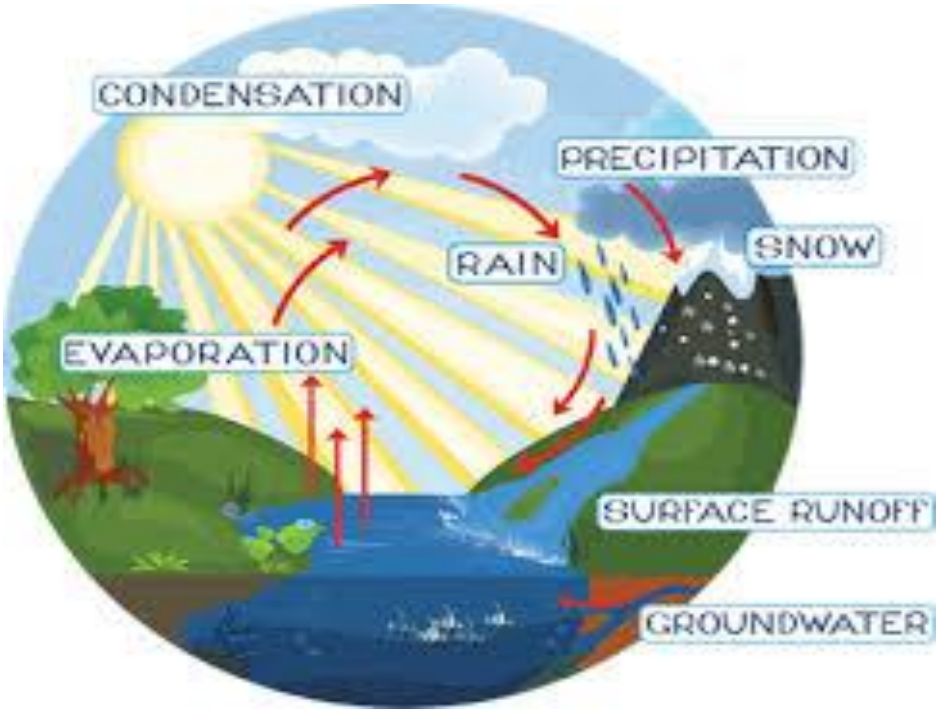
R' Aryeh Leib Tzintz ZT"L (Kometz Hamincha) says:

"Chazal tell us 'Idleness (**בטלה**) brings to immorality.' The Generation of the Mabul lived in idleness and drifted into sin.

Only after the flood, did Hashem decree, **עֵ֣רַע וְקָצִ֔יר וְקֹ֥ר וָחֹ֖ם וְקַ֣יִץ וָחֹ֑רֶף וְיֹ֥ום וָלַ֖יְלָה לֹ֥א יִשְׁבֹּֽתוּ**' ***Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.***' (8:22) Only then, will man be compelled to reap, harvest and toil to provide for his needs from season to season.

Once he will be forced to work day and night without respite - thus removing any time for idleness in his day - he will have little time for sin."

וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לָיְלָה ***And the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.*** 7:12



The rain cycle is quite miraculous, designed by the Creator of the World in His infinite wisdom to sustain the world. The oceans of the world hold 97% of the world's water. Two percent is frozen in the polar ice caps. The constant recycling of the remaining one percent provides us with all the water we use!

It is amazing that all the water in the entire world's atmosphere only equals about 10 days normal rainfall! If water was something that is used up like gas or oil - we would run out of water very quickly. But because water gets re-used over and over, we do not have this problem.

Water is an incredible liquid. It is a combination of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. Each of these two gases alone cannot feed us, yet when they combine together, they form the wonder liquid from which we live. Would this not be so, the water vapour in the air would never condense and form clouds! Snow wouldn't fall in the winter, and if it snowed, it would never melt.

Although the oceans are full of salty, undrinkable water, it vaporizes into the atmosphere and becomes a blessing for us. It has no colour and no smell. It is pure! We cook with it, bathe in it, it regulates our body temperature, moves out our wastes, lubricates our joints, helps to digest our food - and don't forget swimming!

A rainy day is often called, "nasty weather"; a "rotten summer" means it rained a lot; "the weather was just awful" implies that we do not like to be inconvenienced and thus spurn this most wonderful blessing. Let's appreciate the magnificent gift of rain from our Beloved Father and, even if it is inconvenient and even if you get wet, please don't ever call rain nasty again!

Drought



There was once a severe drought that plagued a certain town in Europe. The people of the town decided to proclaim a day of fasting and prayer in order to invoke Divine mercy upon their small enclave.

When the **Apter Rov, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel ZT"L** heard about the proclamation, he gathered a group of his disciples and they travelled to that town. The Apter Rov was very much against the practice of people who fasted and practiced self-affliction, and when he arrived in the town, he and his chassidim immediately sat down to a festive meal with plenty of food and drink.

The local people were aghast. "How can you do this?" they complained. "A public fast has been proclaimed here. Rebbe, we need rain!" "That's precisely why we're eating a seudah," said R' Avraham Yehoshua. "You need rain so that you will have food and drink, but by fasting you're showing Hakadosh Boruch Hu that you can indeed survive without food and drink! On the contrary, my advice is that you should eat and drink and show Hashem why you need rain!"

For 120 years, Noach built his ark, - *before the eyes of all the inhabitants of the earth*, in order to show them why they need to repent their sinful and evil ways. Hashem is angry at you, Noach would say, and He wishes to destroy you.

Unfortunately, the people did not grasp the full import of what was to come and they neither seized the opportunity to repent, nor took Noach's words to heart - until the rains began and by then it was too late!

The Leica Is The Pioneer 35mm Camera.



It is a German product - precise and utterly efficient. Behind its worldwide acceptance as a creative tool was a family-owned, socially oriented firm that, during the Nazi era, acted with uncommon grace, generosity and modesty. E. Leitz Inc., designer and manufacturer of Germany's most famous photographic product, saved its Jews.

Ernst Leitz II, the steely-eyed Protestant patriarch who headed the closely held firm as the Holocaust loomed across Europe, acted in such a way as to earn the title, "the photography industry's Oskar Schindler." As soon as Adolf Hitler YM"S was named chancellor of Germany in 1933, Ernst Leitz II began receiving frantic calls from Jewish associates, asking for his help in getting them and their families out of the country.

As Christians, Leitz and his family were immune to Nazi Germany's Nuremberg laws, which restricted the movement of Jews and limited their professional activities.

To help his Jewish workers and colleagues, Leitz quietly established what has become known among historians of the Holocaust as the "Leica Freedom Train," a covert means of allowing Jews to leave Germany in the guise of Leitz employees being assigned overseas.

Employees, retailers, family members, even friends of family members were "assigned" to Leitz sales offices in France, Britain, Hong Kong and the United States. Leitz's activities intensified after the Kristallnacht of November 1938, during which synagogues and Jewish shops were burned across Germany. Before long, German "employees" were disembarking from the ocean liner Bremen at a New York pier and making their way to the Manhattan office of Leitz Inc., where executives quickly found them jobs in the photographic industry.

Each new arrival had around his or her neck the symbol of freedom - a new Leica camera. The refugees were paid a stipend until they could find work. Out of this migration came designers, repair technicians, salespeople, marketers, and writers for the photographic press. The "Leica Freedom Train" was at its height in 1938 and early 1939, delivering groups of refugees to New York every few weeks.

Then, with the invasion of Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Germany closed its borders. By that time, hundreds of endangered Jews had escaped to America, thanks to the Leitzes' efforts. Leitz Inc. was an internationally recognized brand that reflected credit on the newly resurgent German Reich. The company produced rangefinders and other optical systems for the German military. Also, the Nazi government desperately needed hard currency from abroad, and Leitz's single biggest market for optical goods was the United States.

Even so, members of the Leitz family and firm suffered for their good works. A top executive, Alfred Turk, was jailed for working to help Jews and freed only after the payment of a large bribe. Ernst Leitz's daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, was imprisoned by the Gestapo after she was caught at the border, helping Jewish women cross into Switzerland.

She eventually was freed but endured rough treatment in the course of questioning. She also fell under suspicion when she attempted to improve the living conditions of 700 to 800 Ukrainian slave labourers, all of them women, who had been assigned to work in the plant during the 1940s.

Why has no one told this story until now?

According to a prominent freelance writer and editor, the Leitz family wanted no publicity for its heroic efforts. Only after the last member of the Leitz family was dead did the "Leica Freedom Train" finally come to light.

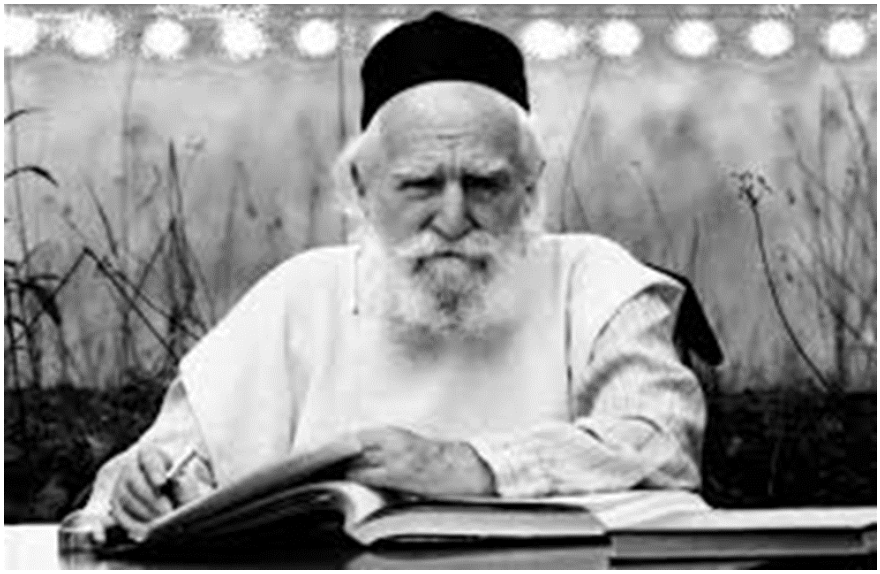


אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו 6:9

Chazal seem to find fault with Noach in the fact that although he was righteous, he did little to promote this sense of right and wrong to the people of his generation. Whereas Avrohom Avinu's entire lifetime was dedicated to drawing in people of every kind to embrace Hashem and the belief in one G-d, Noach seemingly did not concern himself with attempting to rectify the misdeeds and treachery that plagued the people of his time.

The Ksav Sofer, R' Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer ZT"L, however, does not view Noach's inaction as a negative. Quite the contrary. The reason why Noach did not invest his time in influencing the people of his generation was because he was too busy instilling the values of righteousness and kindness in his own children!

Avrohom Avinu did not have children for the first one hundred years of his life; as a result, his time was devoted to others. Noach, on the other hand, had three children with which to give over the proper values, and he chose to work with them over the wicked and corrupt people of his generation.



At the tender young age of twenty-five years old, **R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L** accepted the mantle of Rabbonus in the city of Luban, Russia. This was a difficult time for the Jews in Russia, as the Communist government of the U.S.S.R. was doing its utmost to root out any vestige of religious practice.

If the ordinary Jews found life difficult, the Rabbis and community leaders were put through all manner of torture, both physically and mentally, to try to dissuade them from practicing their religion. The shochet was first banned from ritual slaughtering and later deported to Siberia.

The Shamash of the main synagogue, with his wife and seven children, was forced to live in a one-room shanty adjacent to the shul, and within a short time, he was required to take in the newly evicted rabbi and his family in that same tiny shack. The rabbi's salary was continually slashed year by year, to the point where it became nearly impossible to support himself and his family.

Late night visits from the Russian secret police were intentionally done to spike the family's growing tension and fear. The mikvah was shut down and it took a great deal of R' Moshe's clandestine ingenuity

in maintaining a kosher working mikvah for the townspeople, right under the Soviets' noses.

Through it all, however, R' Moshe soldiered on. For sixteen arduous years, he bore the brunt of the authority's manipulations but never once wavered in the performance of his communal duties. He was wont to remark: ***"A Jew is but a soldier in the midst of battle, and a soldier never deserts the ranks!"***

The community loved him for his ferocious dedication, and he loved them in turn. Thus, when the news hit town, it came as a bombshell that tore through the hearts of the citizens of Luban: ***The rabbi is leaving! R' Moshe is moving to America!*** Not only that, but even the local Russian officials were facilitating the processing of his papers, so happy they were to rid themselves of this unrelenting foe!

The community leaders came rushing to his home. Why was he leaving? How could he leave them? Of course life was hard, but it was hard for all of them and they were all in it together. R' Moshe looked at their worn faces. It was a difficult decision. "Believe me," he said, "it's not any fear of the Russians, nor is it the danger. I've dealt with that for so many years." "Then what is it?" they cried. "What did they do to you to finally cause you to break?"

"Nothing caused me to break," replied R' Moshe. "It's just that the situation has changed. Like I've always said, 'A Jew is but a soldier in the midst of battle.' But the most important battle that a Jew must fight - and win - is the battle of - educating our children. My children are growing up and it is impossible for me to raise them to be G-d-fearing and observant Jews here in Russia. Although I want to remain here and guide you, my first responsibility is to my children, to ensure that they receive a true Torah education."

Indeed, R' Moshe taught his children - and the rest of Klal Yisroel - for the next fifty years!

R' Aharon Yaakov Greenberg HaLevi ZT"L (Iturei Torah) would say:

"The rainbow is a sign of peace. It is composed of several colours which, when combined, become one glorious colour mass.

By the same token, there are differences between individual people, groups and nations. A life rooted in understanding and tolerance of others, leads to the unity which is the basis of the world's existence."

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



'***The Yetzer Hara is entirely made up of eyes***.' (Avodah Zara 20b)

And how many eyes does a person need to be on guard against the Yetzer Hara? – **Harav Shlomo Leib of Lenchna.**

The Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT"L would say:

"Since everyone must have cares and worries in life, it makes more sense to carry the burden of spiritual struggles, which ultimately lead to blessing and happiness, rather than waste our efforts on mundane cares, which drain a person emotionally and offer little in return."

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischah ZT"L would say:



"The Torah calls Noach a tzaddik and from the names he gave to his three sons, we can learn from him the proper path to Avodas Hashem: **שם** - One must always focus on the ineffable Name of Hashem so as not to sin. **חם** - All mitzvos should be performed with the maximum amount of energy and warmth. **יפת** - Every action and deed should beautify the individual and at the same time glorify Hashem."



וַיִּזְכֹּ֣ר אֱלֹקִ֗ים אֶת־נֹ֙חַ֙ וְאֵ֣ת כָּל־הַֽחַיָּ֔ה וְאֶת־כָּל־הַבְּהֵמָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר אִתּ֑וֹ בַּתֵּבָ֔ה 8:1

On this posuk, the Medrash quotes the words of Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim (*קמה.ט*): ***טוֹב־ה׳ לַכֹּ֗ל וְרַחֲמָ֥יו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂ֑יו: – "Hashem is good to all and His mercy is on all his creations."***

Just as Noach worked tirelessly to provide food and comfort for the many animals residing in the Ark that he built, and as a result, Hashem remembered his kindness towards others and saved him; so too, when human beings show kindness and mercy to one another - and in fact to all of Hashem's creations - He will then shower mercy and everlasting kindness upon them.

One Erev Yom Kippur, the entire congregation of Salant gathered in the central synagogue to begin the Kol Nidrei prayer, however, as the hour grew late there was still no sign of the holy Rov, **R' Yisroel Salanter ZT"L**.

This was unusual and the congregants continued to wait with growing apprehension for R' Yisroel to come to davening. When they finally went to search for him, they found him at home, holding a small pan of milk and trying to coax a street cat into his house. When he finally got it inside, he took his hat and kittel, closed the door behind him and made his way to the shul.

The people were shocked and dismayed. What was the Rov doing? "Let me explain," R' Yisroel began. "As you know, I have a large collection of seforim in my bookshelves. What you don't know is that many of these seforim do not even belong to me. The poor people of Salant who do not have enough space in their own small hovels needed a place to store their books and seforim. They know they can trust me to watch over them and even use them when I feel the need to, so they asked me if I can keep them in my house. Of course, I obliged."



"But what has all this to do with a stray cat?" the people asked. R' Yisroel was quite serious in his tone and manner. "All year long, practically from dusk till dawn, there is a constant stream of people coming through my home. Many come to speak with me, ask questions, discuss their problems, and so on. Since there are so many people in my house at any given time, I am not worried that anything will happen to the seforim that were given to me to safeguard and I feel confident that they are safe in my possession.

However, on Erev Yom Kippur, and of course, the night of Kol Nidrei, people are busy. Everyone has needs to attend to and I realized this afternoon that my house was empty of people. Now I began to worry

that due to the absence of people and activity, mice might find their way inside, as they inevitably do, and do damage to the seforim. This would be a terrible thing and especially on Yom Kippur."

Thus, I thought of an idea. If I bring a cat off the street and allow him to roam my house, the mice wouldn't dare come in and if they would, the cat would make short work of them. This way I can accomplish a double benefit.

As Chazal tell us - ***"Whosoever takes mercy on all creatures, is shown mercy from Heaven."*** By taking pity on a stray cat and protecting the seforim of the poor people, I can hopefully elicit kindness and mercy from Hashem."

The Taivoh



Did you ever stop to imagine what life was like inside of Noah's ark? There were three floors; the middle floor was filled with a collection of the world's animals wild, domestic, and otherwise. Birds and critters of all shapes and sizes, vermin and an endless potpourri of creepy crawlers whose pesky descendants bear witness to their survival during that tempestuous period.

Then there was a floor of refuse. There was no recycling centre, and no sewage system that I am aware of. The humans had the top floor.

Cramped in an inescapable living space was Noach, his three sons, their wives and one mother-in-law.

Surely, it was far from easy. What intrigues are the detailed architectural commands that Hashem gave Noach. Hashem details measurements and design for an ark that took 120 years to build! Why? Are there lessons to be learned from the design of the design of the ark? After all, Hashem promised that there will be no more floods. If there are no more floods, then there need not be any more arks. So what difference does it make how it was built. Obviously, there are inherent lessons we can learn from the design of the ark.

Noach is told to build a window. It seems practical enough; after all, sitting for an entire year can get awfully stuffy. So Noach is commanded to build a window for breathing room. It is a little troubling. Does Noach need a command to add something so simple as a window? Does it make a difference whether or not he had a window? Did that command have to be incorporated into the heavenly plans for an ark that would endure the ravaging flood?

A renowned Rosh Yeshiva, tragically lost his son to a debilitating disease at the prime of his life. Not long married, the son left a widow and a young child. The Rosh Yeshiva and his Rebbitzin were devastated at the loss and the shiva period was a most difficult time.

One of the hundreds of visitors was the **Bluzhever Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael Spira,** whose entire family was wiped out during the Holocaust. He sat quietly, taking in the pain of the bereaved family. Finally, when it was time to say something, Rabbi Spira turned to the Rosh Yeshiva and spoke.

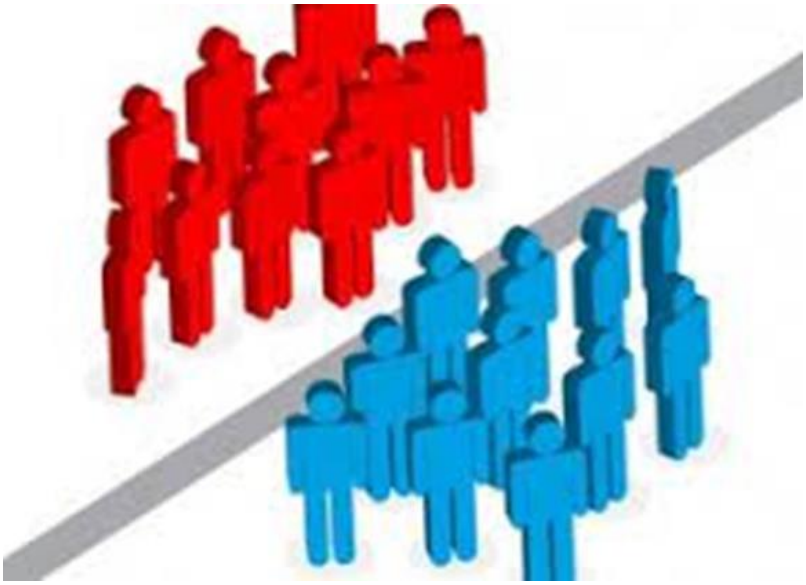
"Your loss is terrible, but at least your son will have a living remnant, his child. He will also have a resting place and stone where the family can visit. I do not even know where any of my children who were killed by the Nazis are buried." Then he added, "yet somehow Hashem has given me the strength to rebuild my family and life."

Those words truly helped console the Rosh Yeshiva. Sometimes when we are locked in our little boxes, we, too, need a window. When we think our world is crumbling and that we are doomed to a fate that is too difficult to bear, Hashem tells us to make a window.

Sometimes, in our frustrations we have to look across the globe to know that despite our difficulties, others must endure a more difficult fate. And when we realize that they can endure, whether it is an Og holding on to the back of the ark, or struggling with those lost amongst the ruins, we can remember that life inside the ark is not so bad after all. (***By R' Mordechai Kamenetzky)***

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

שם האחד פלג כי בימיו נפלגה הארץ ושם אחיו יקטן י:כה ***The name of the first was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and the name of his brother was Yaktan.*** (10:25)



The Chozeh of Lublin asks, what is the difference between Peleg and Yaktan? Why does the Torah explain at length the meaning of the name Peleg and points nothing out regarding his brother Yaktan?

When the source of a name is division, there is a need to explain the meaning, however, when a name indicates smallness and humility, as Yaktan does, no explanation is needed, as we are all small and this name applies to everyone. (*Umatok HaOhr*)

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Being calm and tranquil is mesugal for having good children. As it is known, the only way to raise children is without anger. Anger is only detrimental for the children's chinuch.

Therefore, it is wise to overcome anger, and to become calm. With these traits, you will merit having good children, tzaddikim.

Living Jewish- Chabad

וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת־הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחֵת כָּל־בָּשָׂר I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh *(6:17)*

Why did G-d choose a flood with which to punish mankind? Could he not have chosen another method to destroy the wicked?

The purpose of the flood was to purify the world which had become unclean and defiled by its inhabitants. This is alluded to in the duration of the flood, 40 days, and the requirement that a purifying mikva must contain at least 40 sa'a of water. ***(The Baal HaTanya)***

Parsha Pages - Not Just Noach

וַיִּשָּׁאֵר אַךְ־נֹחַ וַאֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה 7:23

This is a double exclusion, says the ***Ba'al haTurim***, and a double exclusion always comes to include something.

This is Chazal's source in saying that Og Melech ha'Bashan survived the flood too (and they even discuss as to how he managed to do so, seeing as he was not allowed to enter No'ach's boat).

Indeed, the *Ba'al ha'Turim* adds, the Gematriah of **אַךְ־נֹחַ** "ach Noach" (79) is equivalent to that of '*Og*' **עוג** (79).

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



The Gemara in Brachos (61) compares the Yetzer Hara to a fly. The Meforshim explain that a fly doesn't bite like a mosquito or sting like a bee, it only disturbs people.

The Yetzer Hara is like a fly, because the Yetzer Hara tries to confuse and disturb people. Also, if someone has a wound, the fly will be attracted to go there first, and this can often contaminate the wound and bring diseases.

The Yetzer Hara uses this ploy as well. It finds people's faults and emphasizes them, causing people to despair of ever being good people, and making them give up trying.

Knowing this, our job is to outsmart the Yetzer Hara and swat him away, so we can continue to pursue Ruchniyus and getting closer to Hashem!

Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh

The Rosh's Guide to Life— Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh . Distance yourself from Ga'avah— pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, as much as possible.

The Alter of Kelm notes that in the Brachah following Krias Shema we say that Hashem is Mashpil Gei'im U'Magbi'ah Shefalim, He lowers those who are haughty and uplifts those who are low.

We can understand this phrase better by means of an illustration. If we consider the speed at which electricity travels, its regular

speed is quite fast, as it can travel thousands of miles in an instant. If we could somehow quicken the speed of electricity, who knows how fast it would travel?

Hashem, in a similar way, so to speak, will lower those who are full of pride and arrogance. How far will this arrogant person fall when thrust down by Hashem? We cannot even begin to measure it. Therefore, the Rosh implores us with his first directive to stay as far away as possible from Ga'avah.



Rebbi Akiva Eiger was renowned for his modesty. Once, Rebbi Akiva Eiger and **Rebbi Yaakov of Lissa**, the author of the Chavas Da'as and the Nesivos HaMishpat, travelled together in the same wagon to Warsaw for a gathering of Rabbonim. The people of Warsaw were eagerly awaiting the arrival of these two great Gedolim, whom they had only heard so much about but had never seen them and waited for them at the outskirts of the city to greet them when they arrived. When they reached the edge of the town, the townspeople immediately unhitched the horses from the wagon so that the people could have the honour of pulling the chariot of these two Gedolei Ha'dor by themselves.

When Rebbi Akiva Eiger saw this, he jumped out of the wagon and joined the crowd pulling pulling the wagon, assuming that this great honour was done for Rebbi Yaakov, the great Rav of Lissa. At the same time, Rebbi Yaakov assumed that this great honour was for Rebbi Akiva Eiger, and he jumped out of the wagon from the other side and also joined the crowd. Together, with all the people of

Warsaw, these two Gedolim humbly pulled the empty wagon into the city, to honour the other Gadol that they thought was inside of it!



וַיָּבֹא נֹחַ וּבָנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּנְשֵׁי־בָנָיו אִתּוֹ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה And Noach went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives into the ark *(7:7)*

A person should not be content with his own entrance into the "ark"- the holy letters of prayer and of the Torah, but should always seek to bring others with him as well, not only members of his family but every fellow Jew.

Just as Hashem helped Noach by closing the door of the ark after all were safely inside, so, too, is every Jew assisted by G-d when he comes to the aid of his fellow man. (***Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshutz***)



When Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, was young, his parents wanted to inspire him to trust in Hashem and serve Him with absolute devotion, and they would tell him a story about his great-grandfather which made a powerful impression on him.

Rav Moshe's father was named after his grandfather, Rav Dovid Feinstein, who was a man who worked as a common labourer but was full of Yiras Shamayim. When Rav Dovid was hired to work for a non-Jew, it was on condition that every day he must be allowed time off to daven Minchah. However, Rav Dovid's employer was not very happy with this condition. He was angry that precious time that could have been used for work would be 'wasted' because the Jew had to say his prayers. But Rav Dovid was a good worker and the man needed him, so he agreed.

The employer became even angrier when he saw that Rav Dovid's Shemoneh Esrei was recited carefully and with intense Kavanah, and lasted a very long time. The man said, "Who does he think he is? This

is not a synagogue where you can pray as long as you like. I only intended to allow him a couple of minutes off, and nothing more!"

Instead of speaking to Rav Dovid directly, the man decided to send the Jew a message to show how upset he was, and he wanted it to be a message that Rav Dovid would remember for a very long time.

One day, as Rav Dovid stood with his eyes closed Davening Shemoneh Esrei, his employer moved behind him, and held a shotgun in his hands. He waited for Rav Dovid to bow, because after watching him Daven a few times, he knew that there were times when he would bow his head, and when the moment came when Rav Dovid bowed, he shot his gun just above Rav Dovid, and a bullet whizzed right over him. The goy watched with joy, expecting to see the Jew fall to the ground from fright or start running like mad for the door, but he was greatly disappointed. Rav Dovid simply continued to Daven as if nothing at all had occurred. His Kavanah was so intense that he may not have even heard the gunshot at all!

Later, the employer told Rav Dovid what he did and that he tried to scare him by showing that he had been angry enough to kill him for taking so long in his prayers, but when he realized how intensely Rav Dovid was concentrating on his prayer, he realized that Rav Dovid was truly a G-d-fearing man.

He said, "I see now that you actually are not wasting any time at all as you are actually talking with G-d, and I am no longer angry about this. I thought you were trying to fool me just so you can take a break from work."

From then on, the man would refer to Rav Dovid as 'my Jew', and never again complained about the length of his Davening.

When Rav Dovid Davened, it was as clear as day to him that he was standing directly before Hashem!

Parshah Pearls - The Dog, the Raven & Chom

When the world is in trouble, says the Gemara, marital relations are forbidden, as we find by commenting on the Pasuk in Bereishis (41:50), which informs us that Efrayim & Menasheh were born "before the years of famine arrived".





Rashi explains that 'from here we learn that marital relations are prohibited during a time of famine'. That is why, for the twelve months that the Flood lasted, all the inhabitants of No'ach's boat refrained in marital relations - all except for the dog, the raven and Chom, who weren't able to control their physical urges. - Consequently, G-d punished them: the dog is kept on a leash (controlled by man); the raven mates by spitting into its partner's mouth, Chom's skin turned black - a sign of degradation and shame.

In the Ibn Ezra's commentary on Chumash, he writes that the neshama yeseiro – the additional soul – that we receive on Shabbos is an obvious fact that no one can deny. Indeed, we can feel it with our own senses.

The Lev Eliyahu (Rav Eliyahu Lopian) writes that the **Alter of Kelm** had a sickly pallor throughout the week. However, as soon as Shabbos would arrive, the blood would rush to his face, giving it a healthy pigmentation and he would also appear full of vigour. All the students of Kelm could see this clearly, each and every Shabbos.

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב **" … *he sent the raven, and it went back and forth* …"** (8:7).



Rashi explains that the raven flew round and round the boat. It refused to fulfil its mission, he says, because it suspected No'ach of intending to take its mate.

This conforms to the Pasuk in Mishlei (27:19) "As water reflects one's face, so too, does one tend to see one's own faults in others".

Having seen earlier that the raven was exceptionally promiscuous, it is not surprising that it perceived the same fault in No'ach, whom it therefore suspected of sending him away in order to steal his mate (Sanhedrin, 108b).

Others in the same Gemara define the raven's (legitimate) complaint to the fact that only one single pair of ravens remained in the entire world. Constantly, should anything happen to him (the raven) and he failed to return, the species would become extinct!

No'ach accepted his argument, and sent a dove, of which there were fourteen still in existence.

Whatever the case, the **Chafetz Chaim** points out that a person who lacks merit will be prevented from going on a mission that entails a Mitzvah. This, he explains, is on account of the principle that G-d brings about good things through good 'people' and bad things through bad people. Consequently, even if he succeeds in setting on his mission, he will not succeed in completing it. Hence the raven was deemed unworthy to bring salvation to No'ach and the occupants of the boat and returned 'emptyhanded'.

Rashi however, cites a Medrash that although for whatever reason, the raven did not carry out the sh'lichus here, it was reserved for another sh'lichus many years later - when ravens brought Eliyahu, who was hiding from the wicked King Achav, bread and meat.

Rabeinu Bachye completes the story: When the raven returned from his unfulfilled mission, he explains, No'ach refused to take him back 'What use are you to the world?' he exclaimed; You are not Kasher to be eaten, nor are you eligible to go on the Mizbe'ach!' But G-d intervened: 'Take him back!' He ordered, 'until the water dries up' (ad yevoshes ha'mayim) - until a certain Tzadik will come and decree a drought upon the world, with reference to Eliyahu ha'Navi (as is hinted in the word "yevoshes", which contains the same letters as 'Tishbi', Eliyahu). 'Then I will need the raven to bring him bread and meat from the kitchens of Achav to sustain Eliyahu.

For reasons known to Hashem, He decided to use ravens to feed Eliyahu (just as he used a spider to save David from the clutches of Shaul ha'Melech). And that was reason enough to save the raven from extinction.



צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה ***"A window you will make for the Ark."*** (6:16)

The Mishna says the word in Hebrew for "ark" — teiva — can also mean "a word." The word for "window" — tzohar — can also mean "to shine." In other words, you can read this verse as follows: "*Make your word shine!*"

We all have the power and responsibility to illuminate our words, to make them words of positive force, of prayer, of encouragement, and of Torah. When we do this, we raise the world around us above the deluge of physicality and selfishness that looms. Even one word of prayer or Torah can save us from the "flood." (*Sefas Emes)*



Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

בראשית רבה - וימת הרן על פני תרח אביו 38:13 – "Terach was a manufacturer and seller of Avodah Zarah. One time he left his store, and placed his son, Avrohom, in charge of the store. If someone wanted to purchase an idol, Avrohom would ask him his age. Whatever age the person was, Avrohom would answer back, "Woe is to the man who is such and such years old and wishes to bow to that which is a day old." Whereupon the person would be embarrassed and would not purchase the idol.

One time a woman came in carrying a large plate of flour and wanted to offer it before the idols. Avrohom took an axe and smashed all the idols, except for the biggest one there, and placed the axe in the hand of that idol. When Terach returned and saw that his idols were destroyed, he asked Avrohom who did it. Avrohom explained that a woman came in wanting to offer flour, and all of the idols wanted to eat first, so the largest idol smashed all the rest of them so he could eat first. Terach asked Avrohom why he was making fun of him, for the idols do not know what is happening around them. Avrohom retorted, "Did your ears hear what your mouth just said? You yourself said that these idols are really powerless – so how can you worship them?"

Upon hearing this, Terach brought Avrohom to Nimrod. Avrohom and Nimrod had a dialogue, and Nimrod was not happy with the words of Avrohom, and cast him into the fire saying, "Let the G-d to Whom you bow come and save you." While this was happening, Haran was thinking that he would side with Avrohom if he lived through the fire, and if not, he would side with Nimrod.

When he saw that Avrohom was saved, he sided with Avrohom and was promptly cast into the fire, where his innards were burned, and he exited the furnace, and died in front of Terach.

Parsha pages - The Rainbow

After the flood, G-d promised Noah that He would never again bring a flood that would destroy the world. A rainbow is a reminder of this covenant that G-d made with Noah, his descendants, and all living creatures. Therefore, upon seeing a rainbow, we recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלוֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם זוֹכֵר הַבְּרִית וְנֶאֱמָן בִּבְרִיתוֹ וְקַיָּם בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ



Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who remembers the covenant, and is faithful to His covenant, and keeps His promise. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 229:1.)

Definition of a Rainbow: An arc of light separated into bands of colour that appears when the sun's rays are refracted by drops of mist or rain.

Question: On what types of rainbows do we make a blessing?

Answer: The blessing is made on a rainbow that results from a rain event. We do not make a blessing on the rainbows from other circumstances such as seen from waterfalls, sprinklers, etc.

Question: Does one make a bracha again if one sees a rainbow a second time within 30 days?

Answer: If one sees a rainbow again, even within 30 days, one makes another blessing. This is unlike similar blessings on nature such as the newness of the moon, upon seeing the ocean, etc. (which are only recited once in 30 days). Each rainbow is different, since each

rainbow is the result of a different cloud and water situation. (Shaarei Teshuvah)

Question: How much of the rainbow must be seen in order to say this blessing?

Answer: The Shulchan Aruch writes that one who sees a Keshes, a rainbow, should recite the Bracha. The Biur Halacha (ibid. "Haroeh") raises the question whether one must see the entire rainbow, i.e. the bow-shape, in order to make the Bracha, or it is enough to see any part of the rainbow. He leaves the question unanswered. The Teshuvos V'hanhagos (3:76:6) concludes that since it is a Safaik (case of doubt), one should not say a Bracha unless he sees the bow-shape of the rainbow.

Background: We learned that there is a special bracha one says when he sees a rainbow. The Shulchan Aruch, immediately after mentioning the bracha, says that it is not permissible to look at the rainbow for a prolonged period of time.

Question: Why can't you look at a rainbow longer than it takes to say the bracha?

Answer: The Gemara (Chagiga 16a) mentions this amongst other things that a person shouldn't look at (for a prolonged period). Two other things are the Cohanim (while they are blessing Yisrael) and the Nasi. The Gemara explains that these things are representative of the Shechina, and therefore one shouldn't look at them. Maharsha explains that one who looks at the Shechina dies, and being representative of the Shechina, one shouldn't look at these three things.

Question: Is it proper to tell another person that a rainbow can be seen?

Answer: Chayai Adam mentions that one should not tell another about the rainbow due to a reason of spreading a bad report (a

rainbow reflects evil deeds being done). Mishneh Berura states that it is not proper to tell another. Torah Ladaas says it is not proper even though the other person would then be able to say a blessing. The Zos Habracha says that everyone maintains one can pursue the opportunity to see the rainbow in order to make a blessing, since the only possible "disgrace" involves telling another person. He wonders whether it is possible to gesture to another (by eyes or hands) to another to be able to see the rainbow.

However, The Bris Cohunah and the Yalkut Yosef maintain it is permissible to tell another Jew in order that they could make a blessing. They maintain this blessing was instituted as an acknowledgment of G-d's Chessed and we should be happy and share that happiness with others.

Question: Why, of all His many creations did G-d choose a rainbow as this symbol?

Answer: A rainbow is a diffusion of light through water.

Light starts out as a single monocular ray. When it is filtered through a cloud in a certain way the one single colour diffuses and diversifies into all colours. In a sense, the rainbow is a revelation of the inner truth of light. What seems to be white and simple is actually made up of many different colours.

In the Yom Kippur prayer we describe the beautiful sight of the Kohein Gadol as he came out of the Holy of Holies. We describe him like a rainbow. The Kohein represents the entire nation of Israel when he stands before G-d. He stands before the One, the only One, but represents the diversity which HaShem created. When one succeeds, he is beautiful in his Ahavas Yisroel. He brings forth the simple light, the Ohr Dak and turns it into a rainbow.

Further, all living things need water to survive. Water, also known as H2O, has a molecular weight of eighteen atomic mass units (amu).

The Hebrew word Chai, which means life, has a gematriyah (numerical value) of eighteen.

The generation of the Flood had the commandment to "be fruitful and multiply." However, Man desecrated this commandment by mating with other creatures. As a result, Hashem destroyed the generation with the substance on which life is dependent.

Just as a newborn baby emerges from the amniotic fluid, a whole world was reborn from water. Thus, water is a vital component of the rainbow which provides the message to people to seek ultimate perfection (peace).

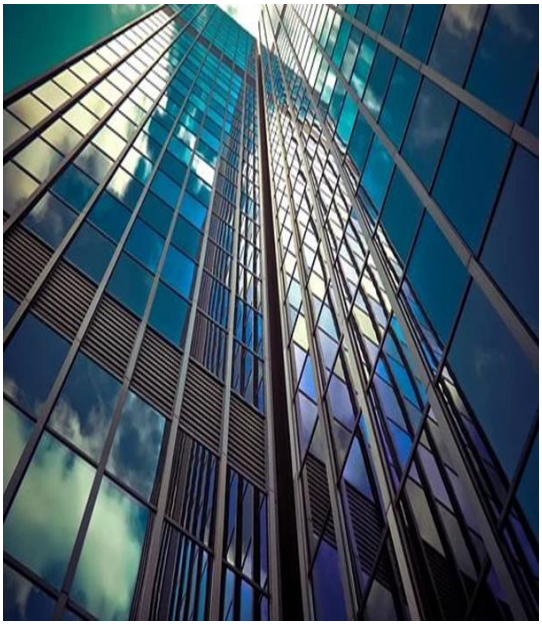
Hakodosh Boruch Hu did not perform a miracle for Haran and save him from the fire, because Hashem only provides miracles for those who are willing to give up their lives for Hashem, and not for those who rely on a miracle to be saved.

Why were Haran's innards burned and not the outside of his body? Being that Haran was willing to risk his life to be Mekadesh Shem Shomayim, he was Zoche that Hashem's Name was Mekudesh through him, in that his body remained miraculously intact.

Haran died in front of Terach, for while Haran sided with Avrohom for it appeared that it was the winning side, nonetheless, he really believed what his father taught him, and believed in the Avodah Zara. It was because Haran still believed in the Avodah Zara that he died and did so in front of Terach for his death was the fault of Terach.

"There is something Hashem loves about you, that only He knows about." – The Chidushei Harim.

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz taught a Mashal.





A town once built a very high building, and in order to reach the top of the building, one had to climb thousands of steps. An announcement was made that whoever could make it to the top floor by climbing the stairs would win a large reward. Many people came to test their ability to climb the stairs. The first one made it to the tenth floor, and he then gave up. The second one made it to the twentieth floor and the third person made it to the thirtieth floor, but then they had to stop.

Not one of the competitors was able to make it to the top floor. Finally, a Jew came along and he began to climb the steps. He was much slower than the others, but amazingly, he did not get tired and he did not give up like the others did. He was able to continue climbing until he was able to reach the top floor! - After he received the reward, everyone asked him, "How is it that you were able to succeed in climbing when no one else could?"

He replied, "When I first started climbing, I did not plan or expect to climb to the top of the building I just wanted to get to the first floor. However, when I saw that I could do this, I decided to climb just one more floor. I kept telling myself to climb just one more floor, and I continued to climb in this way. Although I was exhausted, each time I pushed myself to go just one more floor, I was eventually able to reach the top of the building!"

Rav Gamliel teaches that Tzadikim have written that in regard to any matter of Kedushah, the proper way to overcome it is 'little by little'. Chazal have taught us (Rosh Hashanah 4b) that if you grab a large amount, then you have not taken anything at all, but if you have taken a small amount, you will at least have taken that amount.

Sometimes a person has a strong desire to grow a lot in Ruchniyus, even 'to conquer the entire world in just one day', however, this can only be from one's Yetzer Hara who is trying to get him to take short cuts in his service to Hashem. The Satan is hoping that he tries to change the world in a moment, and then, when he sees that he has failed, he gives up hope completely and he won't even make a small change in himself. However, if a person decides to do it 'little by little', then he is much more likely to succeed.

This is similar to going up a ladder— one can't skip any rungs. Rather, he must go up 'little by little', so that he doesn't slip and fall all the way down the ladder! (*Torah U'Tefilah)*

The Raven – Nevermore?

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* questions why the raven was sent, but rejects the suggestion that it was in order to check the water level: The Torah surely would have stated this, as it does subsequently regarding the dove's mission. - Rather, in keeping with a Talmudic tradition (Sanhedrin 108b) the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* reveals why the raven was sent because Noach didn't want it around.

The Talmud suggests that the raven was cast out because it broke protocol and had relations on the Ark. While the dove was sent on a reconnaissance mission, the raven was simply expelled. The raven, for his part, refused to leave.

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld led the battle to preserve the sanctity and integrity of Yerushalayim. One morning in R' Yosef Chaim came to Shul and before donning his Talis and Tefillin, asked if anyone knew who had won the Presidential election in the U.S. the day before. No one seemed to know and some wondered why R' Yosef Chaim deemed it so important that he needed this information before davening.

R' Yosef Chaim explained that when he said Birchos HaShachar every morning and he came to the brocho of **שלא עשני גוי** where he thanked Hashem for not making him a non-Jew, rather than think of a simple non-Jew from the street, he preferred to have in mind at that moment the most important, the most dignified non-Jew in the world, and to bless Hashem for making him a Jew instead of that very important non-Jew.

"For this reason I am trying to find out who will be the new president of the United States so that I can have him in mind when I say the brocho, as he is undoubtedly the most Choshuv'a goy I can think of".

The number 40- Written by Daniel Fine

Noach builds an ark and thus survives the flood. The flood lasts for 40 days. Why 40?

The Maharal notes that 40 represents a new creation; thus, Moshe went up to Har Sinai to receive the Torah for 40 days – the giving of the Torah was a new creation in mankind. And there are 40 days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until end of Yom Kippur too; for that is supposed to be the time when we individually recreate ourselves and our lives. So too, when bringing a flood to the world that was to mark a new creation, 40 was the number of days it spanned.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

שנים שנים באו אל נח אל התיבה ז:ט ***Two by two they came to Noach into the ark*** *(7:9)* .



Chazal tell us that Noach only allowed pairs to enter the ark. It is written in the Sefer "Tashbeitz Katan" (Siman 447) that when Noach and his family were in the ark, there were demons and spirits with them, and they attacked the people until most of them became ill. Also, the foul odour in the ark made them ill. An angel came and took one of Noach's sons and brought him to Gan Eden and taught him all the cures and remedies in the world and he wrote them down in a book. This is the "Sefer Refuos" [Book of Cures] that was handed down to King Chizkiyah and he hid it away.

The Gemara tells us that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted Noach to allow only pairs to enter the ark, and since demons propagate as people they too entered as pairs.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz said regarding his Rebbe, Rav Binyamin Rabbinovitz, zt"l, that someone once observed him learning and noted he was able to sit and learn for seven hours straight without lifting his eyes from the Gemara even once. This person was very amazed by this, so he built up the courage and asked the Rav where he got his strength from to be able to learn Gemara for so many long hours.



Rav Binyamin answered him, "I also did not think that I would be able to do this, but I said to myself, that I will try to learn as much as I can and see how long I can go for. I thought, 'Isn't learning for just five minutes straight a difficult thing to do?' So I began to accustom myself to learn Gemara for just five minutes straight, without interruption. After I became used to this, I decided to push myself and learn an additional five minutes.

Over time, in stages and with small steps, I was able to keep adding to the time I learned until I was eventually able to learn for seven hours without interruption!"

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

ילקוט האזובי- כי מלאה הארץ חמס - 6:13 They were punished Midah K'neged Midah – **למבול** is Gematria **חמס** - 108.

Rabbi J. Gewirtz- Migdal Ohr

Noach was a tzaddik, but he goes down in history as the man who could have done more – and didn't.



A man once came to the **Beis HaLevi** to ask a halachic question. "Is one permitted to use milk for the arba kosos (four cups) on Pesach instead of wine?" R' Soloveitchik asked if there was some medical reason the man could not drink wine. As he questioned the man, it came out that he could not afford wine. The Rov told him, "No, one may not use milk instead of wine," and gave him a "loan" of twenty rubles for wine.

The Beis HaLevi's family questioned him after the fellow left. "Wine doesn't cost so much money. Why did you give him twenty rubles?!"

"Didn't you hear what he said?" asked the Rav. "He asked if he could use milk. Since we don't mix meat and milk, that means he couldn't afford meat for the Seder either! I merely gave him enough money for his true needs."

את קשתי נתתי בענן בראשית ט,יג - Chasam Sofer

ק״דושתי **ש**״מי **ת**״ורתי י״מיני

As the intention at the end of a person's silent supplication **אלקי נצר** we request even when a cloud is between us that HaShem accept us for the sake of Your name, for Your right hand, for Your Torah, for Your holiness.

Now You Know



When one sees a rainbow a bracha should be made. However, one should be careful not to stare at a rainbow for too long (Shulchan Aruch 229:1).

The Zohar writes that this is because one looking at a rainbow is as if he is looking at the Shechina (B'shalach 66b). There is a debate amongst the poskim as to whether or not these halachos apply to rainbows caused by natural events (as opposed to those that appear in the sky out of nowhere) such as after a rainstorm or in water.

The Ben Ish Chai writes (Parshas Eikev: 17) that it would seem that one should not make a bracha on a rainbow that appears naturally; however, being that the general accepted minhag is to make a bracha on any rainbow, one should make a bracha on a rainbow that appears naturally.

It is written in the Mishna Brura (229:1), that when one sees a rainbow, he should not inform a friend about it but rather make a bracha and keep it to himself. One reason is that if HaShem sends the rainbow as a sign that He remembers His covenant not to destroy the world with a flood, it means that mankind is behaving in a manner that makes it worthy of being destroyed. One would not wish to share such evil tidings, nor should one publicize his own or others' sins. (And definitely NOT take pride in them.)

Chazal teach us that when the truly righteous lived, rainbows were never seen.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky -Parsha Parables



Day in, day out for 120 years, Noah built an ark. Naysayers and scoffers chided him, mocked him, and continued on their path to self-destruction. But Noah continued to build. It must have been terribly difficult for Noach. A man alone, predicting calamity. He was the only human doing something to save himself. Yet despite 120 years of outreach and cajoling to curious onlookers to mend their evil ways, he was not able to persuade one member of civilization to join him. Why?

The Torah tells us that when Noach finally entered the ark for the journey of salvation amidst the world's destruction he almost had to be forced. "And Noach entered the ark because of the flood waters" (Genesis 7:7).

Rashi explains that even Noach himself was considered one of those with only modest faith. Noah did not enter the ark until the rains fell and he realized that disaster was imminent. Surely his failing was minute by our standards. After all, Noah was handpicked by G-d Almighty to save and perpetuate civilization. Yet his minor flaw is recorded.

British physician John Abernathy, in addition to being a renowned surgeon and teacher in the late 18th Century, helped patients with an array of emotional problems. He once related the story of a patient who entered his clinic complaining of severe bouts of melancholy and depression. It seems that the artisan lost faith in his own abilities. He felt he was not living up to his normal standard.

He was beginning to fail at his life's work. After examining him, Dr. Abernathy made a simple suggestion. "Go see the famous comedian, Grimaldi. He is known to cheer those who are depressed, and he would do wonders for your spirit. He will make you laugh and that would be better than any drug I should prescribe." The patient looked even glummer. "It won't help me," sighed the despondent patient. "I am Grimaldi."

Noach worked extremely hard to build the ark, but he could not rehabilitate one soul. Perhaps the Torah tells us the reason why he was unable to convince anyone to join him. Noach himself would not enter the ark until the rains forced him in. He did not run to the boat with a battle-cry of unshaken faith. For whatever reason, perhaps he felt that G-d's compassion would ultimately overcome His wrath: still, he did not show clear, unwavering belief that the flood would come.

In order to bring Jews close to Torah, in order to build souls, one must be steeped in the faith so powerfully that he need not be pushed into his own ark of his own salvation. In addition to building it, he must breathe it, live it and be totally committed to it. One can build great arks, but unless the passion of his faith exudes from his soul, it may never touch others. He may save himself and his family, but no more.

My grandfather, zt"l, once told me that if a certain secular writer would have seen the **Chofetz Chaim**, he could never have believed that man evolved from a monkey. The Chofetz Chaim's radiance emanated a spirit which thundered the sanctity of his very essence.

In order to promote true faith, one must be unwavering in his own commitment. Any lack thereof, albeit well intentioned, may get lost in a large, doubting crowd. For without one's own sense of absolute faith he will never lead others into his own ark d'triumph.

Rabbi Eli Mansour Weekly- Parsha Insights



Just before the flood, Hashem instructs Noah to board the ark together with his family: "*Come…into the ark, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation" (7:1).* The simple reading of this verse, it seems, is that since Noah was a righteous person, in contrast to the rest of the generation, he was deserving of entering the ark and being protected from the floodwaters that would kill the rest of mankind.

The Kerem Shelomo (Rav Shlomo Hallberstam of Bobov, 1907-2000), however, explained this verse differently. He noted that Noah's experience in the ark was actually a punishment. G-d could have saved Noah and his family from the flood in countless ways, but He chose to force Noah to spend around a year confined in an ark together with the animals. The ark was, in a very real sense, a prison in which Noah was trapped. Indeed, Noah did not exit the ark after the floodwaters had subsided until he received G-d's explicit permission. He was sent into the ark not merely to escape the flood, but also as a punishment.

The reason why Noah was punished, the Kerem Shelomo explains, is indicated in this verse, when G-d tells Noah to enter the ark "because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation." Noah lived in a generation which desperately needed guidance and inspiration, yet he was righteous "before Me," only

between him and the Almighty. He did not work to influence and inspire the people of his time, and for this he was punished.

The Kerem Shelomo writes that this was not always the case. The Torah begins Parashat Noah by describing Noah as a "Tzadik" ("righteous person") and a "Tamim" ("complete person"). The word "Tamim," the Kerem Shelomo teaches, refers to working to positively influence other people. He draws proof from the verse in Tehillim (19:8), "Torat Hashem Temima Meshibat Nafesh" ("The Torah of G-d is perfect, restoring the soul"). This verse teaches that one's commitment to Torah is "Temima" – complete – only if "Meshibat Nafesh," if he inspires other people to return to observance.

Noah was a "Tzadik" and "Tamim" – he was righteous, and he also tried to influence the evil people of his time to repent and return to the proper path of conduct. What happened? Why did Noah begin as a "Tamim" but then discontinue his efforts to influence his contemporaries? The Kerem Shelomo explains that Noah discontinued these efforts when he saw they were unsuccessful. When the going got rough, he despaired and stopped.

Noah differed in this respect from Abraham Abinu, who never despaired as he worked to influence the people of his time and spread the belief in Hashem. Abraham persisted, even when his efforts were unsuccessful. He never relented in his quest to disseminate the belief in one G-d, no matter how impossible this challenge seemed.

Noah, by contrast, gave up, and for this he was punished. Even when the going get rough, and one's efforts to teach and inspire do not initially succeed, he must continue and do the best he can. Even when our work is not fruitful at first, we must continue our efforts and do all we can to uplift and elevate the people around us.

Noach

This week's parsha begins with the words אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ - These are the children of Noach" (Beraishis, 6:9). Each weekly portion of the Torah has traditionally been given its name using the first distinct word found (usually) in its first sentence.

The question has been asked why is this week's parsha called Noach and not Toldos? We know that toldos is a distinct enough word to use as a title for a parsha because it is used in a month from now as a title of the 6th parsha. So why not consider it here as the title of this week's parsha, since it is the first distinct word available (and we could have called the later one "Yitzchak")?

Perhaps the answer is that the word toldos -children, is something we associate with life, joy, continuity, dreams, legacy, and vibrancy. Being so, in a parsha describing a mabul, an episode of extreme death, sadness, interruption, dashed dreams and lifelessness, it seems hardly appropriate to entitle it "Toldos". Rather, "Noach", a name that conjures up nechama consolation (as Lemech, Noach's father prophetically said that he is calling his son **Noach** because, "zeh ye**nach**amainu" -" this [child] will console us" (Beraishis, 5:29), something the world bitterly needed after the Mabul, yes, "Noach" makes for a way better title.

Oh, by the way and for what it's worth, the first parsha that does not have any death in it whatsoever is Toldos! *(Rabbi Nosson Greenberg*)

"Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, an amateur builder built the ark, professionals built the Titanic."

Hallel

The Medrash on the verse (Ber. 7:9) **שנים שנים באו אל נח** says that this is an allusion the days that we complete the Hallel, but without further explanation. Therefore, we could say :

The days that we say a complete Hallel are: the first two days of Pesach, the two days of Shavous, the nine days of Sukkos, and the eight days of Chanukah. And this verse serves as a device to remember these days:

שנים – *Two* days of Pesach

שנים – *Two* days of Shavous

באו – numerical value is 9 – *nine* days of Sukkos

אל נח - numerical value is 89 –same numerical value as **חנוכה**

Love Hashem

A man once approached the **Stretner Rebbe** and asked him for advice on how he can come to love Hashem. He said, "How can someone love Hashem when He can't be seen?"

The Rebbe answered, "The best way to love Hashem is to first love other people. By loving other Jews, it expands his heart, and it teaches him to be less self-centred. This will ultimately lead one to love Hashem as well.

"We learn this from the Gemara (Shabbos 30a) where Hillel taught that one should not do to others what they themselves would not like to be done to them. He said, 'This is the entire Torah, everything else is commentary.'

"How can we understand this statement? What does concern for others have to do with all the Mitzvos that are between man and Hashem, like Shabbos, Kashrus, and so many others?

"The answer is that if one shows concern for others, he learns to become less focused on himself. This change makes him sensitive to the needs of other people, which leads him to do the will of Hashem and learn more Torah, and he will then come to love Hashem more and more!" *(Torah U'Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

Likute Mimini Michoel

וַיַּעַשׂ נֹחַ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּהוּ ה׳ 7:5 ***Noach did according to everything that Hashem had commanded him.***

Much comment is made about the fact that, whilst he was a tzaddik, Noach was unable to save his generation from the mabul. The meforshim explain variously that this was because he did not believe it would happen, alternatively, that he did not urge his fellow men to do teshuvoh choosing instead to concentrate on perfecting himself.

The last **Sforno** at the end of Parshas Bereishis has a different approach, which explains the difficulty with the second of these two explanations, since we know that Noach spent one hundred and twenty years building the teivo precisely for the reason that people should see and question him, allowing him copious opportunities to explain the shortcomings of the world and how to rectify them.

The Sforno says that while Noach did spend his time urging people to do teshuvoh and correct their bad ways, he did not teach them Torah. He did not teach them to walk in the ways of Hashem. A person is not complete without Torah. If one only makes oneself holy with Torah, then this will not have the impact of saving others as the Torah is the only foundation you can build on to influence positively other people's futures.

We see that advice on moral and ethical behaviour did not change the people and, therefore, Noach was accused of only saving himself

and not the rest of his generation because he did not teach them Torah.

Similarly, in raising our children we need, of course, to teach them general standards of moral and ethical behaviour, but that is not enough. We must teach them Torah, emunah and bitachon . We must teach them to emulate and walk in the ways of Hashem.

With His help in the holy work of raising children imbued with a love of and yearning for Torah and mitzvos, we will be able to achieve Hashem's precious status for us of being a 'light unto the nations', so that we should be worthy to bring moshiach tzidkeinu bimheiro ve'yomeinu.

Two Generations of Noach Rabbi Moshe Greebel Z"L

Within the 950-year span of his life, Noach lived through two separate generations- the Dor of the Mabul and the Dor Haflaga . In this week's Sidra we are introduced to the Dor Haflaga: "*And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a valley in the land of Shinar; and they lived there." [11:1-2*]

The phrase in the Torah of **וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם** seems to be quite obvious, especially after stating, "*That they found a valley.*" What then, is the meaning of this phrase **וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם**?

For an answer to this question, we turn to the **Yalkut Mai'am Lo'aiz by Rav Ya'akov Culi**, who died in 1732 of blessed memory. In LaShon HaKodesh the expression for 'They lived there' is 'Vayaishvu Sham.' Now then, if we take the Gematriya of the word 'Sham' (there), we get 'Shin' (300) and 'Mem" (40), or three hundred and forty, which is the exact number of years from the Mabul, which destroyed all life on the earth, to the building of the Tower of Bavel.

Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

After the Great Flood the Almighty said: אֶת־קַשְׁתִּי נָתַתִּי בֶּעָנָן וְהָיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ ***"My rainbow I placed in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth"*** *(9:13)*.



What lesson for life can we learn for life from the symbolism of the rainbow? The rainbow symbolizes peace and unity. A rainbow is made up of various colours and shades of colours and although they are very different from each other, they come together to make one entire whole.

Similarly, people are very different from each other. They come from different national backgrounds, and they have different personalities. However, if they will look at themselves as one unit there can be peace and harmony despite the differences between them. This is basic for the existence of the world and for the welfare of individuals. For this reason the rainbow is the symbol of the covenant between the Almighty and the earth.

Whenever you see a rainbow, or a picture of a rainbow, let it be a reminder to work towards harmony with other people even if there are major differences between you. While differences in interests and personality might make it difficult for you to become close friends with a specific person, you can still have a harmonious and peaceful relationship with that person.

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

ויאמר ד׳ לנח בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התבה

Then Hashem said to Noach, "Come to the Ark, you and all your household." (7:1). **The Zohar HaKadosh** asks, "Could Hashem not have secured Noach in a corner of the world, safe from the raging waters of the mabul, flood?" He could have transported Noach to Eretz Yisrael, which was left unscathed, and have him remain there throughout the deluge.

Rabbi Shimon explains that Hashem wanted Noach to experience the flood, to see its massive destruction. Why did Hashem want Noach to be in the Ark, within the floodwaters, surrounded by death?



Horav Chaim Zaitchick, zl, explains that it was important for Noach to see and feel, to see the dead and dying, to feel their pain, to experience their fear and agony, so that he would: A) remember the punishment meted out to those who mutiny against Hashem, who eschew His word; B) be forever grateful for being spared from death. This could only occur if Noach were spared from within the waters of the flood. Had he been tucked away in some distant island or ensconced in Eretz Yisrael, the suffering and death would not be real; thus, his gratitude would be missing an element of authenticity.

Veritably, even after Noach left the Ark, we find that he was rebuked for caring too late. The Zohar writes that when Noach exited the Teivah and saw first-hand the terrible destruction from which he had been spared, he began to weep bitterly, "Ribbono Shel Olam, You are called Rachum, Compassionate. You should have shown

mercy towards Your creations." Hashem countered, "Foolish shepherd! Now you plead on their behalf? Where were you earlier when I informed you that I was going to send a flood to destroy your generation? The tears that you shed now are too late."

There is a time and place for prayer. How many of us have been guilty of noticing someone's pain – too late in the game, when our assistance is neither effective nor desired? Noach was clearly a sensitive person, but he required a trigger to jumpstart his empathy and sensitivity. That trigger was the Teivah. Sadly, it was too late for the victims of the flood.

"Too little – too late" is not an uncommon rejoinder. What makes a person wait and not do what is obviously necessary – immediately – when it is most opportune? I think it is because we do not acknowledge the greatest gift that Hashem grants us: time. Time is life. Unless we appreciate this verity, we will squander time. When we frivol away time – we fritter away life. It is that simple. Sadly, most people fail to think about it this way.

*I recently read a story concerning **Horav Betzalel Zolti, zl**, who was a Torah giant without peer. The story demonstrates the attitude we must maintain with regard to time and the gifts of life and health that Hashem grants us. When young Betzalel Zolti was a lad of ten years old, an epidemic of serious eye disease overran Yerushalayim. Most victims who became infected with this eye virus tragically lost their eyesight, because there was no medicine to combat it.*

Betzalel was a brilliant student whose thirst for Torah was unquenchable. He studied every minute of the day. Orphaned of his father as a young child, Betzalel was cared for by his mother, who had high expectations for her young son and felt that one day he would rise to Torah leadership in the Jewish community. Betzalel's mother always davened for her son's continued health, but especially so during the raging epidemic. When one day Betzalel came home from cheder complaining that his eyes hurt, she became extremely

anxious and immediately turned Heavenward in fervent prayer, hoping that it was nothing more than a mere infection. The next day, when Betzalel came home from school, his eyes swollen and painful and his vision beginning to blur, she knew that something was terribly wrong with her precious child.

A trip to the doctor confirmed her worst fear: Betzalel was, tragically going blind. The diagnosis proved correct, when, a few days later, Betzalel's vision weakened considerably, and then he went blind. How could her beloved son study Torah if he were unable to read the text? In her deep pain, Betzalel's mother did what any responsible Jewish mother would do: prepared to take her son to the kever, gravesite, of Rachel Imeinu, our Matriarch, and pour out her heart to her.

She packed up Betzalel in a baby carriage for the two-hour trek. She could hardly walk with him for two hours without stumbling. When they arrived at the gravesite, both mother and son broke down sobbing and wailing that the Momma Rachel intercede on their behalf before Hashem, that He rescind the decree against Betzalel. Betzalel cried out, "Hashem, I ask You one request, which I want our Matriarch Rachel to also hear: I am prepared to give up my vision and never see my loving mother ever again, my friends, the food that I eat – I am ready to accept never seeing the world again, but one thing I am not prepared to give up is seeing Your holy Torah! I cannot live without learning Your Torah! "I am a young boy who has not learned enough of Your Torah. It is so vast, so great; I want to know it all!" With heartrending cries that split the Heavens, Betzalel pleaded with Hashem to grant him back his vision, so that he could continue learning Torah. His tears flowed freely in a small rivulet to the grave of Rachel.

Exhausted from the journey, the prayers, the tears, and emotionally spent from the ordeal, Betzalel fell asleep. His mother picked him up, placed him in the carriage and pushed him home.

The next morning, Betzalel woke and asked his mother to please allow him to return to school. "How can you go? You are unable to see. How can you learn – you are blind" she said, as tears welled up in her eyes. He answered, "Mommy, I can see now, and I want to run to school to learn Torah!" Betzalel's mother understood what had transpired. They were the beneficiaries of an overt miracle. They had prayed to Hashem, and He had answered. Nonetheless, his mother felt it prudent to take her son to the doctor to confirm that his sight had returned – and would remain that way.

Betzalel was adamant; he was not taking off time to return to the doctor. "I must return immediately to the cheder, so that I may continue my Torah learning!" he declared. "I received a gift from Hashem. I can now see again. I have no idea how long this gift will last. Therefore, I must use every spare minute to learn the holy Torah. Who knows how long I will be able to see?" Betzalel returned to school, refusing to go to the doctor.

The story is obviously incredible. What impressed me most was Rav Zolti's attitude to regaining his sight. It was a gift. How can one squander such a gift? This is how we should live. Every moment of life, every ability to move, speak, think, see, etc., is a gift. It is something we must appreciate; we must value. The greatest expression of our appreciation is not to waste it. "Too little – too late." Are we prepared to stand before the Heavenly Tribunal and explain to Hashem why we were guilty of doing too little – too late?" Noach cried for the victims of the flood. Too little – too late.

When you encourage others, you in the process are encouraged because you're making a commitment and difference in that person's life. Encouragement really does make a difference.

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick- Time to grow… UP!

וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחֲתָה כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר ***And the earth had become corrupt before Hashem . . . (6:11)***



Dayan Abramsky deduced from these words that the earth had become corrupt "before Hashem" but it did not seem corrupt to anyone else, for they had become used to the slow decline in holiness and had forgotten how the world was before and how it was meant to be. Thus, only Hashem saw that the world was corrupt, but those living at the time did not sense the extensive deterioration of their surroundings. (*Related by* ***Rav Moshe Sternbuch***).

Our inability to view ourselves and our surroundings objectionably often leads us to settle blindly into a detrimental situation. One example of this came from a Rav who recently confided that he had just realized that since his bar mitzvah he had been laying his tefillin incorrectly — for over forty years! He explained that his father had taught him that although the custom was to wrap seven times around the arm, since this boy had particularly thin arms and the tefillin straps were thin as well, he could be lenient to wrap the straps around his arm eight times instead. And now, forty years later, the Rav realized that he had never "adjusted" his practice.

There are many examples in our lives where we have not adjusted our practice — be it in our mitzvah observance, our behaviour, or our

Torah knowledge. And in many cases, we are even maintaining the same level from the time of our childhood!



Rav Nachman of Breslov was known to say, ***"If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, then what need do you have for a tomorrow?"*** Every day is a gift from Above, and it should be appreciated as such. The best way to appreciate a gift is to use it well. If we use our days well and seek to improve our practices, then we will, *b'ezras Hashem*, merit to have many more days to come.

נפלאות הבורא - Hashems Amazing World - Floods



Floods can be quite beneficial. Actually, believe it or not, nature benefits more from natural floods than from not having them at all. The thing that makes natural floods a disaster is when flood waters occur in areas populated by humans and in areas of significant human development. Otherwise, when left in its natural state, the benefits of floods outweigh the adverse effects. Let's begin with river flooding. Rivers overflow for reasons like excess rainfall. The good thing about river overflows is the fact that as flood waters

flow into the banks, sand, silt and debris are deposited into the surrounding land. After the river water subsided and go back to its normal flow, the deposited materials will help make the land richer or more fertile. The organic materials and minerals deposited by the river water keeps the soil fertile and productive. However, too much sand deposit will do the opposite.

For farmers that maintain their crops along rivers, they should not feel threatened by yearly flooding. This gives their farmlands better soil consistencies and keeps their land fertile resulting to better harvests each year. Instead of preventing the natural flow of river floods, it might be beneficial in the long run to allow the flood waters to encroach into their lands. It was how nature intended it to be in the first place. However, there may be limits to how much farmers can tolerate such natural occurrences. One has to increase production to feed the demands of the human populace.

Great examples of how river overflows benefit humans are in the Nile River and the Mississippi delta. Farmers in Egypt have long equated river floods to high harvest rates. The higher the flood waters from the river, the better the harvest for that year. However, the case of the Mississippi delta is a little different. The Mississippi river naturally overflows and leaving behind huge deposits of sediments. In time these sediments created lands which are now identified as part of the Mississippi delta. But when humans began settling in along the riverbanks, they constructed complicated and elaborate systems to prevent or control the flood waters from the Mississippi river. Without the regular sediment deposits that the land along the area of the Mississippi delta receives from the river, the land begins to sink. Each year the Mississippi delta becomes dryer and sink more and more. Floods are also known to renew wetland areas which in turn hosts a wide range of flora and fauna. Preventing flood waters from entering such wetland areas will create imbalance to the natural state of things resulting to

destruction of natural habitats and even extinction of various species of animals and plants.

In conclusion, we can say the floods play an important part in various ecosystems. Humans, therefore, should be careful when they try to prevent or control floods. Oftentimes, human intervention causes more harm than good. Basically, Hashem knows what's best!

Torah U' Tefilah- Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Noach is introduced as being a ***Tzaddik***, but the Torah refers to him as an ***Ish Tzaddik*** (6:9). The word Ish, man, is superfluous, as the Torah could have just stated that Noach was a Tzaddik.

Rav Shimon Sofer answers that the title Ish implies that he interacted with others, and he was still able to be pure and a Tzaddik. Therefore, the Torah is teaching us that despite his constant interaction with people, Noach was able to become a Tzaddik.

We need not avoid others or cut ourselves off from society in order that we become great; we have to learn how to attain greatness even through our interactions with others.

Noach's exit from the ark- D Fine

After forty days and forty nights of solid rain, and much longer for the earth to dry and reach normal water levels, Noach saw that the dove did not return, and so Noach knew that the land was now dry. He takes off the cover of the ark and knows it for himself. HaShem tells him to '*go out of the ark*' *(8;16)* צֵ֥א מִן־הַתֵּבָֽה and Noach obeys orders and steps out onto land.

The question to be asked here, however, is why did Noach need to wait for HaShem to command him to leave the ark? – the ark was a

means to survive the flood and thus once the flood was over, the natural thing to do would be to disembark.

Any punishment that HaShem gives is not merely a repercussion of having sinned, but is rather aimed at *correcting the sin* **מתקן** and is related to it [middah keneged middah]. The punishment or test is hand-picked to match the sin committed. One can receive reward for having learnt the correct lesson from the punishment. For example, Shimshon asked HaShem for the merit of one of his eyes that were poked out, despite the fact that the eyes being poked out were a punishment for running after Delilah's physical beauty. How could he ask for reward for the punishment of a sin?

Precisely because Shimshon was asking for the reward for having successfully gained from internalising the punishment and its lessons. The bottom line is that punishments are related to the sin and are in order that we should learn not to repeat the sin, better ourselves, and the punishment atones for the sin. And the same is true for tests in life; they are aimed to strengthen a specific point of one's nature.

And Noach, his sons, and his wife came into the tayvah because of the waters of the flood. (Bereishis 7:7) Rashi – Because of the waters of the flood – Even Noach was from those who are small in belief. He believed and he didn't believe that Hashem would bring the flood. Therefore, he didn't go into the tayvah until the water forced him in.

When the flood actually began, the posuk says that Noach and his family went into the Ark "because of the waters of the flood." Rashi observes that these words imply that it was the water that caused Noach to go into the tayva, not Hashem's command.

Chazal tell us that it wasn't until the water was up to his thighs that Noach finally entered. Therefore, Rashi says that Noach was "One of small emunah who believed and didn't believe." On one hand, he

believed that Hashem would bring the flood, but on the other, he didn't believe it would happen. Therefore, he didn't actually go into the tayvah until the rain forced him in.

Let's apply this to Noach. There are several sources which compare Noach and Avraham Avinu, finding Avraham as spiritually superior to Noach. Thus, whilst the ten generations from Adam until Noach ended with flood, the subsequent ten generations ended with Avraham Avinu getting their merit. (Pirkei Avos 5;2-3). In what way was Avraham Avinu more meritorious than Noach?

Chazal tell us that the principal distinction is that whilst Noach was content with his personal spirituality ('noach' means contentment/comfortable), Avraham went and recruited for 'HaShem's army' – he was an av hamon goyim (father of many nations and called out to them in the name of HaShem. In short, Avraham was a man of chessed and shared his physical and spiritual tools with anybody he could, whilst Noach did not over-busy himself with aiding the world in its spiritual plight.

HaShem set up the ark as the perfect trial for Noach to be put into in order to fully develop into an ish chesed. For the ark miraculously contained animals of all species, which Noach had to feed day and night. It was a twenty four-hour a day intensive chesed course!

In fact, Rashi quotes that once Noach fed the lion a bit too late and it bit him. So the ark was not merely a vehicle to prevent Noach drowning; HaShem could have given Noach and selected animals a special gift of a fish respiratory system to survive the flood like the fish did. Rather, the ark was a vehicle to ensure that Noach was to correct his trait of chessed, of focussing on and of giving to others.

In the bigger picture, the ark was the means of sowing the seeds to create a new world based on a pillar of chesed, which Noach was going to take centre stage in (olam chesed yibaneh). This is why at the end of the flood when the land was visible and the

water had dried, Noach had to wait for HaShem's command to exit the ark. Though the flood was over, what was to say the chesed course had finished? And so Noach waited for HaShem to say 'go out, the course has finished.'

Perhaps the source for this explanation is the midrash rabbah, which says that Noach is praised for not leaving the ark until told to do so by HaShem. Why the praise; one doesn't need to wait for HaShem's command to do something obvious – Noach didn't wait for HaShem's command to breathe?! The explanation is that Noach waiting for HaShem's command before disembarking showed that Noach understood that his time in the ark was a chesed course and that is why he waited for HaShem's command to leave, for that signalled that the course was over and that he was **מתקן** *the Aveiro of not listening to the command to enter the ark originally..*

Noach therfore says 'just like I entered the ark only with HaShem's permission so too will I only leave with HaShem's permission.' Why does this follow; Noach had to be told to enter the ark because the flood was coming; why should that make him wait for HaShem's permission to leave the ark?

The Midrash Tanchuma says that when king Nebuchadnezar had Chanania Mishael and Azariah were thrown into the fire and they survived unscathed, they refused to get out of the fire until the king had ordered them to be able to leave. Why?

The Midrash says that they learnt this from Noach, who said 'just as I entered the ark with HaShem's permission so will I only leave with His permission,' and they applied this to king Nubuchadnezar ordering them into the fire; they'd only leave with his permission.

"If you want to give G-d a good laugh, tell Him your plans."

Marriage Made in The Mabul! -What A Lie! – R Jager

Rashi says that we see from the words "*MiKol HaChai*" (Noach 6:19) that even Sheidim were admitted to the Teivah.



The Daas Zikeinim MiBaalei HaTosfos brings a Medrash that says that Sheker, the liar, came to Noach and asked to be admitted to the Teivah. Noach told him that only couples are allowed in the Teivah and Sheker has no mate. Sheker then went and found Pechas, the koach that makes people lose their money. Sheker asked Pechas if it would become its spouse so that they can be admitted into the Teivah. Pechas asked Sheker , what he would give in order for her to agree to the marriage. Sheker said he would give everything that he earns. The Shidduch was made and they entered the Teivah.

Since that day everything that one earns with Sheker, through dishonesty becomes property of Pechas, and is all ultimately lost!

Why Was Meat Now Ok? Written By D Fine

After the flood, HaShem gives special permission for Noach to eat meat (9:3). As Rashi underlines, Adam HaRishon was forbidden to eat meat, as were all other men forbidden to eat meat. What changed? One answer given is that the climate and nutritional makeup of the earth changed after the flood (remember, the flood was hot water, by the way). Thus, whereas man could previously survive on eating plants, they no longer proved nutritionally wholesome and energy-providing to keep man going – so eating meat was given the go-ahead.

The Chizkuni takes another approach. He answers that since the animals now owed their lives to Noach for keeping them alive (and thus ensuring their survival) in the ark, he was allowed to eat them for food.

Drowning Versus Climbing?- Rafi Jager



In this week's Parsha, Parshat Noach, the Torah tells us of 2 generations of sinners, The Dor Hamabul (the generation of the flood), and the Dor Haflagah (the generation of division).

The Dor Hamabul lost their fear in Hashem. They partook in all types of immoral and destructive activity, as the Torah states, **ותמלא הארץ חמס** "The Earth was filled with robbery" (6:11).

In short, the description of the Dor Hamabul is very bad. Yet, the Dor Haflaga is even worse. The Dor Haflaga lost themselves even more. They rebelled directly against Hashem's authority. They attempted to build a tower, go up to Heaven, and conquer the heavens (Bereishit Rabbah 38:7). This is defiance at its peak. However, if we examine their respective punishments, we find something very interesting. The Dor Hamabul was wiped off the face of the Earth, while the Dor Haflaga was only dispersed around the world.

Why was the punishment of the Dor Hamabul more severe if it appears that the sin of the Dor Haflaga was a graver sin? Why did Hashem punish the Dor Haflaga with such leniency?

Chazal explain that there was a substantial merit that the Dor Haflaga possessed that the Dor Hamabul did not. As rebellious and defiant towards Hashem as they were, the Dor Haflaga possessed Shalom, peace, which brought leniency toward them. As wicked as they were, there was still peace and harmony among themselves. The Dor Hamabul was filled with robbery and crimes, which are Bain Adam Lechaveiro. Therefore there is a more lenient punishment for the Dor Haflaga.

The Dor Haflaga eliminated strife and operated under peace and harmony. The Dor Hamabul did not. A valuable lesson can be learned from this week's Parsha. Even the Dor Haflaga, with rebellion in mind, were peaceful to each other. Imagine how much more peaceful a generation without rebellion can be. We should avoid Machloket and ultimately, we can be better people. If not, however, the Dor Hamabul reminds us of what can potentially happen.

Unlimited Expense Account- Written by H Jackson

וַיִּיקַץ נֹחַ מִיֵּינוֹ וַיֵּדַע אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן "*And Noach awoke and knew what his youngest son (Cham) had done to him. And he said:* וַיֹּאמֶר אָרוּר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאֶחָיו *'Cursed is Canaan, he will be a servant to his brothers'"* (Bereishit 9:24-25).

Our Rabbis teach (in Gemara Sanhedrin 70a) that when Noach became intoxicated Cham actually castrated his father! So if Cham was the one who sinned, why did Noach curse Canaan, the son of Cham, and not Cham himself?

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 36:7) explains that wherever G-d personally expresses a blessing, no curse will be effective. G-d had already blessed Noach and his sons when they disembarked from the ark: "And G-d blessed Noach and his sons" (Bereishit 9:1). Since Cham had received that blessing, Noach could not curse him. He therefore cursed Canaan, the son of Cham.

The Vilna Gaon used this Midrash to explain another statement of our Rabbis. They teach (in Gemara Beitzah 16a) that a person's income is fixed from one Rosh Hashanah to the next. Therefore, a person should be careful how he spends his money, because he will not be allocated more than his limit. The Gemara continues that there is an exception to this rule, namely expenses for the honour of Shabbat. If he spends more, G-d will provide him with more resources, and if he spends less he will be granted with less. Why is Shabbat an exception?

The Vilna Gaon explains that the reason why a person has difficulty in earning a living and thus has to be careful how he spends his money is because we are living under a curse.

Adam was cursed after his sin that he would have to live by the sweat of his brow, BeZeiat Apecha Tochal Lechem (Bereishit 3:19). This does not apply to the day of Shabbat because the Torah states clearly that "G-d blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (Bereishit 2:3). Since Shabbat has G-d's personal blessing, no curse can be effective on it. Hence there are no limits to what one spends genuinely for the honour of Shabbat.

On the same theme, the Vilna Gaon explains the Mishnah in BaMeh Madlikin (Shabbat 2:5) which states: "KeChas Al HaNer KeChas Al HaShemen". Why does the Mishnah say "KeChas" meaning "as if he saves" as opposed to the more usual "Chas" meaning "he saves"?

He answers that the saving is only imagined because he will recoup what he spends on the honour of Shabbat. Therefore, "KeChas" refers to the reality, not his frame of mind.

"The world has changed -the only question is… Have we changed." ~ Rabbi YY Jacobson.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

[לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה]

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ **צַדִּיק תָּמִים** הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו . Later on in the parsha when Hashem actually speaks to Noach the Pasuk says 7:1 וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי **צַדִּיק** לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה The accolade is lessened, he is no longer **תָּמִים** .



Rashi points out that **כי אותך ראיתי צדיק: ולא נאמר צדיק תמים. מכאן שאומרים מקצת שבחו של אדם בפניו וכולו שלא בפניו**: ***for it is you that I have seen as a righteous man before Me:*** *But it does not say: "a righteous man, perfect" [as it does in 6:9]. From here [we deduce] that we tell part of a person's praise in his presence and all of it in his absence.*

The Chasam Sofer however says that at the beginning of the sedra, its calls Noach a **צַדִּיק תָּמִים** , later on it says just **צַדִּיק**. There is a difference. A Tzadik is not on the same madreiga as a Tzadik Tamim.

Noach was guilty because he heard the words **קֵץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ בָּ֣א לְפָנַ֔י** 6:13 "*The end of all flesh has come before Me*" and he didn't turn to Hashem and say, " How can I help them, is there anything we can do to save this generation?" Therefore he lost the title **תָּמִים** . Conversely, we find by Avrohom Avinu that when he was told that Sodom was going to be destroyed, his first reaction was to try to save the people.

Reb Yaakov Kaminetzky says that Avrohom avinu stood for chesed and Gamilus Chessed. Sodom was the antithesis of everything that he stood for. What Hashem saw here in Avrohom, was an unbelievable strength. Avrohom saw Sodom as a place that propagated ideals that were diametrically opposed to his whole way of life and ideals. Avrohom would have been fair in telling Hashem to kill them all. However his reaction was, maybe we can find a way to keep them alive. However Noach didn't daven for the people, and therefore lost the title **צַדִּיק תָּמִים**.

Rav Moishe Feinstein gives a different slant on the issue. What the difference is between a **צַדִּיק** and a **תָּמִים**. The definition of a Tzadik is someone who has a *Taanoh* on him and he is exonerated. He brings a mashul of two people that had a court case, and we are unsure who is right. Neither of them are **תָּמִים** at the moment. There are *Taanos* on both of them. However, one of them will turn out to be exonerated and will become a **צַדִּיק**. *A* **תָּמִים** on the other hand is someone who has never had a *Taanoh* on him from the outset.

Rav Moishe says that if Hashem wanted to tell Noach how great he was, He should have initially called him **תָּמִים צַדִּיק הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו** using the greater Shvach first ie **תָּמִים**. Therefore Noach who should have had an influence and helped others, and didn't, because he didn't want to get involved and have *Taanos* on him, I will be a **תָּמִים**. What he didn't realise was that any person that has the opportunity to help others, and doesn't, even though there may be *Taanos* on him, will only remain on the lesser madreigo of a **צַדִּיק**.

Noach saw that he had a responsibility over here, and if he got involved, people would have *Taanos* on him, resulting in a loss of madreigo. Therefore he shut himself off, going against what The Reboino Shel Oilam wanted. Not realising That the Madreigo of a **צַדִּיק** is more choshuv to Hashem than a **תָּמִים** .

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

והקמתי את בריתי אתך ***But I will establish My covenant with you.*** *(6:18)*

Rashi explains that the promise Hashem made to Noach was two-fold: the food supply in the Ark would not spoil; the *reshaim*, evil people of the generation, would do him no harm. He would safely live on the ark.

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, says. Noach was about to enclose himself on a travelling ark with every species of animal, wild beast and fowl. One would think that this would be considered a frightening experience. These were not domesticated pets. They were vicious wild animals. Noach did not seem to be afraid. Hashem had given him many assurances that the wicked people would not harm him and that there would be sufficient food in the storehouse for them. Scary.



It is well-known that the lion attacked Noach because he was late with his dinner. Multiply that by thousands, and one can have an anxiety attack. It seems that Noach was not concerned. The *Rav* explains that protection from clear and present danger was not necessary. Noach knew that Hashem would protect him. In order to ensure that the *reshaim* of that generation did not attack the ark and kill him, however, Noach required a *bris*, covenant.

Horav Meshullam David Soloveitchik, Shlita, supplements his father's remarks. Noach's concern for the future was after the rain began, and the Flood was apparently imminent. When the *reshaim* clearly saw that their end was near, they were about to die, what was it that concerned them most? What were they involved in at this moment, when the shades of life were rapidly closing on them? To kill the *tzaddik*, Noach! Why? He was doing nothing to them. On the contrary, for one hundred and twenty years, he had done everything possible to convince them to alter their perverted way of life and repent. He warned them of the impending doom. They refused to listen. Now, they wanted to kill him, because he represented the truth- pure, unmitigated, unvarnished truth.

This is a reality that the secular left cannot tolerate. Since they could not change the truth, which was glaring them straight in the eyes, however, they wanted to kill the messenger. This has been the case throughout the millennia. Some things just do not change. They would rather quash the truth than concede that they were living a life of falsehood.

A Sweet Explanation About the Dove- By D Fine

The pasuk tells us וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּקָּחֶהָ וַיָּבֵא אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו אֶל־הַתֵּבָה (8;9) that when the dove that Noach had sent to check if the land had dried, returned to him, Noach 'stretched out his hands and took it (the dove) and brought it into the ark.' Why did Noach do this; couldn't the dove have flown in by itself?

Rabbi Moishe Kupetz of Manchester gives a delightful explanation. Noach felt bad, as it were, that the dove had gone out on a mission and had failed to signify any good news or bring any vegetation back. So as a sign of compassion so the dove would not feel bad for having to return to the ark, Noach personally stretched out his arm and brought the dove back into the ark so the dove would not feel bad.

As with a history of tzaddikim, Noach was allowing his good middos to express itself to such an extent that they were even expressed to non-humans (eg Moshe not hitting the river/dust in the first plagues out of gratitude to the river Nile and dust, etc.)



It is not the execution of a mission that is rewarded, but the trying to the best of our abilities even if we are not successful.

Ha'Emek D'var says that Noach gave the dove tremendous respect & honour because although unsuccessful (the 1st time), it did the best it could- **it tried**.



The Israeli army had an assault course that was so difficult that it was impossible to complete. An onlooker asked the commanding officer what's the point if it can't be done? He answered that he knows that they will all fail, but he wants to see which soldiers get up again and keep on trying & trying. Those are the soldiers that he wants.

Le'havdil Thomas Edison was asked how he felt literally failing hundreds of times before he perfected the lightbulb. He answered that as long as he didn't give up, he hadn't failed, and he just discovered multiple ways how not to do it.

הבה נבנה לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בשמים ונעשה לנו שם

"Come, let us build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves." *(11:4)* .



Researchers say that those who participate in extreme sports do it because they want to have a life-altering experience. They are individuals who are anything but irresponsible risk takers, but rather, highly trained men and women with a deep knowledge of themselves, who simply want to experience an activity that is life-enhancing and life-changing. For them, it is an exhilarating experience that makes them come alive, transcending everyday ways of being and glimpsing their own potential. They view dealing with death as an affirmation of life that gives it greater meaning. There are those who seek to carve out a niche for themselves by which they will be remembered, with "being remembered" serving as the antidote to cessation of life. We all want to live, but how many want to live on, to establish a legacy of life whereby we connect with eternity?

The early builders of the Tower of Bavel thought that it was all about making a name for themselves. Thus, they were willing to risk building an impossibly high tower, in which one slip meant certain death. It was all worth it, because they wanted to be remembered. Their legacy was their tower. The Great Wall of China cost its builders thousands of lives, as did the Siberian railroad. They

thought that somehow, some way, they were, by virtue of the name they made for themselves, connecting with eternity and cheating death. Others have gone so far as to act negatively to achieve their goal of being remembered. *Naase lanu shem;* "Let us make for ourselves a name": We all want to be remembered, but only positive memories are of value. We all want to share in a piece of eternity, but how many are willing to change, to alter their lifestyle in order to connect with eternity?

A lasting monument, an enduring legacy, is not one which makes a name for ourselves, but one which transforms and betters the lives of others. Eternity is achieved by connecting with something eternal. The only true eternity is Hashem. One who wants to be remembered, to share in an enduring legacy, has one recourse: connect with Hashem through Torah, *tefillah* and *mitzvah* observance. This eternalises our every action. Hashem told Avraham *Avinu* that He would establish an eternal covenant with him and his descendants. What more can a person ask for than to be a part of the eternal people, the nation which Hashem promised that He would never reject?

In one way or another, every human seeks to immortalise himself. No one wants to have lived and be forgotten. The physical achievements of man are temporary testaments to temporary actions which are about as eternal as the nations of the world who meant us harm, persecuting and murdering, pillaging and destroying.

Where are they now? Gone and forgotten – as useless as their goals in life. We are the only eternal people, because we connect to Hashem. We listen to Him when we study His eternal Torah. We speak to Him via the medium of sincere prayer. We earn a place in the eternal world of *Olam Habba*. We do not have to make a name for ourselves. We already have an eternal name: *Yehudi*, the name that Hashem conferred upon us.

מודים דרבנן - The Rabbinical Modim Prayer.

We can never have enough of some prayers. Hundreds of years after *Chazal* instituted the *Shemoneh Esrai tefillah*, the *Amoraim* of the *Talmudic* period determined that the congregation should recite a second *Modim* prayer during the time in which the *Shaliach Tzibbur*, *chazzan*, repeats the *Shemoneh Esrai*. This enables the congregants to thank Hashem, *again*. If the congregants were to sit quietly during the repetition, it *might* imply that they had exhausted their thanks to Hashem.

True, the *chazzan* is their representative, but we never know what courses through the mind of the *chazzan*. He might have his own issues/reasons for offering thanks. Thus, he might not sufficiently represent the congregation. In order to demonstrate that we can never sufficiently thank Hashem, we thank him – *again*.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- New Beginnings

The Rokeiach zt'l teaches the following brief lessons:

- There is no love like the love for Hashem.
- There is no crown like humility.
- There is no profit like that gained from keeping the mitzvos.
- No merit compares to the merit of being **מזכה הרבים**
- There is no better *korban* like a broken heart.

•No wisdom compares to the wisdom of the Torah.

•Nothing is worse than *machlokes.*

•No one hates you more than the *yetzer hara* does.

•There's no enemy like temptation.

•No one is wiser than a person with experience."

Hislahavus



When one makes a coffee, he uses boiling hot water, although he will never drink it at that temperature. But if he wants that the water should cool off, why doesn't he use less hot water, to begin with?

The answer is, the beginning has to be hot, fiery, hislahavus. This is a mashal to avodas Hashem, which has to be hot and fiery at the beginning, and afterwards, one can take a more tranquil attitude.

Chessed

Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* said *chesed* is *mesugal* for bearing children. He explained that in heaven the **שערי הולדה** , the chambers for bearing children, are sometimes closed. But right nearby is **שערי גמילות חסדים** , the chambers for deeds of lovingkindness. If the gates to the chambers for children are closed, one can enter through the gates of *gemilus chasadim*, and from there it is easy to jump into the chambers for children.

Rebbe Baruch of Zichlin's *zt'l* came to **Rebbe Henoch of Alexander *zt'l*** for Shabbos Parashas Noach, and he told the Rebbe that his son-in-law hadn't yet born children. Rebbe Henoch told him about the *segulah* of doing *chesed*, to enter from there into the chambers of **שערי תולדה**. He added that Rashi (6:9) writes, **עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים מעשים טובים** . This can be translated, **עיקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים מעשים טובים** tzaddikim have children, , in the merit of their *gemilus chasadim*.

Therefore, the next *Pasuk* states, **ויולד נח שלשה בנים את שם ואת חם ואת יפת**, "Noach gave birth to three children: Shem, Cham, and Yafes," implying that Noach bore those children because he was involved with *chesed*.

It states, **עולם חסד יבנה** , that the world is built on *chesed*. When one does *chesed*, he is building the world. Consequently, he is rewarded that his personal world is built up with good children.

Resting

Chazal (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 9:5) say, ***"If I leave the Torah for one day, the Torah will leave me for two days."*** **אם תעזבני יום יומיים אעזבך**

This is hinted at in the words, ... **אלה תולדות נח נח** , **נח** is written twice. This means, the children, the outcome of **נח** - resting, is **נח** , resting another day. Because **מנוחה גוררת מנוחה** , one resting draws the next one (taught in "Reb Yeiva" from **Reb Yaakov Yosef of Austrao *zt'l***).

"Better a Jew without a beard than a beard without a Jew"

Emunah and Bitachon

Rashi (7:7) **אף נח מקטני אמונה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול**

"Noach was weak in his Emunah. He believed, and he didn't believe that the mabul would come. Therefore, he didn't enter the teivah until it began to rain, and he was forced to go inside because of the flood."



The Ohev Yisrael *zt'l* writes in the name of **Rebbe Michel of Zlotchev *zt'l*** that Noach was a **צדיק תמים** , a perfect tzaddik. Knowing this, it is hard to understand that he displayed doubts in *Emunah*. "*Emunah,* he explains, has two explanations: It means to believe, and it also means to raise, as it states (*Esther 2:7*) **הדסה ויהי אמן את** , ***and Mordechai raised Esther***.

When one believes and trusts in something, this automatically raises its value and causes it to exist. Noach certainly believed in Hashem with all his heart and soul, but regarding this matter [that a flood was coming], he was afraid to believe in Hashem with all his heart because he feared that his belief might cause it to happen. In this matter, he didn't know what he should do.

This is Rashi's intention, **מאמין ואינו מאמין** . He believed, but he was afraid to believe fully that Hashem will bring the *mabul*, because perhaps the belief itself will cause the *mabul* to happen. That is why he waited until the flood began to enter the *teivah*."

Noach- Calm



Noach trusted in Hashem, and, as his name implies, he was **נח** - calm, and relaxed at all times. It states (*Ber 6:7*) ***ונח מצא חן בעיני ה' "Noach found favour in Hashem's eyes."***

The Gemara explains that Noach didn't deserve to be saved. He was saved because Hashem found *chen*, favour, in Noach.

The Or HaChaim explains, "There is a mitzvah, or there are three or four mitzvos that are *mesugal* for *chen*..." Noach performed those mitzvos, and Hashem found *chen* in him. But we are left to grope in the dark, to figure out which mitzvah (or mitzvos) are the ones that grant us *chen*!

Some explain that the hint is in the words of the *pasuk*, **ונח מצא חן בעיני ה'**. When he was experiencing hard times or good times, Noach knew it was **בעיני ה'**, through Hashem's *hashgachah*. Because of this *Emunah*, he found *chen* in Hashem's eyes.

The Ben Ish Chai (*Ben Yohoyada, Beitzah* 16.) says having *bitachon* is *mesugal* for *chen*. The hint is in the word **בטחון** which has in it two words: **חן-טוב**. "Because of his **בטחון** , he brings down **חן** and a bounty of **טוב**, good."

The Chareidim (*Mitzvas Asei* 1) writes, "Noach was always very calm and tranquil. Therefore, it states, **ונח מצא חן בעיני ה'** , the Midrash explains, his calm and tranquil attitude found favour by Hashem.

Tranquility is associated with *kedushah*, and anger with *tumah*… Noach's name is written three times in this *pasuk* because Noach was **נח** - extremely calm and tranquil in the way he spoke, walked, (**הלוכו**), and did things (**מעשיו**).

The people in the generation of the *mabul* were very anxious, as we explained. They didn't believe that *parnassah* is from Hashem, and therefore, everyone stole from each other. Noach trusted, and he believed in Hashem, and this attitude granted him **חן בעיני ה'**

Olive Branch



The Torah tells that the dove returned to Noach with an olive branch in its mouth, **וידע נח כי קלו המים מעל הארץ** "Thereby Noach knew that the waters upon the earth had receded." The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 33:6) asks: How did the bird get an olive branch? Weren't all the trees destroyed in the flood?

One answer is, **נפתחה לה שערי גן עדן והביאה משם**, "The gates of Gan Eden opened, and she brought the olive branch from there."

The Ramban (8:11) quotes this Midrash, and he asks that if the olive branch came from Gan Eden, where the flood didn't reach, how did

Noach know from the olive branch that the waters of the flood were subsiding?

The Ramban answers that during the *mabul*, the gates of Gan Eden were sealed, so the waters of the flood wouldn't enter. When Noach saw that the dove was able to enter Gan Eden, Noach understood that the gates of Gan Eden were open once again. That was his sign that the waters had receded.

We learn from this Ramban that we must seal our homes' doors tight from harmful influences, just as the gates of Gan Eden were sealed shut, so the flood shouldn't enter.



Chessed

Another form of *chesed* that Noach was occupied with was rebuking his generation's people and directing them on the right path. **The Seforno** writes that in this merit, Noach had children. It states (6:9-10), **את האלקים התהלך נח ויולד נח שלשה בנים**.

The Seforno explains, "Noach followed in Hashem's ways to do kindness for others, for he would rebuke his generation… , **ויולד נח שלשה בנים *'Noach gave birth to three children...'***

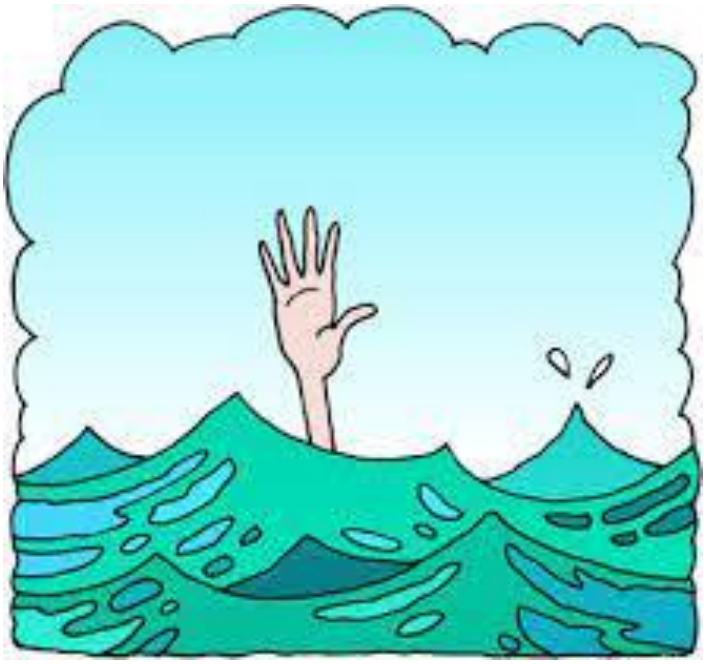
From the time that Noach began giving *tochachah* (rebuke) to his generation, he merited children. We don't find in the Torah anyone that waited for children as long as Noach did. He was five hundred years old, and he didn't have children yet. But when he began to rebuke the people of his generation, he bore his three children."

Giving *tzedakah* and giving loans is *mesugal* for bearing children and good children. The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 9:) states, "Whoever is accustomed to giving *tzedakah*, Heaven will give him children who are wise, wealthy, and learned in all parts of the Torah…"



Acquiring the Crown of Torah

There was once a poor person who suddenly became wealthy. One of his friends kept asking him, "Tell me the secret so that I can do the same. How did you become wealthy?" But the wealthy person refused to tell him.



Once, the wealthy person decided he would give in to his friend's requests. He said, "If you want to know how I became wealthy, come with me." He brought him to the sea. The wealthy man jumped inside, and he told his friend to do the same. The friend didn't know what this has to do with becoming wealthy, but he jumped into the sea, anyway.

The wealthy man forcefully pushed the poor person under the water, and he didn't allow him to lift his head. The poor friend thought he was going to drown. He tried to push his friend's hand off of his head, but the wealthy man was strong, and he held on tight. After a few moments of that torture, the wealthy man finally allowed him to stand up and get out of the water.

"What did you think when you were under the water? Were you thinking about how you could be wealthy? Obviously, you weren't. Your only thoughts were how to survive. This is the trick of becoming wealthy. You have to have nothing on your mind other than your goal to be wealthy, and then you will succeed. But if you want wealth and also other matters, you won't succeed."

For us, this is a lesson on acquiring the crown of Torah. The way to acquire the crown of Torah is to let Torah knowledge be your only

focus. If you want Torah and also honour and pleasures, you won't succeed. As the Rambam (*Talmud Torah* 3:6) states, "Someone who desires to keep this mitzvah properly, to acquire the crown of Torah, he must focus solely on Torah, and turn his thoughts away from all other ambitions. One shouldn't think that he will acquire Torah, and wealth and honour…" Hashem will give him wealth and honour, too, *be'ezras Hashem*, but that shouldn't be his intention. His focus should be only on knowing Torah, and then he will succeed.

Tefillah

The Magid of Mezritz writes in *Toras HaMagid*: "It states, **צהר תעשה לתיבה** - illuminate the **תיבה**.

I heard that Rabbeinu HaKadosh, **Reb Dov Ber of Mezritz**, explained that when one doesn't pray with *kavanah* he says the *tefillah* in darkness. But when one davens with *kavanah*… every word of his *tefillah* shines. The Torah urges, **צהר תעשה לתיבה** , let every word of your *tefillah* shine with your good *kavanah*."

"The chassid, the *magid*, Reb Dov Ber *zt'l*, taught: One should think about how his life and that of his wife and children are dependent on *tefillah* – especially on the *tefillos* of the *yamim norai'im*. Our entire *chiyus* is dependent on proper *tefillos*…"

The Magid explains that this is the meaning of the *Pasuk* **ובאת אל התיבה אתה ובניך ואשתך ונשי בניך אתך** , ***"Come into the words: You, your sons, your wife, and your son's wife with you."***6:18 - Your entire family is dependent on your *tefillos*.

On the words, **צא מן התיבה** "Leave the **תיבה** " the Magid explains that there are times when one should leave the words of *tefillah*, and instead cry out to Hashem with all one's heart, without saying words. This is also a form of *tefillah*

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* asks, where do we see that Noach prayed the flood should cease?

He said that it is alluded to in the *pasuk* (7:23), **וישאר אך נח**. Rashi explains, **גונח וכוהה דם מטורח הבהמות והחיות**, "Noach was moaning…due to his hard toil, feeding the animals." The Gemara discusses the hardships Noach went through to feed the animals in the *teivah*. Some animals eat at night and some by day, and Noach and his family had to care for all of them.

Once, he was bitten by a lion, because he brought the food late. Rebbe Bunim of Pshescha *zt'l* says that even if Noach didn't pray with words, his broken heart was like a prayer before Hashem. His heart was shouting, "Hashem, Save me. I can't manage."

Those silent *tefillos* roused Hashem's compassion, ended the flood, and set Noach free from the *teivah*.

עשה למען שמך

A segulah for the *tefillos* to be answered is to pray for Hashem's honour. For example, when one prays for *parnassah*, one can express in his *tefillos* that if Hashem gives him *parnassah*, he will have more time to learn Torah. When the *tefillah* is for Hashem's honour, his *tefillos* will be answered. After the sin of the *meraglim*, Hashem contemplated destroying the Jewish nation. Moshe saved them with his *tefillos*. He prayed for essentially two points: (a) If Hashem destroys the nation it will create a *chillul Hashem*, because the nations of the world will think that Hashem doesn't have the power to bring them into Eretz Yisrael. (b) Moshe said, **ה' ארך אפיים ורב חסד** , that Hashem should have compassion on the Jewish nation. Hashem replied, **סלחתי כדבריך** , "I forgive them, as you said," and Rashi writes, "Because of what you said that the nations of the world will say that Hashem doesn't have the power to bring them into Eretz

Yisrael…" It was specifically that prayer that saved them and not the prayer that Hashem should have *rachmanus* on them.

The Tchebiner Rav said, **מצוה לפרסם**, it's a mitzvah to publicize this Rashi, so people will know to pray for Hashem's honour, and then their *tefillos* will be answered.

Noach's Traits of "Tzadik and Tamim"



It is stated in the name of the **Bais Yosef** that Noach was called a "tzadik tamim in his generation" because Noach lived in two generations. He lived in the times of the generation of the mabul and in the later times of the dor haflagah – the generation of the rebellion against Hashem.

The dor hamabul had their decree of destruction sealed because of theft. Their sins were bein odom l'chaveiro, between man and his fellow man. This is the antithesis of being a tzadik.

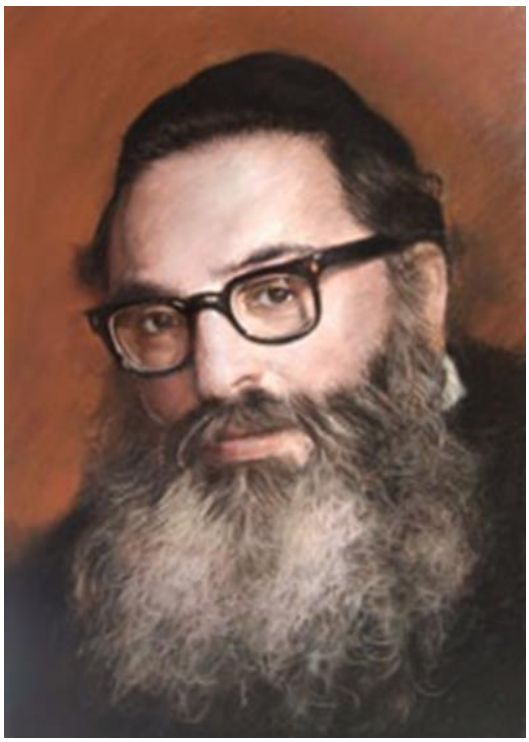
The dor haflagah were missing emunah. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (109A) says: ***"They said, 'Let's build a tower and go up to Heaven and make a war.'"*** Others wanted to erect an idol in Heaven. The opposite of this is tamim, as the verse says: ***"You shall be tamim before Hashem your G-d."***

Thus, the Torah calls Noach a tzadik and a tamim. He was a tzadik against the dor hamabul, and a tamim against the dor haflagah. Later the Torah only calls Noach a tzadik because there the verse is only talking about the dor hamabul, and it says "in this generation" – referring only to the dor hamabul. The verse there is saying that he was free of the sin of theft that was rampant in that generation.

We see from this that Noach excelled both in mitzvos of bein odom l'chaveiro and bein odom l'makom. Furthermore, **the Ramban** says that when the verse tells us that Noach was a tzadik and tamim, it is telling us that Noach was complete in his righteousness in order that we should know that Noach was worthy of being saved. He was completely righteous and undeserving of any punishment.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (108A) says that there was also a decree of destruction upon Noach. He was only saved because he had "found favour in Hashem's eyes". This is puzzling. The verse says that Noach was a tzadik tamim. We can explain by citing **the Ohr Hachaim**, who explains that Noach was indeed a tzadik; however, Hashem wanted to use Noach to take back the entire creation and recreate the world. For this, he needed to find favour in His eyes. This doesn't mean that Noach was not a tzadik. He was. Yet, being a tzadik wasn't enough for this task. He needed to find favour in Hashem's eyes by performing mitzvos that lead to favour.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע"ה]



These are the steps to becoming a Tzadik as it says **שבע יפול צדיק וקם** —the Tzadik becomes who he is through his failures.

R' Yitzchok Hutner writes in a letter that when people look at Gedolim they just see the final product. They don't see the struggles they went through to become who they were. This can be understood through an example of a champion boxer who was in the hospital for three weeks. We just see the final product, that he is a champion, not the weeks he spent in the

hospital. The difference between a successful person and one who is unsuccessful is not how many times he fell but how many times he got up.

Looking at a masterpiece of art, the viewer has no idea how many hundreds of hours the artist worked on the canvas, how many times the artist changed and reworked every stroke, how determined the artist was to constantly improve the picture. Likewise, looking at great people, only those close (and perhaps not even them) to them know how hard they toiled to actualize their goals and how much struggle was involved in attaining those spiritual heights.

R' Yechiel Halperin (1660-1746) in his sefer Seder Hadoros brings from the Shalsheles Hakabala that he saw in an old booklet the following: A man named Maimon didn't want to get married. He had a dream that he should marry the daughter of a butcher that lived in a city near Cordova. He ignored the dream but when it kept recurring, he decided to marry this girl. They had a child named Moshe, but his wife died in the childbirth. Maimon married again and had more children. Moshe had a hard time understanding since he had little desire in his learning and his father eventually gave up on him. Moshe then went to a shul, fell asleep, and awoke a different person. He went to the city where the Ri Migash was and learned from him, becoming great in his own right. This was the famous **Rambam!**

We need to realize that just as penny by penny a fortune is amassed. Small snowflakes add up to be feet of snow. Small bricks build an entire house. Seconds add up to minutes. Minutes become hours. The same applies to spirituality. It is told over that it took Thomas Edison 200 experiments to perfect the light bulb. When asked how it felt to fail 199 times, he responded that he didn't fail once. It was a 200-step process! We should have the same attitude with our spirituality.

Yesoidos M'Hasedra



After serving as a rav in Europe for 13 years, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l** had accumulated a large amount of debt and so in an effort to repay his loans, he left his family behind in Europe and set out for the United States.

He had arranged with a certain organization in Europe to work together with their New York office as a fundraiser. This job however only lasted a couple of weeks: On a visit to a previous donor, R' Yaakov presented him with a copy of the receipt from a previous donation and asked the man to please contribute just as generously again. The would-be donor excused himself for a few minutes and reappeared holding the cancelled check from that donation. "This is what I gave last year, and I am happy to do so again.

It seems", he explained, "that someone in the office wrote out a larger receipt in order to try to get me to up my donation." The man apologized but offered to match the real amount that he gave the year before. However, R' Yaakov refused to accept it and told the man that effective immediately, he doesn't work for that institution anymore. Although he was now out of a job and was separated from his wife and children, R' Yaakov would have nothing to do with something that lacked honesty.

Noble Noach - The Greatness of Noach:

1) The Mishna teaches **במקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש** , in a place where there are no men, strive to be a man. When people are not behaving correctly, we need to make an effort to act properly. During the time of Noach, the world was corrupt and even the animals mated with different species. Yet, Noach did not follow this path. This is the meaning in **איש צדיק** .

Additionally, **צדיק** refers to someone who stands up against promiscuity as in **יוסף הצדיק** . The same is with Noach. Accordingly, he is given this title.

2) Rashi tells us the main children of a Tzadik are his good deeds. The children of Noach—**חם , שם** and **יפת** —are his Maasim Tovim. **שם** : he always had the **שם ה'** , name of Hashem with him. **חם** means warmth meaning he did acts with passion and enthusiasm. **יפת** , beauty refers to that he performed actions **תפארת לעושה האדם ותפארת לו מן**

3) The continuity of the world was due to Noach. In this way we can grasp , **וצדיק יסוד עולם** a Tzadik is the foundation of the world, since Noach is called **איש צדיק** .

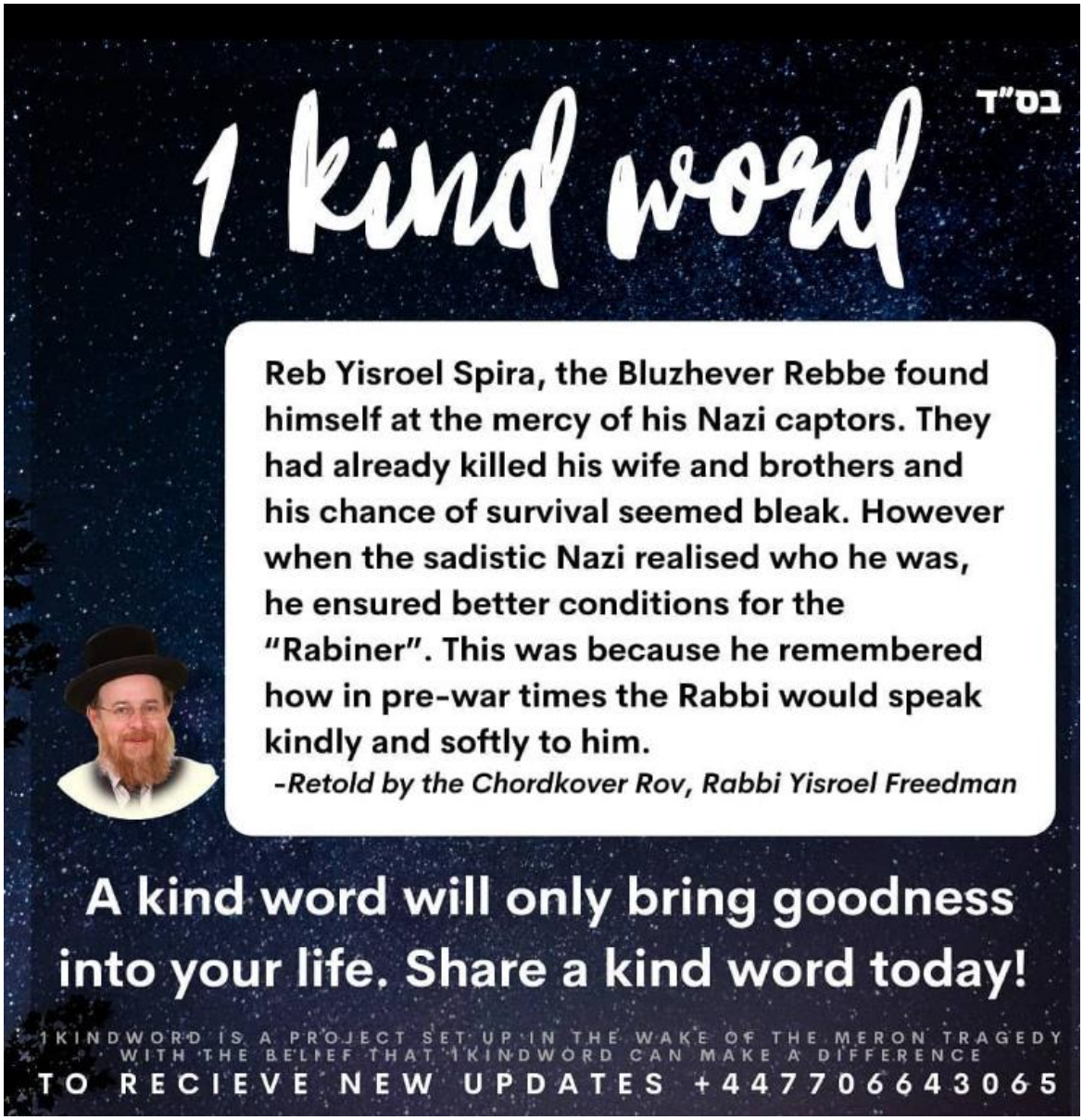
4) Rashi says **מקטני אמנה היה מאמין ואינו מאמין.** Noach was of little faith, he believed and didn't believe that the Mabul would come.

R' Yitzchok of Vorka asks if Noach is described as **איש צדיק תמים** how can we label him with the title **קטני אמנה**? Furthermore, the words **וצדיק באמונתו יחיה** contradict this since he is called a **צדיק**?

Noach believed that his generation would do Teshuva and remove the decree of the Mabul. So, this is how we should read Rashi: **מקטני אמנה היה מאמין**, Noach believed that even those with little Emuna would do Teshuva. He therefore didn't believe the Mabul would come, since their Teshuva would remove the decree.

One Kind Word

One Kind Word is a project set up in the wake of the Meron tragedy with the belief that 1 kind word can make a difference.



"The main focus of Torah education should be on emunah and midos tovos – having a strong level of belief and mastering positive character traits.

These are the two essential ingredients for observing the entire Torah." ~ R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l.

R' Gamliel Rabinowitz ZT"L - ויהי הגשם על הארץ

There once was a king whose dear son sinned against him. The king got angry at his son and ordered that he be banished to a faraway land. After this happened, the king's mercy was aroused for his son, and he wanted to lessen the decree. He immediately ordered his servants to build him a unique palace made of only earth and clay.

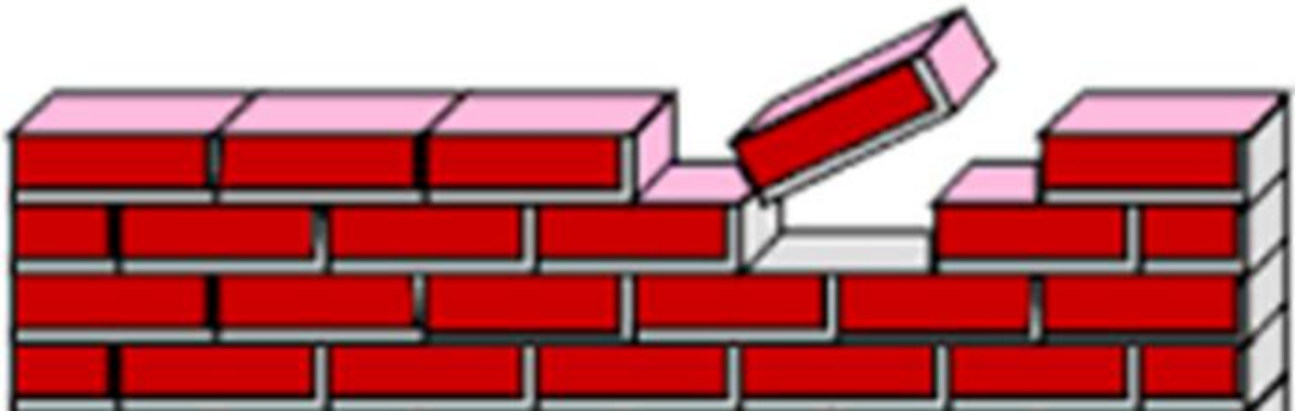
Whoever would see this structure would think he was in a desolate desert. The servants built the palace as the king instructed, and the king made it his residence and from there he watched over his son to see for his wellbeing and that he not lack anything. The prince stayed in that place while sad, and whenever a person would 'happen' to pass there, the prince would tell him how his father had banished him to this place and the king did not have mercy on his son.

One day one of the king's wise men 'happened' to pass by there. The prince approached him, and the prince told him how his father decreed to banish him there. The wise man told him, "Why don't you ask him for mercy? Why don't you fall at the king's feet and ask for his forgiveness by crying and begging?" The prince was surprised, "How can I fall at his feet when he sent me to this faraway and desolate place, as distant as east is from west?" The wise man replied, "You should know that the king is not so far away at all. Just the opposite, the king is very close by, and he has been sitting and watching over you every moment. Speak to him and I assure you that with his generous mercy he will forgive you."

Even when HaKadosh Baruch Hu decided to bring an end to the generation of the flood, He waited 120 years until Noach built the ark, and after that He waited another seven days after the death of Mesushelach, and even after all these deadlines passed and the people of the generation did not repent, the flood began to descend in the form of rain, so that if they did Teshuva they would change into rains of blessing.

Sometimes we think and we are even certain that **כלתה הרעה מאת המלך** – ***'the king's evil determination against him was final'*** (Esther 7:7), but the truth is that even if we see that all the deadlines have passed, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is with us in every situation and waits for our Teshuva. Even if the flood has already begun to come down, we must believe that if we do Teshuva everything will convert to good for us, and the flood waters will turn into rains of blessing. – (*Tiv HaTorah – Noach)*

V'Chol Maaminim ותמלא הארץ חמס (ו יא)



Once, on Tisha B'av day, **the Chofetz Chaim** was in the city of Kenigsburg. When he came to the shul, he saw that there was no empty seat for him. In his humility, he remained standing.

One of the mispallelim who recognized him and knew how great he was, hurried out of the shul to bring a few bricks. He arranged them on the ground, spread a napkin over them, and offered the Chofetz Chaim to sit.

To the man's surprise, the sage refused to sit, remarking, "These bricks were surely taken from wherever you could find them, so there is a chance that they are stolen…"

אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו את האלקים התהלך נח (ו ט)

The Rema MiPano (Shu"t 109) cites the holy Zohar (see Tikkunei Zohar 18, p. 132 1) that the reason that Am Yisrael is called "Goy Tzaddik" (Yeshayah 26:2) is because they are careful each day to say the quota of things that are alluded to in the word "tzaddik" - 90 צ amens; ד four Kedushos, 10 י times Kaddish, and 100 ק brachos.

Based on this **Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, shlita**, Nasi of Bney Emunim, explains that Noach was called an "Ish Tzaddik" so he surely kept to this quota of holy things that are required to be thus called. Indeed, two of them are alluded to in this passuk: "**נח נח** " – the acronym is numerically equivalent to 100, an allusion that he recited one hundred brachos. He is then called **איש צדיק** - whose acronym is 91 ,**צא** ,equal to amen, and also an acronym for **צ אמנים** ,an allusion to the fact that he answered 90 amens. Of all these quotas, accumulating 90 amens a day is the hardest to keep, because the person is dependent on brachos he hears from others (See Remez commentary on the Zohar Vayeilech 285 2).

Therefore the passuk says: "Es Ha'Elokim his'halech Noach"; "Ha'Elokim" – is numerically equivalent to "amen" to teach us that Noach would walk around hoping to hear brachos so he could answer amen after them.

The fact that Noach was careful about answering amen explains that even today, we see gentiles who are "Bnei Noach", who are careful to answer amen, and utter it in Lashon HaKodesh. As **Rav Moshe Dovid Vali** writes (Yirmiyahu 48:18), when non-Jews answer amen, that is what keeps them extant, "because if they would not do so, they would not survive even one day."

"For this middah of answering amen Am Yisrael are called tzaddikim, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2): **וְיָבֹא גּוֹי־צַדִּיק שֹׁמֵר אֱמֻנִים**

Jewish Weekly

In Parshat Noach we are told **ותשחת הארץ לפני האלקים** - the earth became corrupted before Hashem'.

The Kotsker Rebbe brilliantly divides these words into two statements: **ותשחת** – 'the earth became 'corrupted', and why was that the case? **הארץ לפני האלקים** – 'the slogan of the people at that time was: ***'Earth before G-d'***.

That generation prioritized the physical and invested all their efforts into materialism, which for them was far more important than any form of spirituality or any acknowledgment of the role of G-d in their lives.

The antidote for this can be found in the Gemara in Masechet Brachot. There, our sages bring to our attention two verses, both of which are very familiar to us and which seem to contradict each other. In Psalm 24 we read **לה' הארץ ומלואה** – the earth and everything in it, is the L-rd's.' But then in Psalm 115 which we chant in Hallel, we say **השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם** - ***'the heavens are the heavens of the Lord and the earth He has given to the people'***.

So this earth – is it Hashem's or is it ours? The Gemara says both statements are correct. Hashem has given this earth to us so that through our actions, we will appreciate the presence of Hashem in it. The primary way we do this is through the brachot that we recite. When I take something which has grown out of the ground, before I eat it, I say a blessing over it and in that way, I transform a mere physical activity into an action that brings spiritual gratification. We find, for example, at the Shabbat table, we take an ordinary bottle of wine but by reciting Kiddush we sanctify it and all who hear the blessing.

We place so much emphasis on what we eat over Shabbat and Chag, not because there is something extra special in the food itself but

rather through our eating, our table becomes an altar. We elevate the physical and the material in order to appreciate the presence of Hashem in our lives on those special days. Therefore, unlike that generation of the flood, our way of life is **אלוקים לפני הארץ** - Hashem comes before everything that is physical and material in this world and as a result, our lives are filled with so much happiness and meaning.

So let's thank Hashem for what He has given us and let's join together and pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed and spiritual Shabbat.

Shvilei Pinchos - Rabbi Pinches Friedman

The bent "Nun" of **נח** was transformed into the straight "Nun" of **חן**. We will begin our investigation with the illuminating words of the **Ohr HaChaim hakadosh**, commenting on the opening passuk of the parsha. He refers to the elucidation in the Gemara (A.Z. 6a): **תמים בדרכיו צדיק במעשיו** — ***'perfect in his ways, righteous in his deeds.'***

Rashi comments: "Perfect in his ways"—humble and of a lowly spirit. "Righteous in his deeds"—devoid of corruption (robbery). In other words, the passuk is attesting to his humility and lowly spirit. This then is the message of the passuk: "Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations"—even in a generation totally consumed by evil and sins against Hashem, he remained pure and righteous; he did not view himself as superior to his fellow man; he remained humble and lacked vanity.

We can now comprehend why Noach found favour in the eyes of Hashem. For, concerning the incredible virtues of the attribute of

humility, the **Orchos Tzaddikim** writes (Sha'ar 2): The humble person possesses **חן**, as it states (Mishlei 3, 34): "But to the humble, He will grant **חן**- favour."

It is with great pleasure that we will now present to our royal audience a precious insight from the **Divrei Yisrael**, authored by the great **Rabbi of Modzhitz, zy"a**, regarding the passuk: **חן בעיני ה' ונח מצא**. He refers to the teaching in the Gemara (Shabbas 104a) concerning the letters in the "aleph-Beis" that have two forms. With regards to the letter "nun," they teach: The"bent nun and the straight "nun" allude to a faithful person ("ne'eman") who is bent over and a faithful person ("ne'eman") who is erect. According to Rashi, this teaches us that a faithful, kosher person should be bent over and humble in this world; as a result, he will ultimately stand tall and erect in Olam HaBa.

Thus, we learn that the simple, bent over "nun" alludes to the trait of humility, to a person who subordinates himself to the will of Hashem; whereas the straight, final "nun" alludes to the reward HKB"H has in store for him. Let us apply this teaching to our passuk **ונח מצא חן בעיני ה'** but **נ"ח** found **ח"ן** in the eyes of Hashem. The name **נח** begins with a bent-over "nun"; this alludes to the fact that Noach behaved with humility and subordinated himself to the will of Hashem. HKB"H rewarded him by transforming the letters **נ"ח** into **ח"ן** ;both contain a "nun" and a "ches"; however, the latter has an erect "nun." This alludes to the fact that by saving Noach from the mabul, HKB"H enabled him to stand tall and erect..While his entire generation drowned in the waters of the mabul, Noach stood erect in the "teivah."

He merited this salvation and transformation, because he found favour "in the eyes of Hashem"—whose sacred name reflects how much He values humility.

Parsha Pages - A Look Inside the Ark

What did Noah's family and animals eat? Where they get water to drink? Since the ark was sealed, how did Noah and his "passengers" get air to breath? How did Noah clear the waste from all the animals?

Starting with the issue of food. Gen. 6:21, states, **וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ מִכָּל־ מַאֲכָל֙ אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵ֔ל וְאָסַפְתָּ אֵלֶ֖יךָ וְהָיָ֣ה לְךָ֔ וְלָהֶ֖ם לְאָכְלָ֑ה** ***"And take unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to you, and it shall be for you and for them for food."***

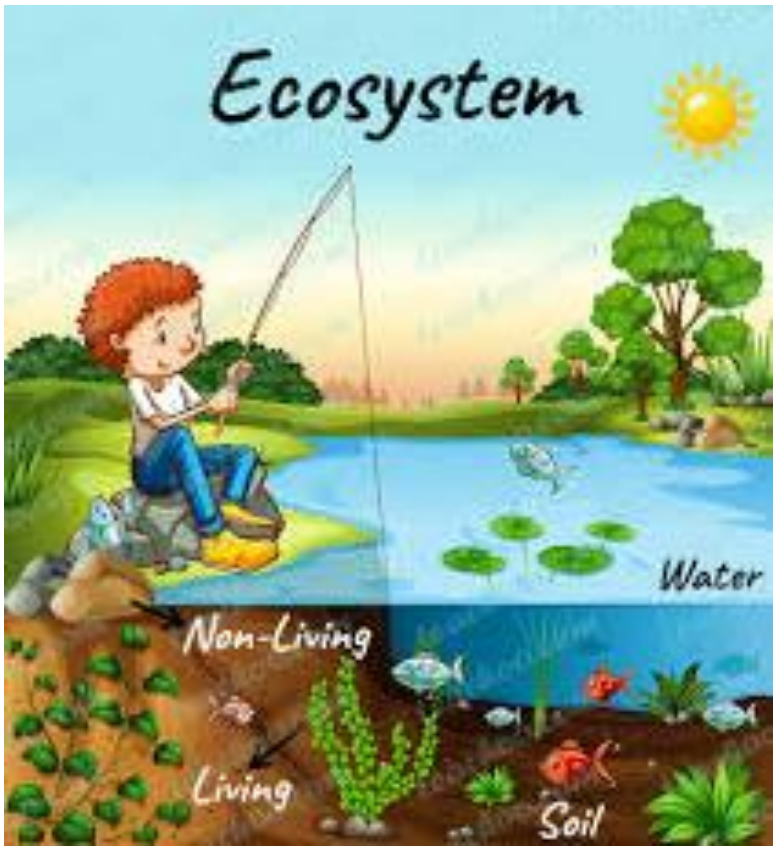
The Hebrew word **מַאֲכָל֙** means "of/from all the food." Just as Noah did not take all the animals available, he did not take all the food types. He had to be selective. The last part of Gen. 6:21 states that his effort "shall be for food…" The Torah should have said, "Noah gathered food."

In our opinion, the Torah is commanding Noah to take plants that he could grow for food. Think about it. Noah did not know how many animals would be coming on board or how long his journey would last. So how could he possibly know how much food to take along?

The solution: Noah grew food for his family and the animals. In other words, the ark was more than a self-contained environment, it was a self-sustaining environment. This isn't mere conjecture. It's the result of hints the Torah gives.

For example, the Torah tells us that the ark came to rest high up on the mountains. At that altitude, nothing grew even in normal circumstances. Where was Noah going to find food to feed all the animals? Being a talented husbandman and farmer, Noah could continue to grow food for as long as necessary in the ark, no matter whether the ark was in the water or on dry land. The construction of the ark also hints that the ark incorporated its own greenhouse. For example, the ark was "pitched" inside and outside to prevent

water from entering. This helped to create a full-fledged ecological system by preventing evaporation.



Another fact. The third floor of the ark occupied over 60,000 sq. ft. (627' long x 104.5' wide.) That's a lot of room for eight people. Noah could have reserved space for living quarters, then used the rest to raise crops. In my opinion, he could have easily spread a layer of soil six inches deep over virtually the entire surface, except for living quarters and two work paths. We stated that the animals lived on the middle level. The logs between the middle and bottom floors were loosely joined. The gaps between the logs on the middle level permitted waste to fall to the bottom of the ark. Naturally occurring gas would result and rise up through the gaps in the floor and nourish the soil.

Let's re-read Gen. 6:21, "*And take unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to you, and it shall be for you and for them for food.*" Suddenly, the Torah is telling Noah to take growing things and plant them in the ark! This also explains, Lemech's mysterious prophecy in Gen. 5: 29). It states, "And he (Lemech) called his name Noah, saying that this name shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our land, which come from the ground, which the L-rd has cursed…."

Until now, we don't find any particular need for this talent. What's more, the Torah certainly would not have mentioned Lemech's prophecy unless it was important. Using his skills as a farmer, Noah

planted and grew his crops on the ark so they would mature and to start to reproduce in one week. Even if Noah was a master agronomist, how could plants have grown so quickly? Gen 1:16, states, "*And G-d made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night.*"

At that time, day and night were more uniform. The light of day and the dark of night were similar, so the growing season was much faster. Gen. 7:4 tells Noah that the Flood would start in "yet seven days." This is followed by an account of the animals boarding the ark. At this point, everything had been prepared. The soil was in place and the first crop was ready for harvest. All Noah had to do was to cut the fresh grains and drop them into shafts that opened above the stalls on the second level. The animals simply would enter the ark seeking food and find the stalls where the shafts were located.

In this way, we can understand how all the animals knew where to go without Noah's assistance. This procedure corresponds to a Jewish source which states that "there were vine twigs for elephants, bean plants for ravens and other birds, lupine seeds for goats, hay for cows, straw for the camels, oats for the horses, barley for the donkeys and grasses and grains of every sort."

In addition to food, the plants served another function, as well. In 1771, Joseph Priestly discovered photosynthesis. This clergyman demonstrated that when plants were placed inside a glass jar filled with air made impure by the breathing of animals, the air became pure again. This led to the discovery that plants produced oxygen in the presence of light. Similarly, to be self-sufficient, the ark's ecological system needed air circulation, temperature control, and a source of energy. Since the ark's covering was transparent, the light provided its energy just as the sun does for the earth. The roof acted as a cloud covering does for our atmosphere, diffusing the light and preventing the ark from becoming too hot or too cold. In addition, the roots of the plants absorbed the carbon monoxide and

waste gases given off by animals and man and produced oxygen. The oxygen would be warmed by the light, rise to the top of the ark, cool and re-circulate downward through the feed shafts. Condensation would take place and provide a passive means of supplying water.

As mentioned earlier, the ark was sealed with pitch, within and without. The outside pitch protected the ark from the elements. The inside seal of pitch protected the wood from the high humidity and acidity of the waste matter. In terms of nutrients for the soil, the main gas released from animal waste is ammonia. These fumes would follow the lines of the least resistance through gas vents (shafts similar to the feed shafts) to the opening of the upper deck into the soil. As some point, the ammonia gas (NH3) from the animal waste would unite with the air (N202), water (H20) and lime (CaO) to produce nitrogen phosphorus and other minerals. The roots and moist earth would absorb these gases and compounds through natural soil chemistry.

The theory sounds plausible, but can it stand up under closer examination? To find out, we'll figure the amount of space needed to support the nutritional requirements of all the animals and people on the ark. We will also determine the combined weight of the animals and man and food and compare that to the payload figure that we calculated earlier.

Ready? Science has shown that grains, fruits, vegetables and grasses could be grown in six inches of soil. According to weight calculation for "strong soil", such soil would average 127 lbs./ cubic foot. The ark's dimensions (627 x 104.5) provide 65,521.5 sq. ft. of area. Deducting the aisles and the thickness of the lumber, we estimate about 30,000 cubic feet of soil. Multiply this by 127 lbs. per cubic foot, and we arrive at 3.810 million pounds of soil.

Duke's Physiology Book reports that the average dairy cow weighs 1,000 pounds and eats 20 pounds of dry hay, plus additional hay and grain each day when supplying milk. Logically, we can assume that the

animals in the ark were young and unbred. Therefore, the animals did not require extra nourishment. Nevertheless, allowing for larger and greedier species, we could safely say that the food eaten would equal 5% of their own weight. In other words, a 1,000 lb. animal would eat approximately 50 pounds of food daily.

On this basis, if the average animal weighs 800 lbs., and consumes 40 lbs. per day, then the count of 18,000 animals would consume 720,000 pounds of food daily. The waste would average about 10% of the daily food eaten, about 72,000 pounds of waste per day. Over the 207-day journey, 14.904 Million pounds of waste was produced.

To be thorough, we should include the food and waste of the eight people on board. If we accept their average individual weight as 200 pounds, we start with 1600 pounds total weight. If they eat 5% of their weight daily, they consume about 80 pounds of food. Eight pounds (10%) per day will end up as waste. Multiply that by 207 days and you get 1,656 pounds of waste.

The total weight of the humans on board is an additional 3,816 pounds. We now have accounted for the following weight: Gross weight of the ark (12 cubits deep) 102,541,871 lbs. Empty weight of the ark 31,697, 484 lbs. Actual payload capacity 70,844,387 lbs. That total weight of 18,000 animals, the soil, the food, animal waste, and human weight and waste amounts to 38,157,816 lbs. If we subtract this from the gross capacity of 70,844 million pounds, we find that the ark had an additional payload capacity of 31,686,571 lbs. We can see that only half the available payload is used for 18,000 animals. If we double the count to 36,000 animals, we come up with the following figures.

Animals (36,000) = 28,800,000 lbs. Food = 10,080,000 lbs. Waste = 29,808,000 lbs. Soil (as before) = 3,810,000 lbs. Maximum payload = 72,498,000 lbs. 36,000 animals would generate 29,808,000 pounds of waste. Assuming the weight of the waste corresponds to that of the rich soil weight, then 29,808,000 divided by 127 lbs. = 234,708

cubic feet of waste materials. In other words, the lowest level of the ark must have at least 234,708 cubic feet of space available to hold the waste. The space in the lowest level was 627 ft. x 104.5 ft. x 20.9 ft. = 1,579,399 cubic feet of space. This proves there was ample room for the ark to hold between 18,800 and 36,000 animals.

To double-check our calculations, let's look at the relative draft of the ark. Calculating the weight of the ark and its payload of 18,000 animals, we find that the ark would sit 12 cubits in the water. If we doubled the payload to 36,000 animals, the draft would amount to 15.25 cubits. Since this is only 50% of the closed structure (free board) of thirty cubits, the ark is still stable.

The Torah (7:20) tells us that water rose to 15 cubits above the mountains. Even with 36,000 animals on board, this does not present a problem, since the ark would likely have come to rest at a point lower than the peak of the highest mountain.

Summarizing, Noah and his sons achieved one of the most incredible engineering feats in history. They constructed a stable, sea-worthy vessel capable of holding and sustaining over 18,000 animals for twelve months or more!



אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו את האלקים התהלך נח
These are the offspring of Noach: Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation; with G-d Noach walked.(6:9)

The Torah given to us by Hashem is concise. Why, then, does it describe Noach's virtues in so much detail?

Our sages divide the mitzvot into two categories: 1) our duties towards G-d and 2) our responsibilities towards our fellow human beings. Some people are strict in observing their duties towards Hashem. They pray with devotion, study Torah diligently, keep mitzvot like tzitzit, tefillin, Shabbat and Yom Tov etc. meticulously. Although they observe the precepts for Hashem with great care,

they may lack the sincerity and respect for the rights and belongings of their fellows.

Others may be very careful in their relations with their fellow men and women, helping those in need and showing respect towards others. However, they are lax in their duties towards Hashem. They may not say their prayers the way they should, study as much Torah as they can, or take proper care to fulfil the mitzvot.

In this verse, the Torah tells us that Noach was a righteous man in every sense: "Perfect in his generation" — in his relationships with others. He also "walked with G-d" — serving Him properly. (**פרדס יוסף**)



נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו את האלקים התהלך נח
***"Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation; with G-d Noach walked."* (6:9)**

A tzaddik is someone who "walks with G-d" — who observes carefully whatever Hashem says. To say that Noach was a *tzaddik* and that "with G-d Noach walked" seems redundant?

There are many different types of people. Some observe Torah and *mitzvot* at home, but when they are among their friends they do things which a Torah-observant Jew should not be doing. Others, act very *frum* (pious) in the company of their friends, but when they are alone at home with no one watching, there is much to be desired.

The Torah is testifying that Noach was a *tzaddik* and goes on to explain what type of *tzaddik* he was: 1) "He was perfect in his generation" — when he was among the people of his generation he acted in a very observant manner. 2) "With G-d Noach walked" — when he was alone with *only* Hashem seeing his behaviour, Noach walked in the path of Hashem. (**ילקוט הדרוש**)



"ויאמר אלקים לנח קץ כל בשר בא לפני כי מלאה הארץ חמס מפניהם"
***"G-d said to Noach: 'The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with robbery through them.'"* (6:13)**

"Divine sentence was finally passed upon them only as a result of their robbery" (Rashi).

Our sages tell us that Hashem's reward or punishment is *midah keneged midah* — in accordance with the nature of the person's original act. What connection is there between humanity's crime of robbery and the flood with which they were punished?

The initial 40 days of intense punishment were a result of their committing robbery — the numerical value of the three letters of *"gezel"* (**גזל**), the Hebrew word for "robbery," totals 40!

The flood began with 40 days of continuous rain, followed by 150 days of unabated flood before the water began to descend in level — a total of 190 days. The numerical value of the two letters of the Hebrew word *"keitz"* (**קץ**) meaning "end" is 190. The "end of all flesh" was decided by Hashem to come in the form of 190 days of intense punishment. (**בעל הטורים**)

"ואתה קח לך מכל מאכל אשר יאכל... והיה לך ולהם לאכלה"
***"And you, take for yourself of all food that will be eaten...it shall be for you and for them for food."* (6:21)**

Noach, together with his family and thousands of creatures, would be in the ark for long period of time, and would need a tremendous amount of food. How was it possible to store all of the food necessary for their survival?

On a similar phrase, *"mikol ha'ochel asher yei'acheil"* — "of all food that will be eaten" (*Vayikra* 11:34), the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 80a) explains that the largest piece of food capable of being swallowed by the human throat is no larger than a hen's egg.

Therefore, we can say here, too, that when Hashem told Noah to prepare *mikol ma'achal asher yei'acheil,* He meant the following: "You, prepare 'bite size' portions, no larger than an egg, of each type of food that will be eaten. Miraculously, through *this* food, you and also they — your family and the thousands of animals in the ark — will be sustained." (**קול אליהו**)

"ומן הבהמה אשר איננה טהרה"
***"And from the animals which were not clean [kosher]."* (7:8)**

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 3a) asks why the Torah uses the longer expression **"אשר איננה טהרה"** — "which were not clean" (three words and thirteen letters in Hebrew) instead of the single word **הטמאה** — "unclean" (only one word — and five letters). The *Gemara* answers that the Torah uses eight extra letters to teach us the eternal lesson that we should always try to express ourselves in decent language, even if it means using extra words.

The question remains, however, why elsewhere in the Torah, when it teaches us which animals may not be eaten, does it indeed use the word *"hatemei'ah"* — "unclean"?

This rule of even using extra words in order to express ourselves decently only applies when telling a story or in normal conversation. But when teaching a Torah law — for example which animals may or may not be eaten — one must be specific and use precise terms. Using extra words, even for a good purpose such as avoiding coarse language, may cause a student to lose the point and not grasp precisely the law the Torah requires us to do or not do. (**מעינה של תורה**)

"מכל אשר בחרבה מתו" "Of all that was on dry land died." (7:22)



Despite the fact that the flood waters were boiling (*Sanhedrin* 108b), the fish did not die (*Zevachim* 113b).

In what merit did Hashem keep the fish miraculously alive?

The fish were the *first* living creatures Hashem created. They were created on the fifth day of creation, even before the birds, who were created on the same day — and certainly before animals and man, who were created on the sixth day. In consideration of this quality, they were not destroyed.

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***"והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה" "And behold, there was a plucked olive leaf in her mouth."* (8:11)**

Why did the dove bring the leaf and not the olive?

According to the *Midrash Rabbah* (23:6), the dove flew to the Mount of Olives and brought the leaf from there. From fruit that grows in *Eretz Yisrael*, one is required to separate *ma'aseir* (tithe). The dove, not wanting to create any obstacles for Noach, brought him the leaf and not the fruit. (**ילקוט הדרוש - דברי יהונתן**)

"ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה"
***"And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, there was a plucked olive leaf in her mouth."* (8:11)**



Why did the dove wait until nightfall to return to Noach?

Noach observed the Torah rule not to start a journey at sea fewer than three days before *Shabbat*. Therefore, he entered the ark on Wednesday noon, the 17th of *Mar Cheshvan*. (See *Sefer Tzeror Hamor*, and *Tur Orach Chaim* 248, *Beit Yosef*.)

The rain lasted for 40 days (counting from 18 *Mar Cheshvan* because 17 *Mar Cheshvan* was not a full day). This was followed by 150 days of unabated flood. Sixty days later, the mountain tops appeared above the receding flood-waters, and 40 days later, Noach sent out a raven. Fourteen days later, he sent out the dove a second time.

This was on the 304th day of the flood (40+150+60+40+14= 304), which is equivalent to 43 weeks and 3 days. Since the first real day of the flood was Thursday, day 304 must have been a *Shabbat*. The dove, not wanting to tear a leaf off a tree on *Shabbat*, waited until nightfall. When *Shabbat* was over, she tore off the leaf and brought it to Noach. (**מגדל עוז - יעב"ץ**)

***"ויאמרו הבה נבנה לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בשמים" "And they said 'Let us build for ourselves a city and tower with its top in the heavens.'"* (11:4)**

Rashi explains that they planned to "wage war against G-d." But how did they think they could reach the heavens?



Rabbi Yehonatan Eibeschutz (1690-1764), renowned Torah scholar, and Rabbi of Prague and Hamburg, answers that they were aware of the laws of gravity. Their plan was to build a tower so high that its top would be beyond the earth's gravitational pull. They could then ascend to the top of the tower where they would become weightless, enabling them to fly up into the heavens where they imagined they could confront Hashem! (Evidently Newton's Law of Gravity and the space program have been in the Torah for thousands of years.

This gives credence to the adage "everything is hidden somewhere in the Torah" — see *Ta'anit* 9a.) (***פון אונזער אלטען אוצר - תפארת יהונתן***)

***"שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך" "One who sheds the blood of man in the man, his blood shall be shed."* (9:6)**

The word, **באדם** "in the man" — seems repetitious and unnecessary?

The *Gemara (Bava Metzia* 58b) states that if a person publicly embarrasses another, it is as if he spills his blood, because the one who is embarrassed blushes, and blood rushes to his face (as if trying to leave his body). Then his face pales as the blood drains to other parts of the body, and it takes on the ashen, pallid appearance of a corpse. The difference between actual murder and embarrassment is that in murder, blood leaves the body, whereas in embarrassment, the blood changes location within the body.

In this *pasuk*, the Torah teaches us two things:

1) If one "sheds the blood of man" — by actually killing him — "his blood shall be shed."

2) If one sheds the blood **באדם** - "*in the* man" - by embarrassing him and causing him to blush and become pallid, "*his* blood shall be shed," for he has committed a mortal sin. (**אלשיך**)

***"והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה" "And behold, there was a plucked olive leaf in her mouth."* (8:11) -** Why did the dove bring a leaf from an olive tree specifically?

Prior to the flood the inhabitants of the world were corrupt. Immorality was rampant among humans. Cattle and fowl consorted with other species. This caused all to lose their unique identities.

An olive produces oil; it cannot mix with any other liquids and floats to the top. The message to Noach was that after the flood, the human race was required to improve its ways. It was forbidden to ever again mix and mingle as it had done previously.

"וימחו מן הארץ וישאר אך נח ואשר אתו בתבה"
***"They were obliterated from the earth. Only Noach and those with him in the ark survived."* (7:23)**

How did Og and Sichon survive the flood?

Og was the son of Shemchazel, one of the fallen angels (see Rashi, *Bamidbar* 13:33) who was exceptionally powerful and tall. According to one opinion, he survived the flood by riding on top of the ark. According to another opinion, his great height allowed him to walk alongside the ark with his head out of the water. Although the waters of the flood were boiling hot, they were miraculously cool around the ark, and Noach gave Og food through the window. (**תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל, ילקוט מעם לועז**)



"וימצאו בקעה בארץ שנער וישבו שם" ***"And they found a valley in the land of Shinar and they settled there."* (11:2)**

Why did all the people of the world want to cram into one small valley?

After the flood, Hashem promised that He would never again destroy the world in such a manner. However, according to the *Gemara* (*Sotah* 11a), this promise only meant that He would not destroy the *entire* world through a flood, but not that He would refrain from bringing a flood on one nation or a group of people.

In order to outsmart Hashem, the people decided the following: If they were to spread out and live in different parts of the world, then one day Hashem could bring a flood and destroy a particular group. Therefore, they all decided to live together in one place so that Hashem would be forced to keep His promise and not bring a flood which would destroy all of them at one time. (**ילקוט האורים**)



שם אשת אברם שרי ושם אשת נחור מלכה בת הרן אבי מלכה ואבי יסכה
***"The name of Avram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nachar's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and the father of Yiscah."* (11:29)**

Rashi comments that Yiscah was Sarah and she was called Yiscah because she was a prophetess and saw [the future] with the Divine inspiration. What commonality is there between these two names?

In addition to the regular Hebrew alef-beit, there is a letter substitution system known as "at, bash." In it the "alef" interchanges with the "tav," the "beit" with the "shin," the "gimmel" with the "reish," and so on. Accordingly, the letters of the name "Sarah" (**שרה**) interchange with the letters beit, gimmel and tzaddik, which have the numerical value of ninety-five, which is also the numerical value of the name **יסכה** /"Yiscah" -**בעל הטורים**

Weekly Wisdom- Yisroel Rudman & Shloimy Weber

Rav Yehudah Meir Shapiro of Lublin Yahrtzeit 7 Cheshvan –

On 7 Cheshvan, 1933, Rav Yehuda Meir Shapiro of Lublin was niftar at the age of 46. His father was a descendant of Rav Pinchas Koretz, the prized talmid of the **Ba'al Shem Tov**. His grandfather was the Minchas Shai, a descendant of the Tevu'as Shor. He was a descendant of some Ba'alei Tosafosin as well. He got married in 1906 and just 5 years later became Rav in Galina. 10 years later, he became the Rav in Sanok, and 3 years after that the Rav of Piotrkov.

Unfortunately, he never bore any children. In 1923, he introduced the idea of Daf Yomi into the world, sharing it at the first Knessiah Gedolah of Agudas Yisrael the previous year. He founded the famed Yeshivah of Chachmei Lublin and wrote the Sefer Ohr HaMeir.

The Jamaican Man's Question to the Flatbush Rav



Rav Zev Smith related that once, a Jamaican man approached a certain Rav in Flatbush and requested permission to ask him a question.

The Rav said, "Of course," and the man told him, "Recently, I was locked out of my van. A Jewish person approached me to see if he could help, and when he realized that he couldn't, he advised me to call Chaveirim, and they would be able to open the van's door for me.

"I was desperate and I had nothing to lose, so I called them. Sure enough, within a few minutes, someone came to help me, and they unlocked my van. I was so thankful and I asked them how much I owed them for helping me, and they replied that I didn't have to pay anything. The one who came wished me a good day, and then left. "I would like to know from you if that was normal behaviour from Chaveirim, or was this treatment different for me?"

The Rav replied that this was standard procedure from Chaveirim, and he didn't receive any special treatment.

The man proceeded to ask the Rav another question. "I see Hatzolah cars and ambulances all day in Flatbush. Do these people get paid?" The Rav answered, "No, these are volunteers." The Jamaican man then exclaimed, ***"If G-d has you guys, why does He need the rest of us?!"***

The Broken Bottle of Wine



One Purim, a man sent his young daughter to bring Mishlo'ach Manos to **Rav Shalom Schwadron, zt"l.** However, when she entered Rav Shalom's house, the package she was holding, which was a bottle of wine and some baked goods, slipped from her hands. The bottle of wine broke into many pieces, and the baked goods scattered in every direction. The young girl was terribly embarrassed, and she began to cry.

Rav Shalom immediately understood how she felt and ran over to her, and in a loud voice said, "Gevaldig! This is excellent! "How amazing! Wine spilled in our house! Chazal teach us in Eiruvin (65a), that any house where wine does not flow like water, does not have a sign of Brachah. How great it is for us that wine spilled in our house! Not only that, but it also happened on the special day of Purim! How fortunate we are! We've never had a Purim this special before!"

This was to the extent Rav Shalom went, in order not to embarrass another person, even if that person is a little girl! (*Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)*

Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.

It Depends on the Question



A man came to **Rabbi Yehuda Assad** for advice. "Rabbi," he said, "I want to buy a certain run-down store, which will give me the opportunity to support my family and myself comfortably. What do you suggest?" Rabbi Assad told him not to buy the store.

The next day, another man came to ask Rabbi Assad for advice. "Rabbi," he said, "If I buy this store, I will, with the help of Hashem, be able to fix it up and earn a decent living."

This time, Rabbi Assad urged the man to go ahead.

When the first man heard the Rabbi's advice to the second, he grew furious and ran to him. "Rabbi, yesterday I asked you about buying the same store, and you told me not to. Why did you tell the other man to buy it?"

"It's very simple," said Rabbi Assad. "You wanted to take on the task of running a run-down store all by yourself, and I felt that it was too much for one person.

"The other man, on the other hand, stated, 'with the help of Hashem.' With a partner like that, I felt he has an excellent chance of making a go of it." (Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit)

Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

"Listen to the Pelican!"



"…The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with robbery through them; and behold, I am about to destroy them from the earth." (6:13) "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked…." (3:7)

A pelican went to the seashore to catch some fish. It thrust its beak into the water, coming up with a large fish. The fish begged for mercy. "Please let me go. Don't kill me. Take pity on a creature that was formed by Hashem."

The pelican was about to release the fish when it noticed a small fish hanging out of the mouth of the larger fish. Apparently, the larger fish had been about to swallow this small fish when the pelican caught the larger fish. The pelican said to the larger fish, "You are a fraud! Why should I take pity on you and not eat you when you yourself were about to do the same thing to the small fish?" (sefer Talelei Oros, quoting this analogy from **Rabbi Yosef Shaul Nathansohn** zt"l, a 19th century Polish rav)

Noach's generation was morally perverse and decrepit. They also served idols. **Rashi** (6:13) indicates that these were the reasons that the people were punished. Yet, **Rashi** also says that their decree was sealed because of theft. If their actions were so

terrible why weren't they destroyed because of them? Why was their fate only sealed because of theft?

Hashem had granted Noach's generation excessive goodness. They were prosperous and happy and felt safe in their homes (Talmud **Sanhedrin** 108A). They were healthy and lived long lives (**Midrash** 36:1). Despite that, they didn't value Hashem's goodness and they sinned terribly. During the last seven days before the start of the Flood, Hashem even gave them a "taste" of the World to Come so they could appreciate what they would be losing if they continued sinning. Unfortunately, they continued sinning. (Talmud **Sanhedrin** 108B).

After the Jews had sinned with the golden calf, Hashem wanted to destroy them. Moshe davened to Hashem, "blaming" Hashem for their actions. "Master of the Universe, because of the gold and silver that you lavished upon Israel during the exodus from Egypt until they said enough [*dai*]; it was this wealth that caused Israel to make the Golden Calf." (Talmud **Berachos** 32A) Hashem listened to Moshe's pleas. Although the Jews were severely punished, they were not destroyed.

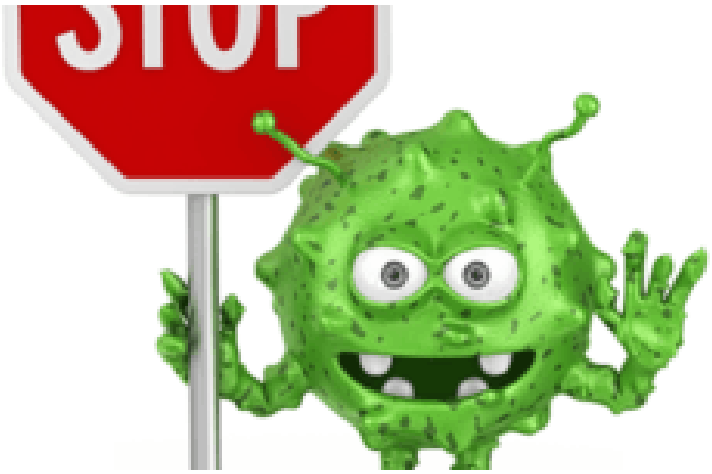
Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l (In sefer Zera Shimshon 2 by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer) says that the people of Noach's generation could have defended their abominable and perverse actions, using the same defense strategy that Moshe Rabbeinu had used. They could have "blamed" Hashem. They could have claimed that they felt compelled to sin because of the incredible and overwhelming goodness with which Hashem had showered them. They could have said that it was too hard to live a moral life because they were surrounded by so much luxury. However, since they also stole, they proved that their possible defense of having sinned because of too much prosperity, was a fraudulent defence.

Thus, this generation sinned horribly with their immorality and idol worship. Yet, despite their abominable sins, they would not

have been destroyed. However, they sealed their own fate by stealing. Since they stole, they negated their only defense. It was their stealing that was the final straw and led to their destruction.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Let's Stop the Disease from Spreading!



וַיַּ֤רְא אֱלֹקִים֙ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ וְהִנֵּ֖ה נִשְׁחָ֑תָה כִּֽי־הִשְׁחִ֤ית כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ אֶת־דַּרְכּ֔וֹ עַל־הָאָֽרֶץ

"And Hashem saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth." (6:12)

When **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** zt"l was a student in the Lomza yeshiva in Poland there was a major medical conference that took place in the local hospital. Many of the world's most distinguished doctors gathered there to solve a serious problem. Every sick person who was admitted into that hospital for a lengthy stay for one illness, ended up contracting a different, severe illness. After many days of lengthy discussions, the doctors agreed as to what the problem probably was. After so many years and many thousands of patients, the germs of many different diseases had infested the wooden walls of the hospital. Their only solution was to tear down the building and get rid of every piece of wood from it.

The people in the time of Noach were very corrupt. The pasuk does not say that <u>man</u> was corrupt. Rather it says that <u>all flesh</u> was corrupt. Why? **Rashi** explains that not only was mankind corrupt. Even the animals and birds were corrupt and mated unnaturally, with other species.

The Midrash Rabba explains that the animals mated this unnatural way on their own accord. **Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik** zt"l, in his sefer the Bais Halevi, asks a question on this Midrash. Man has a yetzer hara, an evil impulse and has freedom of choice to do good or evil. However, animals do NOT have a yetzer hara and do NOT have freedom of choice. Animals act according to their natural, inborn instincts. How was it possible that the animals sinned and went totally against their nature and mated unnaturally?!

We know that man can change his own nature and habits through repetition of his actions. For example, our rabbis tell us that it is a bigger mitzvah to give tzedakah multiple times rather than one time, even if you give the same total amount. The reason is that the mitzvah of giving is reinforced by the repetition of the action. The same idea applies to sinning. The more a person sins in a specific area the more it becomes part of his nature. He can still overcome his new nature by not sinning, but it is more difficult since that is his new nature.

Rabbi Soloveitchik says that man can also influence the world around him even when he sins privately. If a person is drawn after a specific desire and acts upon it, he strengthens the power and influence of that desire in the world around him until it becomes embedded in the nature of the rest of creation. Man can literally change the natural instincts of all the living things.

This is what happened in the time of Noach. Man's constant corruption strengthened the evil within him and **changed the natural instincts** of the animal and bird kingdom around him.

Rabbi Soloveitchik adds that man even influences and changes the nature of inanimate objects, which in turn can influence him even more. If a certain country has a breach in a certain trait or is drawn to a specific sin, a traveler to that country will feel himself being pulled towards that sin. He will have to exercise more self-control than usual to overcome that pull.

The **Talmud** says that our actions change the chemical makeup of the stones and beams of our homes. In the future, when we are judged by Hashem, the physical walls of our homes will testify what our actions were. Were we kind? Did we invite guests? Did we learn Torah? Did we speak loshon hara about others? And more.

The germs affected the walls of the hospital. Our actions, both bad and good, affect the walls of our homes. Our actions also affect the world around us. Both the animate and inanimate are affected by our deeds. Let us try to strengthen our good deeds to counterbalance the evil and violence as well as the lack of modesty, morality and honesty in the world around us.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Feel The Pain!



וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ מִכָּל־מַאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל
"Take for yourself every food that is eaten…" (Bereishis 6:21)

The people of Noach's generation were extremely wicked. They refused to repent and were soon to be destroyed by a world-wide flood. Noach, his family, and some animals would be saved in the Ark. Hashem told Noach to gather all types of food and "it shall be for you and them (your family and the animal's) **<u>to eat</u>**".

Clearly this phrase seems to be unnecessary – of course the purpose of the food is to eat!

Rav Elchonon Wasserman in his sefer Kovetz Ma'marim, gives a beautiful explanation:

The Midrash describes what the world was like before the flood. People were healthier and stronger. The climate was perfect, and the earth was so fertile that planting occurred only once every forty years. The fruit was also superior in taste and smell. Noach, who was a prophet, knew that after the Flood the earth would not be the same and the food would not be of the same superior quality. He may have wanted to take extra food (of this superior quality) to store for use after the Flood (just as Yosef had stored food, preparing for years of famine).

Therefore, Hashem told Noach to take only enough food that both he and the animals needed to eat in the Ark. He was forbidden to take extra food to eat for after he exited the Ark. Why? **When others suffer, even deservedly,** (people were killed by the flood) **we must feel their pain and not look to satisfy our own personal pleasure.**

In 1895 a fire destroyed many homes in Brisk. **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik refused** to sleep at home. Instead, he slept on the floor in a side room of a shul. He said, "I am not able to sleep in a bed when so many people do not have even a roof over their heads". Rav Chaim felt it was inappropriate to sleep in his own bed while his fellow Jews were in such discomfort.

One bitterly cold night, Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Meisel went to visit the wealthiest Jew in in the town of Lodz. Rav Chaim knocked on his door, and the wealthy man invited him in. Rav Chaim stayed outdoors for a few minutes, while he was carrying on a casual conversation. Meanwhile, the wealthy man was shivering terribly from the cold. Only after the wealthy man's teeth started chattering and his lips started turning purple from the cold, did Rav Chaim accept his invitation inside. Rav Chaim wanted him to feel the frigid cold before requesting a donation for warm clothes for his yeshiva students and

money to heat their Study Hall. Rav Chaim felt that one can better appreciate another's pain when he experiences some of it himself.

When the Jewish People were enslaved in Egypt, Hashem wanted to share their pain. Hashem placed sapphire bricks under His Heavenly Throne to serve as a constant reminder of the bricks that the Jews were forced to make.

The Jewish People are One Nation. When Jews are in pain, when Jews in our community are undergoing difficulties, or when tragic events are occurring to Jews in Eretz Yisroel <u>are we feeling their pain? What more can we do to feel their pain??</u> (*Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)*

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



Noach was childless for hundreds of years. His first child was born when he was five hundred years old. **The Chofetz Chaim** said that this could have aroused a question in Noach's mind. Noach was the greatest tzaddik of his generation; why didn't he have children (during the first five hundred years of his life)? Most people of his era were having children at one hundred years. Why must he and his wife be barren? But upon deeper reflection, we recognize that the delay was for his benefit. Rashi (5:32) explains that if Noach would have had children sooner, the children would have been a hundred years old (or older) at the time of the Flood. [In that era, a person was punished and responsible for his sins, from the age one hundred and older.] If Noach's children wouldn't be

righteous, they would perish in the flood. If they would be tzaddikim, Noach would need to build many teivos (arks) to save them.

Therefore, "Hashem held back from Noach the ability to have children until he was five hundred years old…" He and his wife may have been distressed that they were barren for so many years, but in retrospect, they realized that it was for their own benefit.

The Order of Food by Rabbi Berach Steinfeld



Hashem commanded Noach in Bereishis 6:22 to bring all types of food into the Teiva for you (Noach and family) and them (all animals) to eat.

The Gemara in Berachos 40a brings in the name of Rav Yehuda, in the name of Rav, that one must feed his animals first; only thereafter may he eat, as the posuk in Shema says, "I shall give grass in the field for your animals and then you shall eat."

The question is, why did Hashem command Noach to first take food for himself and afterwards to take food for the animals? There are a number of ways to answer this question. The first one is that there is only a chiyuv for a person to feed the animal before himself if the animal belongs to him. These animals that Noach took into the teivah were hefker.

When it came to preparing food, Hashem told him to first prepare food for the humans and then prepare food for the animals, but once he was on the teiva, Noach fed the animals first. The reason for this is that when there is a sakana and there is not enough food for both the human and the animal, the human comes first.

A third answer is from the **Maharil Diskin** who said in the name of his son that since people could not eat animals, only vegetables and fruit, before the mabul, the people only had ownership of the animals that could work for them. This type of ownership is called kinyan peiros and we pasken that kinyan peiros is not like a kinyan in the guf of the animal so these animals did not belong to Noach.

A fourth answer is based on the **Yad Efraim** Orach Chaim 167 in the name of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh Bereishis 24:19 that says in the time of sakana, or when a person is in tzaar, the person eats first. Feeding the animals in the teivah was a big tzaar to Noach as he had to constantly feed them. He therefore was allowed to eat first.

The fifth answer is based on the Mishna Halachos Vol 11:139 that explains the reason why a person needs to feed his animal first is because as we say in Mincha on Shabbos," Adam and a beheima Hashem helps." Since we are saved in the zchus of our helping the animals, they need to be fed first. During the Mabul the opposite held true; the animals were saved in the zechus of Noach. It therefore stands to reason that Noach should eat first.

Since this took place before Mattan Torah we can't bring proof from this. However, the problem is that we learn things from Rivkah. We do learn from our avos and imahos as they kept the Torah, whereas Noach did not keep the complete Torah.

We see the importance and sensitivity one must have to all creations around him. May we use our sensitivity to one another and thereby evoking the sensitivity of Hashem to us and we should be redeemed!

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



After the Flood, Hashem gave Noach a guarantee that there will never again be a time that will be void of vegetation, weather, or night and day (8:22).

The *Chafetz Chaim* points out that we can be witness to this on a daily basis, as there is always day and night, each and every day. Clearly, Hashem is fulfilling His promise. Similarly, there will soon be the day when all of the other promises that Hashem has made to us will also be fulfilled.

Hopefully, we will merit this in the near future!

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

There once lived a man who was *zocheh* to live a very long life. Some tried to figure out what special thing he did to help him live so long, but as far as they could tell, he did things that any ordinary *Torah Yid* would do. Nothing stood out as extra special that would contribute to his long life. When they asked him what he could attribute it to, he said, "All my life, I was extra careful to use only olive oil for my *Shabbos licht*, and not candles. This was the *zechus* that allowed me to have *arichus yamim*, a very long life!" (*Sefer Chassidim* 272)

Halacha B'drachav - The Ways of Hashem



A mashal is given about a man who was chopping wood with an ax. Though the axe is what is splitting the wood, the power does not come from the blade; rather it is from the man swinging it. The blade is merely the instrument that carries out the task.

So it is with us. Hashem is the One who provides sustenance and success. We and what we do are merely instruments to carry out Hashem's Master Plan. Everything is in the hands of Hashem and He has many messengers. One should never feel like he is lost, as Hashem has unlimited ways to provide— if not one way, it will be in another. Hashem is the Giver of all.

(*Orchos Tzadikim, Sha'ar HaSimchah*)

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

At the end of this week's *Parshah* is the story of the Tower of Bavel, where a group of people foolishly tried to construct a tower that would reach up to Heaven, where they would wage a war against Hashem. Their punishment was that they were each given different languages, and the entire tower was destroyed. *Rashi* (11:7) explains their downfall. If one would ask another for a brick, the other gave him cement in return, and he would then kill the one who misunderstood him.

Why does *Rashi* have to go into such an explanation? Would it not have been sufficient to simply say that there was a language barrier, and therefore the project failed?

The *Brisker Rav*, *zt"l*, explains that we need to see such an example to understand that not only was there a language barrier, there was also a lack of unity. Each person wanted to do things his own way. If there was only a language barrier, but they were still unified for the same cause, they would have overcome their barrier. Since they were also not united, they were doomed for destruction.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

It was a time of poverty, and few had the means to get by on their meagre salaries. The students in the yeshivah in Kletzk were satisfied with their small meals, as long as they could learn Torah with their *Rebbe*, **Rav Aharon Kotler, *zt"l***.

One day, a student came to Rav Aharon and complained about how much he needed a new pair of shoes. The ones he had were barely holding together and his feet would get dirty and wet every day. Rav Aharon looked at the tattered shoes and told the student to wait and that he would be back in a few minutes. When Rav Aharon returned, he was holding a pair of shoes and happily gave them to the waiting student.

That Shabbos, when the student saw that Rav Aharon was still wearing his weekday shoes, he realized that his *rebbe* had given him his own pair of Shabbos shoes!

Rav Aharon couldn't have been happier to help someone else! (*Ma'asei Tzaddikim*, p. 52)

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



When **Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, *zt"l***, was a young man, he used to sell flowers for Shabbos. That was how he made his living. One *Erev Shabbos*, after selling all his flowers, he went to the *mikveh* to get ready for Shabbos. While he was there, someone stole all the money he had made that day selling flowers.

When Rav Chatzkel got dressed he realized what had happened. He said to himself, "I see that something like money, which I worked so hard to get, can be gone so quickly! I think I will put my efforts into working at learning Torah instead. No one can ever take that away from me!"

Rav Chatzkel resolved to put all his efforts into his learning. He went on to become the great *Mashgiach* of the Mir and Ponevitch Yeshivah.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

When Hashem commands Noach to build the *Teivah* (**תבה**), He tells him to make a light (**צהר**) for the roof. *Rashi* mentions two opinions explaining what this light is. It is either a skylight so that the people could see out, or it was a precious stone that shone light for them. While the meaning of *Teivah* is normally 'ark', it also means 'word'.

The *Sfas Emes* says that the 'words' of one's *Davening* and Torah study save him from the deluge of the many materialistic obsessions and distractions that flood the world.

The *Zohar* tells us that the name Noach alludes to the day of Shabbos, which is a day of *Menuchah*, rest. Just as Noach saved the

world from being totally destroyed by the flood, so too, Shabbos saves us from being totally engrossed in mundane daily pursuits.

The *Sefer Otzar HaTorah* explains that the *Teivah* had a precious stone to light up the surrounding physical darkness, and we in turn, must take the day of Shabbos and use it to cast a light on the darkness of the world. The power of Shabbos to be our safe haven from the everyday pursuits is even alluded to in the *Gematria*, the numerical value of the words of the *Pasuk*. **צהר** equals 295, **תבה** equals 407, and their combined value of 702 is the same value of the word 702 **שבת.**

We have to be able to tap into the power of Shabbos and totally disengage ourselves from the world around us, and appreciate that we will never lose out because of Shabbos. For just one day a week, let the spiritual uplifting atmosphere of Shabbos absorb within us and carry us throughout the week, and may this power take us to new heights in our service of Hashem!

Parshah Thoughts by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

After the flood, Noach sends out from the *Teivah* a raven and a dove (twice) to check for dry land (8:7-11). After realizing that the land was indeed dry, Noach removed the lid of the *Teivah* (8:13). Why did Noach do all this if he wasn't planning on leaving the *Teivah* before he was commanded to do so by Hashem?

Rabbi Yitzchok D. Frankel offers a beautiful understanding in Noach's mindset. Noach was showing that although the land was dry, he showed that he could have left the *Teivah*, however, he wouldn't leave until Hashem told him to do so. This also displays that his entire stay in the *Teivah* was purely because he was commanded so by Hashem.

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



The final sin which guaranteed that the Flood would come was thievery (*Rashi* 6:13, quoting *Sanhedrin* 108a). **Rav Shimon Sofer** notes that the generation of the flood was blessed with extreme wealth, therefore, there was really no reason for them to steal from each other. When they stole it was indicative that their wrongdoing was not out of need, but out of their wickedness. Therefore, this was the sin which sealed their punishment.

To sin out of necessity or missteps can be overlooked, but sinning for the sake of sinning cannot be passed over.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

When one *davens*, he does so quietly, in whispers between himself and Hashem. Why is this?

Because Hashem is so close to him, He can hear every word. (*Yalkut Va'es'chanan* 825)

"A mother understands what a child does not say."

Parshah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections by *Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

Noach sends out a dove from the *Teivah* in search of dry land, and the dove returns with an olive branch (8:11). The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 108b) explains this as an expression that he would rather get bitter food, olives, directly from Hashem than get sweet foods from man.

Maharsha expounds on this point. When one is reliant on another person they feel as though they have no life, and they are forever indebted to their benefactor.

The dove was expressing that by being in a direct relationship with Hashem, even if the food may not be as pleasant, at least he will have a comfortable life.

Pearls of Wisdom… *A Word for the Ages*

When it comes to matters regarding things that need to be done to strengthen *Yiddishkeit* and *Torah*, the *Chofetz Chaim* would say that there are three requirements that are necessary when it comes to working for the public:

1) The issue that one is working on must be the only thing on his mind, it can only be done today, and he must feel that there is no one else who can do the job other than him.

2) A person must do everything with *Zerizus*, doing things quickly and right away, without procrastination.

3) One must be prepared to do what he is doing with *Mesiras Nefesh*, self-sacrifice.

The *Chofetz Chaim* said that without these three essential conditions, one will not see *Haztlachah* in what he is involved with!

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Once, a person who was having difficulty with his *Shalom Bayis*, went to the ***Steipler Gaon*** for a *Brachah*, and gave him a letter explaining the issues he was having, and asked for his advice.

The *Steipler* reads the letter and then took a pen and started marking it up in different places. When he finished, he handed it back to the person and said, "Look at your letter. The problems you are having are only because you are too focused on yourself! In this short note that you gave me, I circled the word 'I' thirteen times! This indicates that the problem is that you are too self-absorbed. When you shift the focus from yourself to your wife, you will see that you don't have any *Shalom Bayis* problems!"

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS NOACH

Pierre-Louis and The Baal Shem Tov

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

One day, the **Baal Shem Tov**, founder of the Chasidic movement, summoned Rabbi Nissan. He gave his faithful chasid a closed envelope and asked him to travel to the castle of the local landowner, Count Radzvill. Rabbi Nissan was to open the envelope in two-day's time.

The purpose of this trip was to try to arouse the Count's best friend, Pierre-Louis, to return to Judaism. Rabbi Nissan was perplexed for, as far as everyone knew, Pierre Louis was not Jewish. Yet, he followed his Rebbe's instructions without question.

Count Radzvill was kind and just to all those living on his lands, Jew and gentile alike. On the particular day that Rabbi Nissan arrived at the castle, Count Radzvill and Pierre Louis had just returned from a

two-month holiday in Europe. Crowds of people were gathered to welcome them back.

After the two men entered the castle and the crowd had dispersed, Rabbi Nissan meandered around the grounds for the rest of the day wondering how he could arrange to speak to Pierre Louis. When night came, Rabbi Nissan traveled into town and slept in the local synagogue. Early the next morning, Rabbi Nissan returned to the castle hoping to be inspired as to how he could obtain an audience with Pierre Louis. But as he approached the castle, Rabbi Nissan immediately noticed that something was wrong. A large crowd was gathered there, but many of them were crying.

Rabbi Nissan inquired and found out what had transpired. The Count and Pierre Louis had gone hunting late the night before. When they returned from their successful trip, a tragic accident occurred. The Count tripped on one of the castle steps, his pistol discharged, and he suffered a large bleeding wound in his chest.

Despite the attention of the best doctors, all efforts to stop the bleeding had not helped. The Count was dying. That's when Rabbi Nissan remembered the envelope the Rebbe had given him. He opened it, took out the letter and began reading. It was a prescription with exact directions how to prepare a salve to cure...a gunshot wound to the chest!

Rabbi Nissan ran to the castle gate waving the letter and demanded to be let in, but the guards refused. Pierre Louis heard the noise from inside the palace and ran out to the gate, obviously irritated, "Jew! What do you want here?" he shouted. "Don't tell me you are a doctor? Leave here immediately!

"Wait!" he shouted. "What is that paper you are holding?"

Rabbi Nissan tried to explain, but the Frenchman snatched the prescription from his hand and began to read. "This is your cure?!" He screamed. "This is nonsense!"

He was about to tear it into pieces when one of the doctors emerged from the castle, noticed the commotion and approached. He examined the paper, turned to face Pierre Louis with his back to the Jew and whispered. "They've given up in there. Let the Jew try; it can't hurt."

Minutes later Rabbi Nissan was in the castle, preparing the medicine. Then he began the treatment. Some of it he smeared on the wound, and some of it he applied on various parts of the Count's body. Every few minutes he repeated the process, following the instructions exactly.

To everyone's surprise, the Count stopped hemorrhaging almost immediately! After a few applications he even seemed to be breathing more deeply and evenly. After an hour, instead of being dead as everyone had anticipated, color returned to his cheeks and minutes later he regained consciousness!

The doctors and professors were speechless; they had never seen anything even vaguely like it. Pierre Louis, moreover, was moved to the essence of his very being.

After several hours the Count was strong enough to call Rabbi Nissan to his bedside and thank him. He offered to reward him but the chasid refused. "Seeing you returned to health is my reward. Just continue to treat the Jews kindly," he said. "But, he added, "I do have one request: I wish to speak with Pierre Louis privately."

The bewildered Pierre Louis and Rabbi Nissan went into a side room and closed the door. Rabbi Nissan said, "I am a follower of a great Jew called Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov. He was the one who wrote that prescription and saved the Count. He told me to come here and tell you to return to Judaism." Pierre was still in shock from the near death of his friend and then his strange supernatural recovery. And now this?

Pierre just looked at the chasid, eyes wide in disbelief. "Return? Judaism?" He mumbled to himself. "I don't understand."

"The Baal Shem Tov told me to tell you that your real name is *Pesach-Tzvi*," continued Rabbi Nissan. "Both your parents were Jewish. Your mother wanted to give you a Jewish education but your father was opposed and prevailed. Eventually you lost your Jewish identity. But now it is time for you to return."

"I don't understand," said Pierre, trying to clear his throat, "Are you saying that I am a Jew? Me! A Jew? It's absolutely impossible!"

Pierre Louis refused to discuss the subject further and abruptly ended the conversation. All he agreed only to give it further thought.

Almost a year later Rabbi Nissan heard a knock on his door. He opened it and was surprised to see a bearded Jew standing in front of him whom he didn't recognize. 'Don't you recognize me?" the man queried.

Then Rabbi Nissan realized: It was Pierre Louis, now Pesach Tzvi, returning to the G-d of his fathers.

"Sometimes your presence is greater than any intervention. Often, people don't need solutions or answers – they simply need to feel heard, to know that their voice matters and their feelings are valid. By listening with an open heart, you remind them that they are not alone, that their struggles and their story carry weight, and that they themselves are worthy of care and respect. In a world where so many feel unseen, your quiet compassion can be the light that helps someone remember their value and worth." ~ Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

The Non-Religious Soldier and His Torah Commitment



Reb Moshe was travelling home to Bnei Brak, with traffic moving as slow as it always did on Erev Shabbos. With the Fridays getting shorter, it was a test of his patience to be able to navigate traffic in order to arrive home in a timely fashion.

Friday was the day that he lectured in Rishon L'tzion. It was a kiruv outreach programme which took precedence over his Erev Shabbos errands, because inspiring even one neshamah, soul, was of immeasurable value.

He was lost in thought when he chanced upon a soldier standing on the side of the road seeking a hitch. Reb Moshe figured that the young soldier was also in a rush to reach his destination before Shabbos. He pulled over and offered him a ride. He told the fellow that he was on his way to Bnei Brak. He would be happy to have him join him as far as he was travelling.

The soldier jumped into the car, happy that after thirty minutes of waiting, someone finally stopped for him. "There should be more Jews like you," the young soldier, whose name was Gabi, said.

Reb Moshe countered that people were in a rush to make it home in time for Shabbos. "How far do you have to travel?" R' Moshe asked Gabi. He gave him the name of a kibbutz that was quite distant from Bnei Brak. R' Moshe asked the obvious question. "How do you expect to reach your destination in time for Shabbos?"

"I do not expect to make it, because I do not observe Shabbos." "Why not join me and my family for Shabbos and continue on home after Shabbos?"

"My family is expecting me for the weekend," Gabi replied.

"This is what a telephone is for," R' Moshe said. "Why not call them and say that you are late and have decided to spend Shabbos in Bnei Brak?" Veritably, Gabi was exhausted and did not mind spending Shabbos with this kind, observant Jew. Shabbos was not really his "thing," but if it meant sleep and a decent meal, why not? "Fine, I accept your offer."

Gabi actually enjoyed the Shabbos experience with R' Moshe's family. The negative impression that the teachers in the secular school that he had attended as a youth had drummed into his mind was not consistent with this wonderful family and the warm, welcoming Shabbos experience that he enjoyed.

After Havdalah, Gabi turned to R' Moshe and said, "I would like to take something along with me as a memento of the wonderful Shabbos I spent with your family."

"What would you like?" R' Moshe asked.

"Well, I do not want to become dati, observant, but I would like to accept upon myself to do something as a token of this Shabbos." "Perhaps you would like to observe Shabbos." "No, no, I am not ready for that" was Gabi's immediate reply.

"What about kashrus?" "Also no. It is much too difficult to undertake. Just suggest something simple and easy, and I will do it."

Reb Moshe murmured, "No Shabbos, no kashrus, and you say that your Tefillin have not been touched since your bar mitzvah. I do not know what to suggest. We will open up the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, which is a collection of Jewish laws, and see what we can find."

He opened up the Kitzur, and the first halachah that struck him was the law concerning how one puts on his shoes and ties his laces. "There is a Torah concerning how one dresses himself?" Gabi asked.

R' Moshe explained that Torah encompasses every aspect and facet of life. Gabi agreed that following the rules of lacing his shoes would be his mitzvah, the mitzvah that would remain with him as a memento of his Shabbos in Bnei Brak. Gabi bid R' Moshe and his family goodbye and left for home.



A week later, he was back at his base when he began a series of intense training courses. During this entire time, Gabi never failed to lace his shoes in accordance with halachah.

One night, he was awakened from a deep sleep and instructed by his commanding officer to dress in full gear and board one of two training helicopters that would take the soldiers on a mission. As Gabi was running to the helicopter, he remembered that in his haste he had forgotten to lace his shoes properly. He had given his word never to deviate from the halachah of putting on one's shoes properly. He told the commander that he must return to his barracks to put on his shoes properly.

The commander thought that Gabi had lost his mind. "Absolutely not!" the commander shouted above the noise of the helicopter rotors that were warming up in anticipation of their passengers.

Gabi insisted on returning. The commander warned him that returning to the barracks meant ignoring a direct order, which was punishable by a week in the stockade.

Gabi replied, "I will do what I must do, and you will do what you must do." That is exactly how the altercation played itself out. Gabi returned to the barracks, only to be arrested. Later, Gabi was lying

on the floor of the stockade when the word of the tragic mid-air collision of two helicopters reached him. All seventy-three soldiers on board the helicopters were killed. This was a disaster of epic proportion. Had Gabi not returned to the barracks to lace his shoes in accordance with halachah, he would have been one of the victims.

Commitment, altering his existing lifestyle by accepting upon himself to follow one of the Torah's imperatives in what many would consider a mundane, non-essential area of endeavor, saved his life. Torah saves.

How Disconnecting Saved Their Lives By N Green



Scene of the attack (Israel news photo: Flash 90)

Rabbi Eliyahu Amar in a speech explained a great strategy to silence the prosecution in the Days of Awe. He recounted a story of Rabbi Moshe Moreno and his wife who were saved by a miracle from certain death. They were driving toward their town of Maale Ephraim in the Shomron.

A car was trailing them and shining its bright headlights so Rabbi Moreno allowed the car to pass. This kind gesture was almost the end of the lives of the rabbi and his wife. The car passed and blocked the road. 3 terrorists with automatic rifles came out of the car and started spraying them with gunfire. All the tires were shot out and not one window or windshield was intact. Miraculously, the rabbi and his wife were still alive. The terrorists finished up their

cartridges of bullets spraying them on the car. They ran back to their car to get new cartridges to finish off their murderous work. At that moment the rabbi and his wife took advantage of the 'temporary cease fire' and they ran out of the car and threw themselves into the wadi (valley) of the side of the road hoping to find cover in the brush.

They rolled downhill for 30 meters through rocks and thorns getting bruised along the way. Rabbi Moshe even got a bullet in his foot from the terrorists shooting at them in the dark. But in the end the terrorists left and the rabbi and his wife were still alive.

But what could they do in this situation? Their cell phone despite all the gunshots, bumping and rolling was intact in his wife's pocket. They called the military security in the area which came quickly and whisked them off to the hospital. The security also sealed off the roads and managed to apprehend the terrorists.

A few months later the Rabbi and his wife made a "Thank You" meal to thank G-d for saving their lives from what should have been certain death. One of the rabbi's family friends spoke emotionally: "The army upon investigating this incident was left with one unanswered question. How did you make a phone call from your cell phone deep in the wadi? There isn't even any reception on the road where the car was, let alone in the wadi!"

"But I think I know the answer. Rabbi Moreno accepted upon himself to turn off his cell phone upon entering the synagogue. Now the rabbi is talking to G-d and everyone else can wait, not like some people who come to pray but somehow forget about G-d, leave him on 'call waiting' and talk to their friends instead."

"If you go into an embassy, the phones are put away in storage. If your phone rings in a court room you can get fined for irreverence to the court. So why should a synagogue where the Divine presence rests be any less? Should our cell phones be on there? When Rabbi

Moshe disconnected his phone for G-d's honor in the synagogue, G-d gave him a special connection in the wadi, measure for measure."

Concluding the story Rabbi Amar says: "If someone is silent from saying mundane things in the synagogue G-d will, measure for measure, silence the prosecutors that want to slander us in heaven and cause us harm. May G-d silence the Satan from speaking ill of us."

Can One Ever Do Too Much Chesed? By David Bibi



I often discussed with the Rabbi [Abittan] how he dealt with the burdens of an entire community. He treated every problem as his own. He was as empathic a person one could know. And he stayed with a person day in and day out until the problem was solved or the burden had eased. He rarely complained though. He looked at everything he did as doing his job. Not in the sense of a job at work, but the job mankind has of emulating G-d while on this world.

To the Rabbi everything appeared as an opportunity to do the right thing, to do the mitzvah. He once mentioned a story that serves as a lesson to those wishing to throw in the towel.

When the Chofetz Chaim was in Vienna, an important person came to the house where he was staying to ask a pressing question. The Chofetz Chaim was in the middle of a meal, so the owner of the house invited the visitor to join everyone at the table, assuring him that when the meal was finished, he would gladly introduce him to the Chofetz Chaim so that he could ask his question.

Meanwhile the Chofetz Chaim was reciting the Psalm, "Mizmor LeDavid Hashem Ro'i," as he usually did at mealtimes. When he finished the last verse, "May goodness and chesed follow me all the days of my life," he turned to the guest, whom he did not know, and asked, "Isn't it wondrous that King David says that goodness and chesed shall chase me; for usually murderers and robbers are what chase a person, but when do goodness and chesed chase him? "

We can learn from this that it may seem to a person who is occupying himself with acts of kindness and charity that the 'goodness and chesed' indeed chase him. Since he is losing money or taking time from his work, his yetzer attempts to convince him to stop doing chesed. What should he do?

King David tells him that in such a case he should pray to Hashem that goodness and chesed should continue to chase him for the rest of his life, since he is continuing to do acts of kindness and charity. He should know that if he does so G-d will allow him to fulfill that which is promised at the end of the verse, 'And I shall sit in the house of Hashem all the days of my life."'

When the guest heard these words, he got up to leave, thanked his host and said goodbye. The host was astonished. Why would he want to leave before he had even asked his question?

The guest then explained, "The Chofetz Chaim has answered me without my asking. You see, several years ago I established a gemach in my town. Recently, my wife has been complaining that my chesed is causing me losses in business, and it is taking up too much of my time. She wants me to hand over the gemach to someone else, but I refuse to do so, and we decided to ask the Chofetz Chaim.

“But now the Chofetz Chaim has answered our question, saying that even if goodness and chesed already have been done by a person, this is not an excuse to stop. He should continue to be occupied with them. And so now I am hurrying home to tell this to my wife."

Rabbi Feinhandler comments that doing chesed should be our constant goal, and there is never "enough" chesed done. So rather than throw in the towel we should also look at the work we do as an opportunity rather than a challenge. This was Rabbi Abittan every day of his life. I guess it was my dad too!

No Time to Retire by Rabbi Reuven Semah

וַיָּחֶל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּטַּע כָּרֶם ***"Noach, the man of the earth, debased himself and planted a vineyard."*** (9:20)



When Noach emerged from the ark, he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk. It seems that while Noah did nothing wrong by planting a vineyard, the Sages teach that he was remiss in making that his first priority upon leaving the haven in which he had been spared from the destruction. He was supposed to replant the world, and he should have started with necessities, not wine.

Rabbi Frand quotes Rabbi Leibel Hyman who explains that what made Noah mundane was that he chose to look at his past accomplishments, his heroic salvation of all animal life in the ark, and say, "I did enough. Now it's time to retire, to relax with a glass of wine."

This lesson applies to each and every Jew, to this very day.

Some commentators write that the most difficult test for Abraham was the need to obtain a burial plot for Sarah after all he had been

through with the test of the sacrifice of Isaac. But how could that compare to the test of the sacrifice? There he was commanded to sacrifice his only son!

The answer is that one of the most difficult tasks is to keep moving, to keep building, no matter what our prior accomplishments may have been. Abraham could justifiably have said, "I did more than enough." But he didn't. He kept on moving and doing, and every Jew, as a descendent of Abraham, doesn't rest on his laurels. He keeps going.

One of the greatest myths that American culture has invented is the marvel of early retirement. Every American dreams of the day when he will be able to relax on his porch with a cup of wine (or a bottle of beer perhaps). But this is a fallacy. At the age of 82, Sumner Redstone, CEO of Viacom, said, "You retire, you die."

Even if retirement is the great American dream, it shouldn't be ours. Americans, as sons of Noah, earn their retirement honestly. It is their heritage from their great-grandfather Noah. These are not wicked or evil goals, just plain and mundane.

We trace our roots back to Abraham *Avinu*, who at the ripe old age of 137 was still overcoming daunting challenges, without looking to put up his feet to relax. While those around us follow the ordinary path of Noah, we follow Abraham and build as long as we can.

Making a Loan to a Stranger by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

"Rabbi you have a visitor" announced Rab Yaakov's servant. Rab Yaakov looked up from his desk and saw entering the room a Russian nobleman dressed in his most formal and elegant uniform standing erect like a king.

Rabbi Yaakov, the head of the Jewish community in Bohemia, a Chassid of the **Baal Shem Tov** and a very successful businessman, was well acquainted with the gentile nobility.

"Hello" he said cordially as he formally stood and extended his hand to his visitor, "With whom do I have the honor of speaking".

"I cannot tell you my name" said the stranger, shaking Rab Yaakov's hand, "but I come on a very important and desperate mission; I must borrow from you five hundred Gulden (about $100,000)."

"Excuse me, but how do you expect me to…." Rab Yaakov stood back a half-step and looked the visitor in the eyes to see if he was normal, "…to loan you such a sum without knowing you? Have you any backers, any letters of reference, any credentials, any collateral, anything at all?"

"I have nothing and I can say nothing. You only have my word and my oath to G-d that I will pay."

Rab Yaakov couldn't believe his ears. He wanted to just tell the man to leave but something told him not to.

He sat for a minute deep in thought as the visitor just stood looking straight ahead and finally answered. "I won't say no or yes, I must travel to my rabbi, the Holy Baal Shem Tov, and ask him. Please return tomorrow night."

But Rab Yaakov was in for a surprise. When he asked the Baal Shem he enthusiastically encouraged him to make the loan but only on condition that he get some sort of written receipt. The next evening the nobleman reappeared, took the money, wrote an IOU that contained only the words "I owe Rab Yaakov 500 guilden" with no name or address and walked out the door into the night.

In the course of the next few years, when he happened to see the IOU among his papers, Rab Yaakov remembered the loan for a few seconds and thanked G-d that his businesses and investments succeeded so he didn't really feel the loss. But still it puzzled him as to why the Besh't insisted on such a worthless IOU and in the course of time he totally forgot the entire incident.

Fifteen years later tragedy visited.

The local Bishop, a vile anti-Semite spread a blood libel against the Jews and succeeded in getting all the local clergy to sigh an edict evicting all of them from Bohemia. The decree was to become effective six months from its signing and spelled disaster for tens of thousands of families.

Rab Yaakov sped to the Baal Shem Tov for help, but the Besh't told him that his only chance would be to speak to the only man in the world that had the power to rescind the evil decree. None other than the Pope himself.

The very idea sent shivers down Rab Yaakov's spine. Any Jew caught traveling in Italy especially in the 'holy' city of Rome, would almost certainly die. According to Catholicism, the Jews were the murders of god, the enemies of mankind and were it not for the hope they could be 'converted' there was no reason not to simply exterminate them.

The next day Rab Yaakov bade his wife and family farewell, perhaps for the last time, set off on a ship and after several weeks, arrived on the shores of Italy.

Disguised as a simple peasant, he rented a donkey and cart and began traveling according to a map he brought along.

He just kept praying that the holiness of his task, the Baal Shem's blessing and his excellent disguise would protect him. After all he did know a bit of Italian; certainly HaShem would make a miracle. How to get to the Pope would definitely be a problem but he would cross that bridge when he came to it.

On the third day of his journey as he was driving slowly through some town saying Psalms by heart suddenly, he noticed his wagon was becoming surrounded by peasants.

He only understood a bit of what they were saying but he got the point quickly when someone jumped on the cart, grabbed his nose and yelled 'It's a Jew all right! Kill the Jew!!" and rocks started flying at him from all directions.

Rab Yaakov sensed that this was the end. Possibly this is why the Besh't sent him; sacrificing his life would save the Jews of Bohemia. He closed his eyes, said 'Shma Yiroel!' and prepared to meet his Maker when suddenly a voice rang out and everyone became quiet.

Yaakov opened his eyes and saw a tall important-looking middle aged man striding through the crowd.

He walked up to Rab Yaakov took a close look at his face, smiled wickedly, took out a long sword from a sheath that was hanging from his belt yelled out 'I'll take care of this Jew' myself. Move aside!

He motioned to his victim to get off the wagon, to put his hands behind his back and to walk before him. They walked this way for about fifteen minutes until they reached a large mansion. He told Rab Yaakov to enter and as soon as they were inside he closed the door, told Rab Yaakov to turn and face him, dropped his sword to the ground and threw his arms around him hugging him for several minutes saying in Russian, "Ahh thank G-d!! It is you. It is you!! Thank G-d I came in time."

Rav Yaakov was sure it was some sort of mistake; he had never seen this man before in his life.

"Do you remember me?" the man said as he held Yaakov at arms length and gazed lovingly into his eyes "You saved my life!!"

Yes, it was he. It was the nobleman that borrowed the money fifteen years ago. They shook hands gratefully both exclaiming "It is a miracle!!! Thank G-d a miracle!!"

They sat and when Rab Yaakov explained the reason for his trip the stranger seemed even happier. "My dear friend, I can help you, I am

nothing less than a Duke and a very influential one at that. Do you know how much power a Duke has here in Italy? And to top it off I have very good connections with the Pope. I can arrange a meeting.

It was like some sort of a dream. The next evening they were actually sitting before the Pope and Yaakov the Jew was explaining how it was the Pope's duty to dispel these anti-Semitic superstitions and teach forbearance and tolerance and true justice.

The next day the Pope called a meeting of the Cardinal Court and put forth the suggestion that they rescind the Bohemian expulsion. When they objected, as he knew they would, he clapped his hands and a huge book was brought forth, put it on an ornate table and the Pope announced:

"This is a book containing all the Papal decisions in history from the foundation of the Church. It is, needless to say, full of cases against the Jews. I suggest we open the book and to whichever page it falls we will take it as a sign from heaven what to do in this case."

The Cardinals agreed, the book was opened to an arbitrary page and the scribe read: "In the year 1456 a Jew called Yehuda was accused of poisoning the well of the Church grounds in Venice."

The Cardinals winked and smiled at one another in glee.

"But" the scribe continued reading, "the charges were discovered to be false and due to the lies of the priest Thaddeus who was relieved of his position for two months because of the trouble he caused to the court."

The Cardinals had no choice but to agree with the 'sign from heaven'! A decree was signed nullifying the expulsion and Rav Yaakov returned joyously and full of gratitude with the Duke to his palace.

When they arrived the Duke took Rav Yaakov into his study, closed the door, took out a stack of money out of one of his desk drawers and said. "I'm returning the loan; exactly 500 Gulder. I would like to

give you interest but I cannot. You see..." he was unable to finish and tears were streaming from his eyes. Suddenly he burst out weeping and fell to his knees … "I am a JEW!!!"

It took several minutes for him to calm down but finally he sat Yaakov down and began to tell the story.

"You see, I was born to a Jewish family in Russia, my name was Ariah Leib but poverty drove us from place to place until finally we ended up in Paris. It's not important how, but I got involved with the wrong crowd and before my parents knew what happened I left Judaism and began travelling the world.

"I lived a totally wanton life until fate brought me to Italy and I found favor in the eyes of a very powerful and rich Duke. He was an old man when I met him and my keen wit and business sense made him so fond of me that, because he had no children of his own, he adopted me as his son.

"I had everything one could ask for, power, youth, success, pleasure and when he died, I inherited even more. But it also brought me enemies; people that were jealous of my power and riches. They were very clever, they plotted behind my back bribed witnesses, forged papers and before I knew it, I was charged with treason and sentenced to death."

"My friends, who believed I was innocent, succeeded after several years of court battles in getting the court to agree that if I would pay an exorbitant fine to release me from prison and even return my title and the rights to my properties.

"My friends helped me with some of the money I took loans on my properties but after all I still lacked five hundred gulden, a small fortune, and had exhausted all my sources in Italy.

"So I asked for permission to return to Paris to collect there and it was granted but it wasn't so easy. First of all people didn't

remember me and I was simply ashamed to ask for loans but also something else was happening inside of me.

"I didn't understand what it was until one day as I was walking in the streets I passed by a Synagogue and suddenly heard from inside the sound of the ram's horn the Jews sound on Rosh HaShanna. Suddenly I felt drawn into the building and once inside I began to feel a strange revulsion for everything I had done in my past and a great yearning for the G-d of my fathers, the G-d of Israel.

"I took a prayer shawl out of the box at the door, put it over my head entered and began weeping uncontrollably. Then after several minutes I was approached by one of the congregants who took me aside heard my story and told me that as soon as the holiday is over I should travel to the Baal Shem Tov in the city of Mezibuz in the Ukraine and ask his advice."

"Well I did so, it took me a while but when I saw the face of the Baal Shem Tov I decided then and there to forfeit all my money, title and past and never return to Italy again but become a totally new man….a Jew!

"But he didn't agree. He told me that the only way to completely cleanse my soul is to return to Italy, take back my title and lands and live secretly as a Jew but most important to develop connections with the Pope.

"He gave me your address, told me to dress up in my finest clothes and ask you for the money I needed but under no circumstances to divulge my identity. That is why I couldn't sign the IOU.

"When I asked him how will I know when and if I have been completely forgiven, he answered, 'When you save an entire Jewish community.' That means …now."

Relax

The verse tells us that "These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a righteous man..." (Bereishis 6:9) Why does the Torah double the word "Noach?" Why not just say "These are the offspring of Noach, a righteous man...?"

The answer is the following: The verse tells us that Noach was called "Noach"- which means 'relaxed' or 'tranquil', because Noach was a righteous man. We reread the verse above to mean "These are the offspring of Noach, [who was] "Noach" - relaxed [because he] was a righteous man..." We will see that those who uphold the Torah generally live more relaxed lives.

Noach distinguished himself in his generation as a righteous person who listened to Hashem. As the verses tell us "Noach walked with Hashem..."(Bereishis 6:9) "And Noach did according to everything Hashem had commanded him." (Bereishis 7:5)

On the merit of listening to Hashem, Noach's ark "drifted upon the surface of the waters." (7:18) While the world was destroyed, Noach floated peacefully on the water. Noach walked with Hashem, so Hashem only gave Noach the plans to build the ark, which saved Noach and his family. Therefore, we see that Noach lived a peaceful life because he followed Hashem's word. By following the example of Noach, who listened to Hashem, we too can learn to float over life's difficulties and live virtually stress-free lives.

The following amazing true story shows how one Jew managed to float through a particularly difficult period in Jewish history. Almost 30 years ago, Mordechai Shababo was a typical secular Israeli who lived with his family in Tzefas, in northern Eretz Yisroel. Mordechai had been training hard as a wrestler for the 1972 world competitions, which were to take place in Munich, Germany.

Mordechai was the only real hope for bringing home a victory for the Israeli team. Although Mordechai himself was not an observant

Jew, his family had a long and illustrious history in the religious community of Tzefas. An ancestor of Mordechai was Reb Yehoshua Shababo, who had been a student of the Arizal, some 400 years previous. Mordechai's father was a member of the local Chevra Kadisha along with being a Shammas at the famous Alshich Shul.

The holy Alshich (1508 - 1593?) was a pious scholar and rabbinical judge who had lived, taught, and was later buried in Tzefas. Mordechai's father was responsible for the upkeep of the Alshich shul, which was next to the Alshich's grave. For a few days in the summer of 1972, Mordechai's father was unable to carry out his duties in the shul. The older Mr. Shababo therefore requested that his son Mordechai take care of the Alshich shul in his place. At first, Mordechai wanted to refuse his father's request, because the world competitions in Germany were quickly approaching.

However, something inside Mordechai's heart told him to help his father. Mordechai agreed to take care of the Alshich shul for a few days in his father's stead. One night, a couple of days later, Mordechai had a dream. The holy Alshich appeared to him, wearing all white. The scholar thanked Mordechai for making the shul so bright and clean, however, the saintly Rav added: "But where I lie, it is dark, filthy and neglected so that no one can approach my grave."

Mordechai woke up the next morning somewhat disturbed by the dream. However, Mordechai did not act on the Alshich's request to clean up the grave. But when the same dream occurred twice more over the next few nights, Mordechai became very alarmed. Mordechai's wife insisted that he do something about the grave of the holy Alshich.

Mordechai wanted to wait until after he returned from the world competitions in Munich. But Mordechai's wife insisted. So, 48 hours before the Israeli team was set to leave for the competitions, Mordechai hastily withdrew from the team, claiming that he was not feeling well. The team tried everything including bribery to force

Mordechai to take part in the competitions. Mordechai, however, refused to join the team.



As his former team members boarded the plane for Germany, Mordechai was already busy cleaning up the grave of the holy Alshich in Tzefas. Several days later, news of the horrible tragedy in Munich reached Mordechai. Mordechai, along with the rest of the Jewish world was shocked by the report.

[*During the 1972 Summer Olympics at Munich, a group of Palestinian terrorists stormed the Olympic Village apartment of the Israeli athletes, killing two and taking nine others hostage. In an ensuing shootout at the Munich airport, the nine Israeli hostages were killed.*]

When he heard the news, Mordechai realized that the Hand of Hashem was upon him. He was spared from the tragedy in the merit of the saintly Alshich, of blessed memory. Mordechai began to become more and more Torah observant. His day began to revolve around the Alshich shul, where he prayed three times a day. Using his phenomenal strength, the wrestler Mordechai moved the heavy obstacles, which had blocked access to the cave where the grave of the Alshich was situated. After sixth months of backbreaking labor, Mordechai completed his restoration of the Alshich's gravesite.

Over the last 28 years, Mordechai has continued his holy work in maintaining several gravesites of tzaddikim in Tzefas. All of Mordechai's work is for the sake of heaven, for he receives no

payment for his services. Today Mordechai lives a fully religious lifestyle with his family in Tzefas.

Mordechai Shababo was able to ride out the tragedies which occurred in that horrible summer of 1972. Although Mordechai was distraught at the deaths of his teammates, Mordechai was able to recognize the amazing Hasgacha Pratis which led to his decision not to travel with the team to Germany.

Mordechai, like Noach was able to float peacefully above the destruction which rocked the world. By listening to Hashem's mitzvahs, we too can have peace of mind. Noach was "Noach" - relaxed, because he followed Hashem's word. Once we realize that Hashem is watching over us, we will naturally live more relaxed lives. We will be less subject to the ups and downs of everyday life. Instead, we will have the inner peace of knowing that Hashem is our Father and Keeper. Let us therefore strive to follow Hashem righteously and then we will be better able to float over life's difficulties.

Who Can Predict a Monday Funeral?

In this week's parsha, Parshas Noach, the Torah tells us "Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations..." (Bereishis 6:9) The verse states that Noach "Tamim hayah b'dorosav," which we translated above to mean that he was "perfect in his generations..." However, it is also possible to translate the verse in the following way: Noach was the "Tamim" - the Gadol Hador, the great Sage of his generation.

And why does the Torah use the plural when stating that Noach was the perfect one of his "generations?" Perhaps the Torah is coming to teach us an important lesson that every generation has its Tzadikim, righteous Torah leaders. The reason why the Torah needs to teach us this lesson is that many people say, "A shame that

Rav X is gone now... and these new Rabbanim (Rabbis)... Hashem just doesn't make them like He used to.." The following amazing story from about 40 years ago illustrates the concept of believing in the Torah leaders of every generation.

The woman tried to control her tears as she knocked on **Rav Shloima Poupko, zt'l's** (1928-2003) door one Friday morning. Originally from New York, R' Shloima had joined the Johannesburg community in the 1950's, where he served as the Chief Rabbi and the Rav of the Sydenham Highlands North Synagogue.

The woman, a neighbour of R' Shloima, knew that he was willing to help everyone in the Jewish community in South Africa. R' Shloima opened the door. One look at his visitor told him that something was very wrong. "I need your help. It's ... it's my nephew. David Kauder. He's just four years old, and the doctors say he's going to die on Monday."

The woman took a deep breath, then explained. "David was hit by a car six months ago. He's been in an irreversible coma ever since. Today, the doctor came in and told us that his funeral would be on Monday." R' Shloima was taken aback. How could the doctor have spoken in such a manner? I've never heard of anyone, let alone a doctor, speaking like that. It's barbaric to say such a thing!"

"Can you help us?" the woman begged. There was no time to spare. R' Shloima grabbed his jacket, ran outside, and asked his driver to take him to the Florence Nightingale Nursing Home, where David was being treated.

Less than ten minutes later, he was striding down the corridor, searching for the room that held the gravely ill David Kauder and his family. R' Shloima found a grim scenario as he peeked around the door. The boy lay motionless in bed, only the faintest rising of his chest giving any indication that he was still alive. His parents stood

nearby, looking helplessly at their son. R' Shloima greeted the nurse, then quietly asked about the boy's status.

"How is he?" The nurse slowly shook her head. "It's not good. The doctor says his funeral will be on Monday." Once again, R' Shloima was shocked by these callous words. He gave a quick glance at David, lying silently on the bed. There was a good chance that the young boy—though appearing unaware of his surroundings—could actually hear every word. How could the doctor have spoken in this way?

"Please give that doctor a message from me," R' Shloima declared. "Tell him that no one knows whose funeral will take place on Monday!" R' Shloima returned home to find David's aunt anxiously awaiting his return. He invited her into his office. "Please sit down for a few minutes. I'll be right with you."

R' Shloima had decided to send a telegram to the late **Satmar Rav, Reb Yoel Teitelbaum** of blessed memory (1887- 1979), asking him to pray on the boy's behalf. There wasn't enough time before Shabbos to write a detailed explanation, so R' Shloima simply wrote the boy's name and his mother's name, and urged the Rav to daven immediately for the child's recovery.

That task done, R' Shloima returned to the aunt and told her to invite the entire family—many of whom were not religious—to come to his house for kiddush and the Shabbos meal that Friday night. "Let them know that they won't be able to drive back. They'll either have to walk, or if it's too far, we'll be happy to arrange accommodations for the night." That Friday night, over forty Kauder family members showed up at R' Shloima's house—uncles, aunts and cousins. After making kiddush, R' Shloima spoke to them about the significance of kashrus, Shabbos, family purity and Jewish education. "We all want David to have a full recovery," R' Shloima declared, "but we have to do something for Hashem to reverse the Heavenly decree."

The family members unanimously agreed to accept these mitzvos upon themselves. "It's not that hard," they reassured each other. "We can do it—for David's sake." Early Sunday morning, R' Shloima was awakened with a call from the nursing home.

"I can't give any details on the phone," the nurse said breathlessly. "Could you please come down to the nursing home right away?" R' Shloima sat frozen, trying to fight down the surge of panic and despair that had welled up at the nurse's words. He couldn't help imagining the worst.

Forcing himself to stand up, he immediately set out for the nursing home, ready to face whatever was coming. R' Shloima walked cautiously into David's room—to be greeted by a room full of people, including a beaming Mr. and Mrs. Kauder and a bewildered array of doctors and nurses. The source of their bewilderment was right in front of them. Little David was awake and out of bed, pulling the tubes out of his mouth and crying, "Mama, Mama!"

One of the assisting doctors, the disbelief evident upon his face, turned to R' Shloima and exclaimed, "This is an absolute impossibility!" Like the doctors, R' Shloima could hardly believe his eyes. Yet he knew what he had to do. He immediately gave praise and thanks to Hashem for performing this open miracle for the Kauder family.

One person was absent from the scene of the miracle. David's doctor—the one who had predicted the boy's funeral for Monday—happened to have the day off. He was tinkering with his car in front of his house, changing a tire, when a truck parked further up the hill suddenly came rolling down. The doctor didn't see it coming—until it smashed into his car a moment later. He never had a chance. His funeral was on Monday morning.

One year after David's miraculous recovery, R' Shloima received an unexpected letter from the Satmar Rav. "You should know that the

souls of the family made a strong impression in Heaven," the Rav wrote.

"Since you encouraged them to return and accept the mitzvos, the Heavenly Judgment was changed, and their child was spared." R' Shloima was astonished. There had been no time to tell the Rav anything about the Kauder family on that hectic Friday—no time, in fact, to do much more than write David Kauder's name. Yet the Satmar Rav had known it all. (From Visions of Greatness Volume VII, Rabbi Y. Weiss zt'l).

We can be inspired by this story to believe that every generation has its righteous leaders!

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

Why Does G-d Allow Certain Animal Species to Go Extinct?



Animals become extinct because *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wants to show us that nothing in this world is forever. A tremendous lesson! Once upon a time, in the times of *Adam* and *Meshuselach*, the elephants were tremendous, much bigger than our little elephants of today. The beavers - a beaver is this big today - in those days a beaver was six foot long! It's a fact. Everything was big in those days.

And so *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* showed that the great ones fall eventually. Nobody is too important to hang around a long time in

this world. That's the lesson for us. Now, the ancients were expected to utilize what they saw with their eyes.

We are not capable of utilizing too many things, so *Hashem* gives us a limited number of things [to benefit from]. Let us look at these things because not all these things will be around forever. Little by little, some more species will be extinct. Then we'll look back at the good old days. If we could have seen the great mastodon elephant, or the great reptiles, almost as high as a two-story house, then we would see the *Nifloas Haborai* [G-d's wonders of creation.]



But today what do we have to look at? Little crocodiles! We have nothing to look at. So *Hashem* says look at the crocodiles, when you see a crocodile, be amazed by it. Why does it have such a thick skin? It's an armor on it. Is it an accident? Where did it get all those teeth? Is it an accident?

It's a tremendous thing that the crocodile can swim in water and he can walk on land, and you see the miracles of his constitution. So while we still have them, let's utilize them... because nothing is forever in this world.

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l - Appreciating Our Eyes



Why should a person thank *Hashem* for his eyes, *Baruch Ata Hashem Pokeach Ivrim*, if animals can also see?

Plenty of people cannot see. Walk in the streets and see this man tapping his way with a cane, and ask him that question, what will he answer?

We have to thank *Hashem* for the animal's eyes, too. But whatever there is in the world, is given for the purpose of making us aware of *Hashem*. And not only thank *Hashem* for the fact that we have eyes to use, but the eye itself is a testimony.

You know; that *Rasha* himself, Darwin, *Yemach Shemo*, himself said, that when I come to the subject of the eye, I feel somewhat faint to think that such a contrivance could happen by itself. He felt somewhat faint, he should faint, he's in *Gihenom* fainting right now.

The eyes are a wonderful thing, *Nisay Nissim* what an eye is, you have to talk about the eye, at length - to appreciate it. Wonder of wonders. It's a camera taking pictures every second, colour pictures, and it functions perfectly not only for close nearby pictures, but it can focus on far away images in the same moment. When I look at you, now the camera, I have to adjust it for far away, but immediately the eye adjusts for far away pictures, then I turn back to you, close pictures. Wonderful.

You're sitting in a car speeding down the road, you look at the speedometer right here, and then you look at the mountains miles ahead; you couldn't do that with a camera.

The wonders of the eye would occupy volumes and volumes to explain. And the eye itself testifies to the endless wisdom of its great designer. And therefore when we thank *Hashem*, *Pokeach Ivrim*, not only for the happiness of the eye, not only for the joy of sight, we appreciate a life of colour and motion. Great pity, a great sadness to lose sight.

Opportunity that sight gives us to gain understanding, to see people we love, to be able to guard ourselves against danger, when you have to cross the street, pitfalls. Eyes are not only useful for us in every sense, but the eyes bring us the greatest benefit of all, the awareness of the great Designer who brought such a most complicated contrivance into existence.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Rabbi Reuven Hoff - The Truth

What comes to mind when you heard the word, "Truth"? We say, "Moshe is truth, and the Torah is truth." The word Emes, truth, is a part of our Torah lexicon.

The last three letters of the first words of the Torah, "Bereishis bara Elokim," spell out the word 'Emes.'

The Or Hachaim asks, why is the word 'Emes' spelled out at the end of these words as opposed to the beginning? The answer is that two types of things happen to us on a daily basis – good things, and things which we perceive as not good. The good things we appreciate right away. On the other hand, the not so good things, they can bring us down.

But, in fact, everything which occurs to us is good, and at the end it will be revealed that it was for the good. Not right away, not at the beginning. At first it will seem not so good. However, at the end, in

hindsight, we will see that Hashem had a plan in mind and it was for our good. Therefore, 'Emes' is hinted to at the end of the letters. Take a moment and appreciate that everything Hashem does is for the best.

Rabbi Eliezer Abish - Scary Sarcasm



We find that Hashem takes Adam and Chava and tells them that they can eat from every tree except the Eitz Ha'Daas. The Torah then says that the snake was more cunning than any other animal and said to Chava, "Did Hashem say not to eat from any tree in the garden?" Rashi explains that the snake's intent was to draw Chava into a conversation and then he would get her to eat from the Eitz Ha'Daas.

The Chiddushei HaRim explains these words, "Even though Hashem said…" as the snake being sarcastic. He was saying, "So what if Hashem told you not to eat from it? Big deal!" This is why the snake was the most cunning because he knew how to get somebody, he knew how to sever someone from a relationship with Hashem. And that would be through being sarcastic and derisive. And that is the meaning of the Pasuk. And indeed, the snake was successful. How careful we must be to stay away from people who are sarcastic.

In the last year of the life of **Rav Elyashiv zt"l**, he was sitting in the Sukkah with his children and grandchildren, and they were going through a certain halacha, and one of the children related the

opinion of **Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook**. One of the grandchildren then said, "Okay, so big deal? What does that have to do with us?" Rav Elyashiv then asked the grandson, "What did you say?" The grandson repeated what he had said.

Rav Elyashiv, so uncharacteristically, said to his grandson, "Go out of my sukkah." His family had never seen him act this way before. Rav Elyashiv could not stand that someone would have such a sarcastic way of speaking about a tzaddik this way.

The grandson then went outside to the front steps and started crying, realizing what he had done. And then he went to the shul Tiferes Bachurim, which his grandfather was involved in. After his grandfather, Rav Elyashiv zt"l passed away, and the uncles and family took over, this grandson established a night seder Kollel where people would learn the halacha seforim of Rav Kook in order to make up for what he did.

That is the power and the danger of a sarcastic comment.

Parshah Pearls *(adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim)*

The Dangers of Drink

וַיֵּ֥שְׁתְּ מִן־הַיַּ֖יִן וַיִּשְׁכָּ֑ר וַיִּתְגַּ֖ל בְּתוֹךְ אָהֳלֹֽה – ***"And he drank from the wine and he became drunk, and he was revealed in his tent (va'yeisht min ha'yayin va'yisgal be'soch oholoh)"*** (9:21).

The word "va'yisgal" contains the same letters as 'Galuyos', observes the **Ba'al ha'Turim**. This hints to the ten tribes, who went into Galus, Chazal explain, because they drank too much wine due to their over-indulgence in the material and physical pleasures of life.

It is also worth bearing in mind, he concludes, that the numerical value of "ha'yayin" is equivalent to that of 'yeloloh' (wailing).

Torah Tavlin

8:16 צֵ֣א מִן־הַתֵּבָ֗ה אַתָּ֛ה וְאִשְׁתְּךָ֥ וּבָנֶ֖יךָ וּנְשֵׁי־בָנֶ֥יךָ אִתָּֽךְ



A man went on a hunting trip into the woods, but somehow lost his way. For days he wandered in the forest, disorientated and confused, desperately trying to find his way out. He felt hopeless and forlorn.

After some time, he saw another man approaching in the distance. At last, he thought to himself, another human being who probably knows how to get out of this forest. When they met, he asked the man, "My friend, can you tell me the way out of this forest? I have been wandering for days but have been unable to find my way out."

The other fellow answered, "I do not know the way out either. I, too, have been wandering about these woods for days. Let us journey on together. Perhaps, side by side, we can figure a way out." The man was no longer hopeless. As they were walking together in the forest, they suddenly spotted a large grizzly bear off in the distance, heading their way. One man took off his pack, pulled out a pair of running shoes, and started to put them on. The other frantically said, "What are you doing? You can't outrun that bear. He will surely catch you." The other man calmly replied, "I don't need to outrun the bear. I only need to outrun you!"

After completing his ark, Noach set out on his journey - a voyage that the Lord commanded him to undertake. But dealing with animals all day, every day, was tremendously stressful and somewhat lonely

for a human being. His family was onboard and that eased the pain. Companionship makes our suffering tolerable. However, as the two men running from the bear realized, whether in love, friendship, or business, always choose your companions wisely....

Rabbi Frand on Noach - Bavel Builders Lost Sight of the Forest



The parsha contains the story of the Tower of Bavel.

"The entire world was of one language and of unified words... Let us make for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in heaven. Let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be dispersed over the face of the entire land." [Bereshis 11:1, 4].

The people had the best intentions. They were trying to form a centralized government. They were trying to protect themselves and trying to preserve the society they had achieved. Their ideals were lofty. They wanted to work for the good of mankind.

Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer provides some background to this narration. There were no bricks where they lived. They needed to create bricks. [Bereshis 11:3]. Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer describes that if a person fell off the tower during construction, the workers ignored the accident. However, if a brick fell during the course of construction, they would sit down and mourn its loss.

Two things were needed to build the tower: People and bricks. Every brick was a precious commodity. The people were not that precious.

The whole purpose of building the tower was to preserve humanity (lest we become dispersed) and yet when a worker was killed there was no reaction. What happened to their concern with humanity?

The lesson is that too often we lose sight of the forest because of the trees. We lose sight of the goal because we get so wrapped up in the means to achieve that goal. There are all sorts of organizations whose purpose is to help people but sometimes they get so caught up in the bureaucracy of the organization that the people become secondary.

This was the crime of the Generation of Dispersion. This is an all too common phenomenon. The example I always cite is when people come into shul because they have Yahrtzeit for a parent. They want to daven for the amud. Why? They want to make a Kiddush Hashem [Sanctify G-d's Name in memory of the departed as a source of reward for his/her soul] by reciting blessings and Kaddish publicly.

What happens when two people approach the amud, each having Yahrtzeit? Each inevitably claims precedence and arguments ensue. The result is Chilul Hashem [Desecration of G-d's Name] ?- the antithesis of what they were ostensibly trying to accomplish. They have lost sight of what "Kiddush Hashem" is all about. 'Davening for the amud' is only a means to create Kiddush Hashem. Too often, the means becomes the goal in and of itself.

The tower "for the sake of humanity" became the goal itself, rather than the means. We always need to be on guard that we don't lose sight of what we are "in this for" in the first place.



"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."



שֹׁפֵךְ֙ דַּ֣ם הָאָדָ֔ם בָּאָדָ֖ם דָּמ֑וֹ יִשָּׁפֵ֕ךְ כִּ֚י בְּצֶ֣לֶם אֱלֹקִ֔ים עָשָׂ֖ה אֶת־הָאָדָֽם

Whoever sheds the blood of man through man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of G-d He made man. 9:6


The New York Times.

47 DEAD IN JERUSALEM RIOT; ATTACKS BY ARABS SPREAD; BRITISH TROOPS RUSH TO CITY

MARTIAL LAW PROCLAIMED

Emergency Is Declared in Whole Country—Censorship Set Up.

POPULACE PANIC-STRICKEN

Arabs Dash Through Suburbs, Assaulting All They Meet When Driven From City.

AMERICAN JEWS ASK HELP

Closing Prices of Stocks in This Edition

The Evening World

ARAB NATION IS IN REVOLT

THE BALTIMORE NEWS NIGHT

MASSACRE OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AT HEBRON TOLD BY REFUGEES

One of the worst pogroms in Jewish history occurred in Chevron which claimed 67 Jewish lives. During the two days of rioting, which began on August 23, 1929, Arab hordes, armed with axes and knives, went from house to house in the "Jewish ghetto" in Chevron. Scores of Jews were maimed, in addition to those murdered.

Of the victims, twenty-four were young yeshivah bochurim of Yeshivas Knesses Yisroel, which had relocated to Chevron in 1924 from the Lithuanian town of Slabodka. By 1929 there were close to 200 students, making it the largest yeshivah in Eretz Yisroel at the time. The massacre in Chevron, which was then under British rule, brought the centuries-old Jewish presence in the city to an abrupt end.

One of the younger bochurim survived the horrific ordeal by hiding under another student's limp body and although he was only minorly injured physically, emotionally he was a wreck. For days and days, he walked around traumatized, and he could barely function like a human being. He could not remain with the yeshivah anymore and the

hanhalas hayeshivah, as well as the Rosh Yeshivah, **R' Moshe Mordechaim Epstein zt"l**, decided that it was in his best interest to go back home to Poland, to the warm embrace of his family, in order to deal with the demons that were plaguing him constantly.

Passage aboard a steamliner was booked and the voyage took a number of weeks. By the time he arrived back in Poland, it was only a few days before Rosh Hashana, and the ehrlicher bochur decided that if he couldn't be with his yeshivah for the Yamim Noraim in Eretz Yisroel as he would have liked, at least he could be in another yeshivah and spend the awesome holy days together in the Mir.

He arrived a day before Rosh Hashana and found a place to stay. By the next morning, word got around the yeshivah as well as the town of Mir, that a survivor of the Chevron riots was in their midst and people wanted to talk to him. The bochur was still traumatized and refused to talk to anyone. Until a message came for him in the afternoon of Erev Rosh Hashana, that the famed Mirrer Mashgiach, **R' Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l**, had asked to meet the bochur and speak to him for a short while. This request, he could not refuse. The bochur made his way to R' Yeruchem's home and the Mashgiach welcomed him at the door with a warm and loving embrace. Tears welled up in the student's eyes as he really really needed such a hug. After what he experienced, a loving embrace and human interaction were a balm to his grieving heart and troubled soul.

R' Yeruchem spoke to him for a few hours and by the time the bochur left to get ready for Yom Tov, he felt like a different person. The first night of Rosh Hashana, the Mashgiach would get up between Mincha and Maariv and give the bochurim a shmooze, delving into the meaning of the Yom Hadin and what they needed to do to merit a good year.

This year, the Mashgiach stood up as usual and began by recounting the bochur's tale of tragedy in the holy city of Chevron. He told the tzibbur how the bochur heard the bloodthirsty Arabs breaking into

homes and attacking men, women and children. When they burst into the room where he was hiding, they attacked him first and slashed him with a sharp object, opening up a wound that bled profusely. He fell to the ground, but he wasn't seriously injured. It was mostly a flesh wound. On the other hand, his fellow student (according to some accounts, it was Yaakov Wexler from Chicago, Il) was stabbed repeatedly with a knife and an axe and collapsed to the ground mortally wounded in a pool of blood. As he fell, he saw the first bochur laying on the floor and with his final words, he whispered, "Lay underneath my body so that they won't see you and attack you anymore." He pushed his body on top of the other's and moments later, his soul left his body for a better place.

The younger student remained motionless for hours, covered in blood, but he survived the ordeal. R' Yeruchem's voice rose thunderously, "In the last seconds of the niftar's life, all he thought about was to protect another Jew. This is what we say in Selichos, **פדני מהומת מות - *'Save me from the terror of death.'***

He did not allow the terror of his impending demise overtake him. He was calm and composed as he saved another Yid's life.

This is the highest level of Mesiras Nefesh, always focusing on another Yid's plight and doing whatever we can to help and assist him."

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

מכל רמש האדמה למינהו שנים מכל יבאו אליך להחיות (6:20)

מן הבהמה הטהורה ... ומן העוף וכל אשר רמש על האדמה שנים שנים באו אל נח אל התבה (7:8-9)

Parshas Noach revolves around the ark that Hashem instructed Noach to build to save himself, his family, and all the species of birds and animals from the flood that destroyed the earth. Interestingly,

when Hashem initially commanded Noach to build the ark, He told him to bring into the ark two of each kind of birds, animals, and creeping creatures, mentioning birds first. However, when the time came for Noach to actually go into the ark, the Torah records that he entered together with the animals, birds, and creeping creatures, listing the animals before the birds. What is the reason that the Torah reverses the order of the birds and the animals in a span of only ten verses?

Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter suggests that birds are considered superior to animals due to their ability to fly over them, and therefore they are listed first. However, this advantage is only relevant when they are living naturally in the wild and free to fly around. If, on the other hand, the birds are restricted to a confined area, their inherent advantage becomes irrelevant, and their unutilized potential renders them inferior to other animals.



In light of this distinction, it is now understandable that when Hashem initially approached Noach to discuss the impending flood with him, He mentioned the birds before the animals, as they are naturally considered superior. However, when the time arrived to enter the ark, which would negate the birds' ability to soar toward the heavens, they no longer had any edge over the animals and are listed after them.

Rabbi Senter adds that the Gemora (Shabbos 130a) teaches that Klal Yisroel is compared to a bird: a dove. Just as the dove's wings enable it to fly, so too the Torah is the wings of the Jewish people. If we elect to lower ourselves to the restricting decadence of the

immoral nations that surround us, we give up our advantage and become inferior to them, due to our wasted abilities. However, when we use the Torah properly, by studying and keeping its laws, we are able to actualize our potential for greatness by soaring to lofty spiritual heights.

Peninim on the Torah

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו These are the offspring of Noach – Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation. *(6:9)*

A well-known debate exists among the sages concerning the term "generations" as it relates to Noach: Was he righteous only in the context of his generation, which was evil? Or, alternatively, even in his evil generation surrounded by moral corruption, he was able to remain righteous. Certainly, in the generation of Avraham *Avinu*, he would have been righteous. In other words, how would Noach have fared in Avraham's generation, which was on a much higher plateau?



The question is obvious: What provoked the sages, who viewed Noach in a less-than-favourable manner, to state: "Had he lived in the generation of Avraham, he would have been insignificant." Why is it necessary to add what seems to be a harsh statement: "He would have been insignificant?"

Perhaps Noach might not have received the *tzaddik* accolades, but he certainly would have been on a higher plane than most of the people in Avraham's generation.

The *Apta Rav, zl* (*Ohaiv Yisrael*) (who usually takes a positive, complimentary approach), explains that actually there is no debate, since both perspectives concerning Noach are true. The one who opines that had Noach lived during Avraham's generation, he would surely have been a *tzaddik*, has a self-evident position. The fact that he was able to maintain his spiritual status quo, despite being surrounded by individuals for whom moral depravity was a way of life, is an obvious testament to Noach's righteousness.

The second opinion which holds that had he lived in Avraham's time he would be insignificant, is a commentary concerning Noach's selfview. His only goal was to serve. Nothing else mattered. He took a dim view of his spiritual achievements, because his only concern was spiritual continuity. He would muse to himself, "So what if I am able to maintain my spiritual integrity? I am surrounded with *reshaim*, evil, depraved people. Thus, compared with them, I am considered a *tzaddik*. What if I had lived in a generation of *tzaddikim* – would I be so lauded? No! In a generation of righteous people, I would be insignificant!"

The Torah attests to Noach's self-chastiment. *B'dorasav*, in his generation. Noach felt that his excellent reputation was relative only to his generation.

Noach is held accountable for not doing more to reach out to the members of his generation. **The *Chasam Sofer*** posits that Noach spent a year cooped up in the Ark with all of his "passengers," whom he was relegated to serve day and night. This was his atonement for not exerting himself more to save the people of his generation. As he had been unsuccessful in his outreach efforts, he should have at least prayed for them. Apparently, he did not do enough.

Noach's behaviour vis-à-vis his community is contrasted to that of Avraham, who not only reached out, but he even prayed to save the sinners who had crossed the line. Apparently, the distinction between Noach and Avraham went beyond the backdrop of their generations. Noach's approach toward outreach was to insulate himself. Avraham was all over, calling out in the Name of Hashem, teaching a pagan world about monotheism. Wherein lay their point of divergence?

Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita, quotes the *pasuk* that precedes the creation of man: *Naase adam b'tzalmeinu kidmuseinu,* "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness (*Bereishis* 1:26).

The question which the commentators pose is obvious: Hashem alone created man. As such, it should have stated, *E'eseh adam*, "I will make man."

The *Yismach Moshe, zl*, quotes the ***Baal HaTurim*** who wonders why, concerning the creation of man, the Torah does not write *va'yaar Elokim ki tov*, Hashem saw that it was good," as it writes concerning every other creation. Surely, his creation was good.

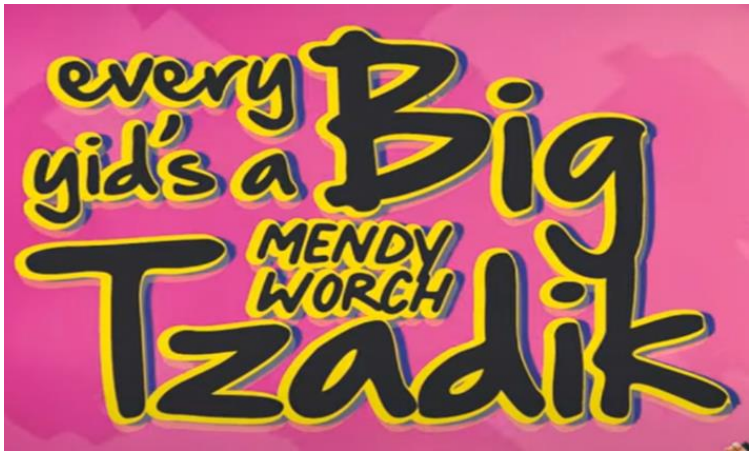
He explains that all other creations achieve *sheleimus*, completion/perfection as soon as Hashem places them in this world. Thus, the Torah can write that their creation was good. Man, however, is a *baal bechirah*, has the ability to perfect himself. Indeed, he must work hard and long to achieve this. If he ignores his G-d-given mission, instead spending his days seeking all forms of physical gratification, he will not be worthy of Hashem granting him His *Ki Tov* stamp of approval.

Based on the exegesis of the *Baal Haturim's* exegesis, the *Yismach Moshe* explains the meaning of *Naase Adam*, in the plural. *Adam* is used to describe man's elevated status over animals. If the Torah would have written *eeseh adam*, it would imply that man was created to perfection, when, in fact, Hashem created man in such a manner

that he would strive to perfect himself. Thus, *Naase Adam* means, "Let us together, Hashem and man, create the perfection of man." The Almighty wants us to partner with Him in creating "ourselves."

We have, however, another explanation for the term *Naase Adam*. It is incumbent upon every one of us to create an *adam*, to teach and reach out to others, so that we recreate them as observant committed Jews. Indeed, *Chazal* (*Sanhedrin* 69b) teach, "He who teaches his friend's son Torah, it is considered as if he made him." Hashem wants each of us to make a man, to create a spiritual metamorphosis in those who are distant, and to strengthen those who are near.

Veritably, both explanations are dependent upon one another. One cannot achieve his personal perfection; he cannot become an *adam* until he perfects his fellow. Noach worked on himself. Avraham reached out to others. This was his approach to perfecting himself. As long as the rest of the world did not acknowledge Hashem's sovereignty, Avraham viewed himself as less-than-perfect. A Jew does not live for himself. We are here to serve. What greater service can we perform than reaching out to others?



"Noach was a big Tzadik, Noach was a big Tzadik. From his keppelah till his feesele - Noach was a big Tzadik!

Every Yid's a big Tzadik, Every Yid's a big Tzadik. From his keppelah till his feesele - Every Yid's a big Tzadik!

ועמך כולם צדיקים

וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ מִכָּל־מַאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל וְאָסַפְתָּ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָיָה לְךָ וְלָהֶם לְאָכְלָה

And as for you, take yourself of every food that is eaten and gather it into yourself. *(6:21)*



If the animals walked into the Ark on their own without having to be herded in, why could their food not, likewise, arrive on its own? Why did Noach have to go out and gather food for all the animals – enough to last them a year?

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, explains that Noach required a special command to gather food, for, otherwise, he may very well have thought that just as the animals came of their own volition, their food should have "arrived" in the same manner. Thus, Hashem informed Noach that the animals would come on their own; their food, however, was his responsibility.

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, derives from here that it is incumbent upon a person to think constantly about how to address all the needs of his fellow. He cannot say, "Well, I can only do so much." There is no such concept (it is not acceptable) as "only so much." One must give all of himself to his fellow.

This is what *chesed* means – all partial commitment is limited commitment.

Horav Baruch Dov Povarsky, Shlita, adds that, since the seal of doom against the generation of the Flood was based upon *gezel/chamas*, theft, which represents sins committed in interpersonal relationships, it was necessary that the atonement

must be acts of lovingkindness. Noach was spared and charged with establishing a new world, a world in which respect and caring for one another is paramount. It would only be in the merit of a world committed to a life of *chesed* that a devastation the likes of the *Mabul* would never again occur.

With this idea in mind, the *Rosh Yeshivah* explains why it was necessary to remain within the confines of the Ark until Hashem instructed him to leave.

One would think that Noach was in the Ark in order to be protected from the menacing flood waters. The flood was over; the waters had subsided; why not open the doors and walk down the ramp to freedom?

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that while the water had subsided, the survivors' merit to leave and re-inhabit the world had not yet been fully achieved. Noach was saved because he had spent one whole year 24/7 taking care of the various creatures on board his Ark.



The emotional stress and physical toil that were part and parcel of this mission are indescribable. One time he came late with the lion's dinner and he paid dearly, when the angry lion hit him with great force. Why? The lion does nothing on his own. He is nothing more than Hashem's agent. Apparently, Hashem wanted Noach to feel pain. Why? What did Noach, the consummate *baal chesed*, do that should incur such punishment?

Hashem is demanding of His *tzaddikim*. If Noach tarried even for a moment, if the lion's dinner was delayed for an insignificant period of time, it was cause for punishment! The slightest impropriety in

executing *chesed* impaired their ability to leave. The lion's suffering, regardless of his cognitive level, was sufficient cause to delay their departure from the Ark. The new world must be founded on *chesed* that is perfect. If it is in any way compromised, they were not to leave the Ark. Thus, Noach's pain was necessary.

How often do we plan to provide *chesed* for someone, only to come up short? We assuage our conscience, pat ourselves on the back, and muse, "Well, it is more than he/she would have had otherwise." That is not the way it works. Blemished *chesed* is just that! Blemished.

Our intentions may be noble, our goal may be realistic, but if something is failing in the execution, it is still blemished. Noble intentions do not help a person in need.

When carrying out acts of *chesed*, we must take the beneficiary into consideration. To make him bend over backwards in order to receive our *chesed* might be worse than no *chesed* at all. It conveys a message: "I will help you when it is convenient for me, and only if it is something I do not mind doing."

To help a person, while denying his/her dignity, is not *chesed*. Indeed, when the benefactor makes the effort to preserve the beneficiary's dignity, the *chesed* quotient rises exponentially.

Yesodos M'Ha Sedra –Excuses for Real Reasons

After the flood waters began to settle, Noach sent out a raven to see if dry land was visible yet, but the raven refused to go. The gemara (Sanhedrin 108b) tells us that the raven submitted a "winning argument" that if he were to go and get burnt by the sun or frozen from the cold weather, his mate would be left all alone and ravens would become extinct. Surely, it would make more sense to send the yonah of which there were seven of them on the teivah. Moreover, the raven said that he was afraid that Noach would steal

his mate. Noach replied that he was already forbidden to his own wife, and so why should he steal the raven's?

Seemingly then, the "winning argument" refers only to the risk of ravens becoming extinct, but the fear of losing his mate to Noach was addressed. Why then, does the gemara add this weaker argument, if the first one was really a winning one?



The Netziv wonders what gave Noach the right to send out any of the birds on a mission? Hashem commanded him to take two of each non-kosher species and seven of each kosher one. Unless Hashem commanded him to, Noach should have been forbidden from removing any animal from the confines of the teivah, very much like he had to remain there until it was clear that Hashem wanted them to disembark.

The Netziv explains that it was the custom of royalty and the wealthy to use ravens and doves as messengers and Noach was considered among these elite people and he took his messenger birds along with him onto the teivah. Therefore, sending them off was no problem at all. The problem is though, that the Netziv seemed to have ignored an explicit gemara that the raven argued that he was only one of two and they would become extinct if he didn't return.

There is another, more fundamental question that we should ask: Why does the Torah expend so many words to tell us about sending out the raven and the dove. It would seem that there is a lesson we should learn from it.

The Oznayim La'Torah contrasts the two birds: Ravens despise their young. They are black and their babies are white. They don't feed them and it is only through the chesed of Hakadosh Boruch Hu that insects grow around them so that they will have food to eat. Certainly then, they don't really care about their spouses either. No creature is as unfaithful or cruel as a raven. Doves are the opposite. Even if a dove dies, its mate will never "remarry".

Perhaps then, we can suggest the following: The Netziv is correct in his assumption. There were two other ravens and there was no risk in becoming extinct, but the raven didn't want to go, and offered this as a winning argument; an excuse. Since however, it wasn't so accurate in this case, he offered another reason which was even more ludicrous, that Noach might steal his mate, who was someone he really didn't care about. He just didn't want to go out on this mission.

The dove had very good reason not to want to go. Although there were other doves and therefore no risk for extinction, his mate, who he cared deeply for, might be left an agunah by choice. Still, he saw it as his obligation to go on the mission he was sent to do.

All of this should serve as a window into our lives. We are all here on a mission of some sort and once we figure out what the true ratzon Hashem is in each of our lives, it is our duty to accept it. One who doesn't want to, will follow the lead of the raven and find many reasons or excuses not to, often one more ridiculous than the next. Yet, one who accepts his mission in life will pursue it despite the sacrifices he might be forced to make, like the yonah who understood his purpose in life.

"To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time."

Passing Tests Results in Chen

Consider the following mashal:

A wealthy, powerful king had many musicians and singers. They would play and sing before him, and the king had much pleasure from them. But mostly, the king would listen to his pet bird, which was trained to sing.

Some birds, by nature, can whistle a few notes, but this bird was able to carry a tune and sing actual songs.

One of the singers complained to the king, "I sing nicer than your bird. Why do you prefer the bird's singing over mine?"



The king replied, "You sing beautifully, that is true, but many people sing well. But a singing bird is a novelty. This is the only bird in the world that can sing. That's why I prefer listening to the bird's singing over the best singers and musicians."

This explains why Hashem loves our service more than the *avodah* of the *malachim* in heaven. *Malachim* sing better than us, and they serve Hashem with more fear, love, and perfection than we can, but malachim don't struggle. They don't have a *yetzer hara*, and they aren't tested. Therefore, there is nothing special about their service.

Hashem prefers to listen to the singing and the service of the Jewish nation, human beings made of dust, people who struggle with the *yetzer hara* because, despite their many hardships, they serve Hashem.

Struggles

Someone complained to **Rebbe Mendel of Vitebsk zt'l** about his many tests. When he succeeds in passing one difficulty, he is confronted with another.



The Rebbe explained to him that each time he passes a test, he creates, *keviyachol*, a garment for Hashem.

People don't like to wear the same clothing every day, and *keviyachol*, Hashem also wants new clothing. Therefore, one is confronted daily with new tests. Each test creates a new garment for Hashem.

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l says that if a person finds his *avodas Hashem* simple and easy, without struggles and tests, that's a sign that he hasn't embraced the yoke of Heaven and hasn't yet begun *avodas Hashem*.

A person can get into the habit of davening each day and going to a *Torah shiur*, and when this becomes routine, it isn't all that hard, but *avodas Hashem* doesn't end there.

He should ask himself, "Do I daven with *kavanah*? Do I invest enough effort to understand what I'm learning? And how are my *middos* and my *emunah*?"

There is much work to do. *Avodas Hashem* isn't easy. If he thinks *avodas Hashem* is easy, it is because he is satisfied with the routine he attained and isn't trying to go higher.

When one recognizes the extent of his struggles and the power of his yetzer hara, he won't be disheartened by his ups and downs, days when he serves Hashem better, and days when he fails, r'l. It is a battle, and a battle has casualties. The main thing is to keep battling, and you will succeed in the end.

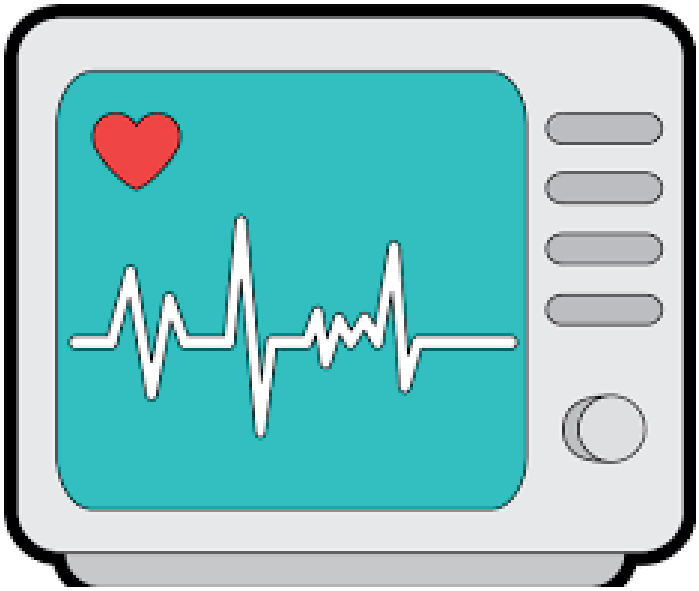
A father asked his son to get out of the car to check if the blinkers were working. The son said, "They're working. They're not working. They're working. They're not working." The father explained to the son that this means they work.

Similarly, when it comes to *avodas Hashem*, we expect ups and downs. When everything is smooth and straightforward, something is wrong. This isn't how *avodas Hashem* works.

Someone asked a *rosh yeshiva*, "My son learns in your yeshiva. How is he doing? Does he study well?"

The *rosh yeshiva* replied, "I don't know what to say. There are days when he studies well, but there are times when he doesn't…"

The father smiled broadly and said, "That's what I was hoping to hear."



The *rosh yeshiva* was startled; why would the father be happy that his son isn't always studying well. The father explained, "I'm a cardiologist, and I often watch the lines on a cardiograph machine. When the lines go up and down, I know the patient is alive. When there's a straight line, I know the patient is dead. So, for me, ups and downs are a sign of life!"

Migdal Ohr – R' J. Gewirtz

וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ מִכָּל־מַאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל וְאָסַפְתָּ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָיָה לְךָ וְלָהֶם לְאָכְלָה

"Take for yourself from all food that can be eaten, and gather it to you, and it shall be for you and for them to eat." (6:21)



Simply understood, since there were all sorts of eaters, there had to be all sorts of things for them to eat. Now, the question of what predators would eat, since they normally ate other creatures, isn't such a compelling one, explain the commentaries, because when one has no other choice, he will eat grass or whatever he can find.

Noach, here, was commanded to gather the various types, however, to do his best to provide for each animal what it normally ate. (There is a Midrash which relates there was a small worm who wouldn't eat, until they realized it liked to eat dough.) Though there was no way for Noach to be able to bring enough food for them all, he was tasked with trying to accommodate them as best as possible.

Not only that, the **Klei Yakar** says that the words, "take for yourself," are similar to those regarding lulav, and mean that Noach had to use his own money for this. Even though the people of the world would be destroyed, and their wealth would go with them, Noach was not allowed to take it. [Note: This is similar to the disagreement of the shepherds of Avraham and Lot, as Avraham's servants would not take anything that wasn't his, while Lot's servants felt that since Avraham would inherit the land, and Lot was his heir, they could avail themselves of things now.]

These guidelines must have made it very difficult for Noach. He had to use the limited funds he had to obtain foods of all sorts, and be ready to feed himself, his family, and the entire animal kingdom!

But that was the point. Explains the Klei Yakar, these were intended to increase the miracle. Though usually Hashem seeks to camouflage His acts, here He wanted Noach to see that Hashem would send His blessing to the storehouses and fill up the needs of the creatures on the ark.

However, the blessing didn't release Noach from his obligation to make his best efforts to provide food for his family and the various animals. He still had to buy it, bring it, and store it in the ark, and THEN Hashem blessed it.

The point of Noach's efforts was not because Hashem could not provide for them all without Noach's help. Rather, it was Hashem showing Noach that man does not base his efforts on whether he thinks he will be successful or not.

We have to do what needs to be done and leave the rest to Hashem. It may take some stretching on our part, extending ourselves beyond what we feel capable of, but when we do that, we become deserving of Hashem lifting us to our goal.



Cheshvan

The Chida (*Moreh b'Etzba* 298) writes, "After *yom tov*, in the month of Cheshvan, be strong with your *yiras Shamayim* and with studying Torah *l'shmah*, because it is the beginning of the year and this will be a good sign for the entire year.

This month is called Mar Cheshvan. **The Ruzhiner** said **מרחשון** has the same letters as **מר חשון** . This hints that in Cheshvan, our lips are still moving and are inspired by the tefillos and the mitzvos we performed in the previous month of Tishrei.



The Imrei Chaim *zt'l* compared it to a rolling tire. The tire continues to roll, even after one lets go of it. Similarly, we just went through a month of tefillos, *teshuvah*, and requests. Our mouths were accustomed to moving and praying, and even after we stopped, the momentum continues.

This is the uniqueness of Cheshvan. The influence of the holidays is still with us, and we should allow the momentum to continue.

The Maor v'Shamesh (*Shemini*) says that this month "is *mesugal* to understand Torah, more than all other months."

Tzedakah



Not everyone can give tzedakah. Some poor people can't give much. But there are other forms of tzedakah that they can do.

The *Zohar* says that saying a kind word to your fellow man is also a form of tzedakah. So, if you can't help with money, you can help with kind words!

Another kind of tzedakah is to educate and direct people on the right path. Indeed, there is no greater *chesed* (in this world and the next) than to lead someone on the right path.

Tefillah

There are essential lessons in tefillah that are found in this week's *parashah*. Hashem told Noach (6:18) **ובאת אל התיבה** -"***And you should enter the teivah***…."

The Magid of Mezritz *zt'l* explained that **תיבה** can be translated as "words" of Torah and *tefillah*. Hashem tells every Yid, **ובאת אל התיבה** , to come into the words of *tefillah* and say them with all your heart and soul. That is the *teivah* that will save you from all your problems.

The Torah urges, **צהר תעשה לתיבה**, "***Illuminate your words***." Let every word of your *tefillah* shine.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* asks, where does it state in the Torah that Noach davened when he was in the *teivah*?

Rebbe Bunim replied that it states (7:23), **וישאר אך נח** and Rashi writes, **גונח וכוהה דם מטורח הבהמות והחיות** , "Noach was groaning and spitting blood because of the burden [of caring for] the cattle and the beasts." (Chazal say that Noach didn't have time to sleep because he was always busy feeding the animals.)





His desperation and broken heart were like a prayer before Hashem. It wasn't a prayer with words but a call from the depths of his heart: "Hashem, save me. I can't manage."

Those were Noach's tefillos that roused Hashem's compassion and freed him from the *teivah*.

When a poor person comes to the door, we sometimes request to see his *hamlatzah*, his letter from a rav who attests that he is indeed needy. But when a person comes to the door with ripped clothing, he doesn't need to show an approbation to prove that he's poor. The poverty is confirmed by his very appearance.

This describes the tefillah of a broken heart. Even without words, the circumstance itself is like a loud shout before Hashem.

Time To Grow… UP! - by Rav Moshe Sternbuch

וַתִּשָּׁחֵת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים - And the earth had become corrupt before Hashem . . . (6:11)



Dayan Abramsky deduced from these words that the earth had become corrupt "before Hashem" but it did not seem corrupt to anyone else, for they had become used to the slow decline in holiness and had forgotten how the world was before and how it was meant to be. Thus, only Hashem saw that the world was corrupt, but those living at the time did not sense the extensive deterioration of their surroundings.

Our inability to view ourselves and our surroundings objectionably often leads us to settle blindly into a detrimental situation.

"If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, then what need do you have for a tomorrow?" **- Rav Nachman**

Every day is a gift from Above, and it should be appreciated as such. The best way to appreciate a gift is to use it well. If we use our days well and seek to improve our practices, then we will, b'ezras Hashem, merit to have many more days to come.

Torah Temimah

Although the Torah terms Noach a 'tzadik tamim' (completely righteous), when Hashem addresses him directly, he tells him "I see you are a tzadik", omitting that he was completely so. Although Noach could not possibly misinterpret Hashem's words as flattery, He omitted part of compliment to teach us to hold back a bit on the compliments so that it isn't viewed as flattery.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Long Live the Phoenix!



The Mabul, the Great Flood, destroyed all of mankind, except for Noach and his family. After about a year in the Ark, the water receded. Noach wanted to check if the earth was dry enough to leave the Ark. First, he sent out a raven, who just kept circling around the Ark. A week later, Noach sent out a dove. There was still too much water covering the earth and the dove could not find a resting place, so it returned to the Ark. Another week later, Noach again sent out the dove. This time the dove returned with an olive leaf that it had plucked. Clearly, the land was now visible.

The Alter of Slobodka zt"l (sefer Ohr Tzafon, vol 1 page 61) discusses the actions of the dove. The dove performed a great act of kindness for Noach. It brought the good news that the water had receded, and the earth was dry. Soon, Noach would be freed from

his tiresome and burdensome job of taking care of all the animals in the Ark.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 108b) quotes Rav Hana bar Bizna who said that Shem told Avraham's servant, Eliezer, that they experienced great suffering in the Ark in caring for the animals.

The Talmud continues Shem's narrative. Noach found the phoenix [*avarshina*] lying in its compartment in the Ark. He was wondering why the phoenix did not ask for food. The bird replied that it saw that Noach was very busy, and it did not want to trouble him by requesting food. Noah blessed the bird with long life. Noach blessed the phoenix for its consideration.



The Alter zt"l asks, shouldn't Noach have blessed the dove as well, for fulfilling its mission and bringing back such good news?

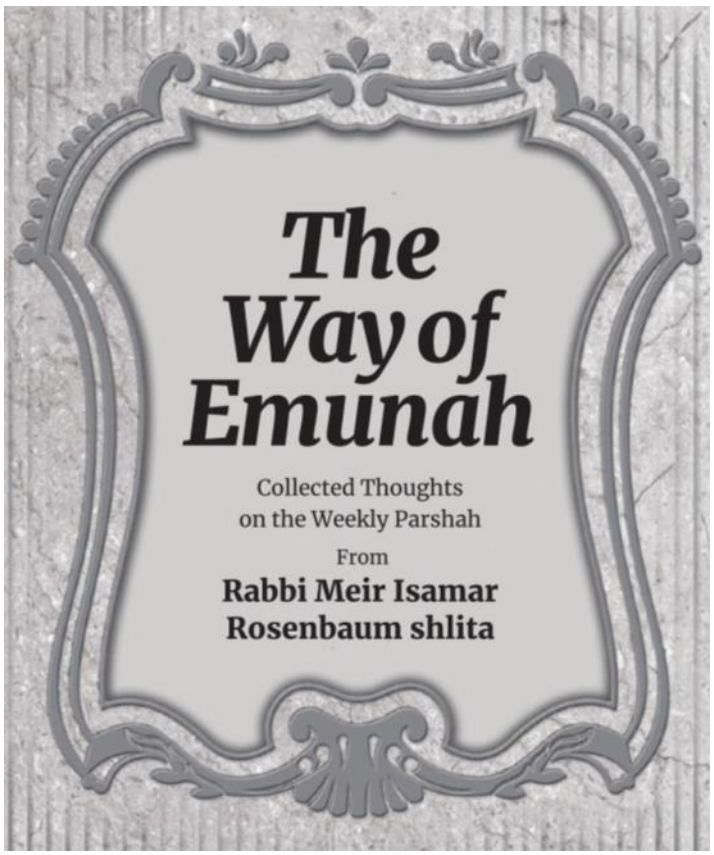
The Midrash (Beraishis Rabba 33) quotes the pasuk that the dove "had plucked an olive leaf with its bill". The Midrash translates the word "plucked" as "killed" (just as it means killed in the pasuk in Beraishis 37 when it says, "tarof toraf Yosef").

Noach told the dove that had it not plucked the branch, the branch would have grown into a tree. In the midst of the dove doing a good action, it did something that was inappropriate. Therefore, the dove did not deserve a blessing from Noach, perhaps losing the blessing of eternal life.

The dove fulfilled its mission. It acted with the best of intentions when it plucked an olive branch, proving to Noach that the flood waters had totally receded. However, there was a lacking in the

dove's actions because it caused harm to something in the creation. It prevented one olive branch from growing further.

The lesson from this is, even when we are in the midst of doing a great mitzvah, we mustn't lessen it by harming something or someone else. It is more than an act of niceness. It is an obligation to avoid harming others!



Noach's Desire Was to Please Hashem

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֶּךְ־נֹחַ- *These are the generations of Noach. Noach was a tzadik. He was perfect in his generations. Hashem walked with Noach. (6:9)*

Rashi states: ***"These are the generations of Noach."*** This teaches us that the main 'children' of tzadikim are their good deeds. **The Kisvei Ramam quotes the Yesod Ha'avodah of Slonim zy"a** as explaining that the word "Noach" indicates "nachas ruach", providing a "pleasure" to Hashem. Thus, the pasuk can be read as follows: "These are the generations of Noach, Noach."

Noach's "generations" was his desire to please Hashem. The entire life of Noach was dedicated to providing pleasure to Hashem.

Similarly, my grandfather, the **Kretchnifer Rebbe zt"l**, explains the end of the pasuk: ***"Hashem walked with Noach"***, by citing the pasuk in Mishlei (3:6): ***"Know Him all of your ways."***

Thus, the pasuk is saying that no matter what Noach did, he first contemplated whether this action is the right thing to do in front of Hashem or not. He always thought about whether he was bringing pleasure to Hashem. Therefore, it can be said that all of his comings and goings were with Hashem.

Anger is Needed to Annul Bad Middos

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יִבְשֹׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ

And he sent forth the raven, and it went out, back and forth until the waters dried up off the earth. (8:7)



The Izhbitzer Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Mei Hashiloach) says that a raven is symbolic of anger.

When Noach sent the raven out of the teivah, he was trying to send the trait of anger away from the world so that this middah would no longer exist.

Hashem, however, showed him that there is a need for anger. A person can save himself from aveiros by getting mad at the sins and lashing out at them. Therefore, the raven came back.

He says that "water" symbolizes bad middos. The pasuk is saying that the middah of anger is needed until the "water", i.e., the bad middos dry up and are removed from the world.

They Relied on Their Own Abilities

וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֲחָדִים – ***And the entire land was one language and the same words***. (11:1)



Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah says that the sin of the Dor Hamabul is easy to understand. The people refused to accept Hashem's authority, they hurt each other, stole committed immoral acts, etc. But what was the sin of the Dor Haflagah? They were friendly and at peace with each other. What did they do wrong?

He answers that when a person is in this world, his job is to do a little hishtadlus to help himself, and to rely on Hashem for the rest. A person is meant to recognize that he doesn't really know everything, and he has to depend on Hashem to take care of him. The people of the Dor Haflagah didn't want to accept this. They thought that they could do everything on their own and they don't need Hashem for anything. They believed that they could live by "their strength and the might of their hand" (Devarim 8:17).

They wanted to build a tower "with its head in the sky" – meaning that they wanted to take control ofthe Heavens as well and not to rely on any higher power. They wanted to take full control so that if Hashem doesn't give them something, they would take it on their own.

Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 38:6): "Peace is great. Even if Klal Yisroel serve idols, if there is peace amongst them, Hashem says

that He cannot harm them." ***Even if the biggest reshaim are at peace with each other, Hashem provides them with kedushah***.

Hashem said: "They are one nation and one language and this is what they have commenced to do. Now, will it not be withheld from them, all that they have planned to do?" As long as they were at peace, they would succeed at what they were doing. Therefore, Hashem had to scatter them across the land. He had to get rid of their peace and unity so that they would no longer be able to rely on their own abilities and they would have to rely on Hashem.

Do Not be Naïve

The **Kretchnifer Rebbe** asks why Noach is referred to specifically as "Ish", a man. He answers that even though Noach was a tzadik and a tamim, he was not unfamiliar with the ways of the world.

The reason he was a tzadik was not because he was so isolated from the world and so naïve that he was removed from all earthly matters. Rather, he was an "Ish". He was a regular person in the sense that he did know exactly what was going on and he was aware of all that the world had to offer. Still and all, he chose to remain a tzadik and a tamim and not to be tempted by the depravity of his generation.

Chasam Sofer

בראשית ט,יג את קשתי נתתי בענן

ק״דושתי **ש**״מי **ת**״ורתי י״מיני

As the intention at the end of a person's silent supplication **אלקי נצר-** we request even when a cloud is between us, that HaShem accept us for the sake of ***Your name, for Your right hand, for Your Torah, for Your holiness***.

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Rav Meir Shapiro, ZT"L, the originator of Daf Yomi, also headed the historic Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. In 1924, almost 50,000 people came to the cornerstone laying for the magnificent new building that was to be built for the yeshiva. Although Rav Shapiro was burdened by crushing debt, he maintained his faith that Hashem would help him in his holy mission and always persevered.



On the day that the yeshiva moved into the gorgeous new facility, which still stands today, he spoke to his students about how he managed to keep pushing himself to raise the needed funds. - He credited Chaikel the water carrier.

The Baal Shem Tov told a story regarding Chaikel. One day Chaikel passed by the Baal Shem Tov, who inquired as to his welfare. Chaikel answered sadly that he worked too hard and earned too little. The next day, Chaikel again met the Baal Shem Tov, who again asked him how he was doing. This time Chaikel happily answered that thanks to Hashem he still had the strength to earn an honest living.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that although a person's earnings are determined on Rosh Hashana, each day a person deals with his fate differently. One day he is sad, the next day he is happy with his lot.

Rav Meir Shapiro told his students that he was like Chaikel. There were days when the difficulty of his task, and the inherent setbacks, weighed heavily on him. Yet, the next day, he was encouraged when considering that he was constructing such a magnificent yeshiva, which re-energized him. (Peninei Chein Al HaTorah)

Comment: In the beginning of our Parsha, Noach is called an "Ish Tzaddik," a righteous man. Yet later he is called a much less flattering name, an "Ish Ha'adama", a man of the ground. Life is a constant battle, as it was for Noach, and we must push ourselves to confront life's challenges and ultimately succeed.

Nefesh Shimshon – from the teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l

A Born Tzaddik?- נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו **- *He was a perfect tzaddik in his generations (5:32)***

The Dubno Maggid has an amazing explanation of this verse, and there is a lesson in it for us all.

The *Midrash* says that whenever the word **היה** "he was," is written about someone, this indicates that he was a *tzaddik* from beginning to end. Thus, Noach was a *tzaddik* from the day he was born.

But the *Midrash* then takes issue with this generalization, because the same word is written about Avraham: **אחד היה אברהם** . And we know that Avraham was not a born *tzaddik*. He did not recognize *Hashem* until he was three years old [and maybe not until he was much older. One view says he recognized *Hashem* only when he was forty-eight]. Until then, Avraham was an idol worshipper like the rest of his family.

The *Midrash* answers by saying that when it is written **היה** about Avraham, this indicates that he had the innate capability to guide the whole world back to *Hashem*.

But how is this an answer? Granted, *Avraham* had great potential. But how does potential alone make him into a *tzaddik* at the time when he was still an idol worshipper?

A person can admonish his fellow when his fellow is in a similar situation. This explains Avraham's tremendous success in teaching the world to recognize their Creator. If he would have been raised in a pious, G-d-fearing family, and would have served *Hashem* meticulously from day one, he would not have seen much success in admonishing all those idol worshippers.

The reply would have been, "How do you know that *avodah zarah* is wrong and a waste of time? Who told you so? Did you even try it?" But in fact, Avraham used to be an idol worshipper just like them, so he could quip back, "For sure, I tried every *avodah zarah* you can think of. I saw for myself that only *Hashem* is G-d, and there is no other."

This transformed his early years from bad to good. He used the very things he did back then to bring people to worship *Hashem*. Thus, those years are counted among his righteous years, and he is called **בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ מֵרֶחֶם** – '***In glorious holiness from the womb***' *Tehillim* 110:3.

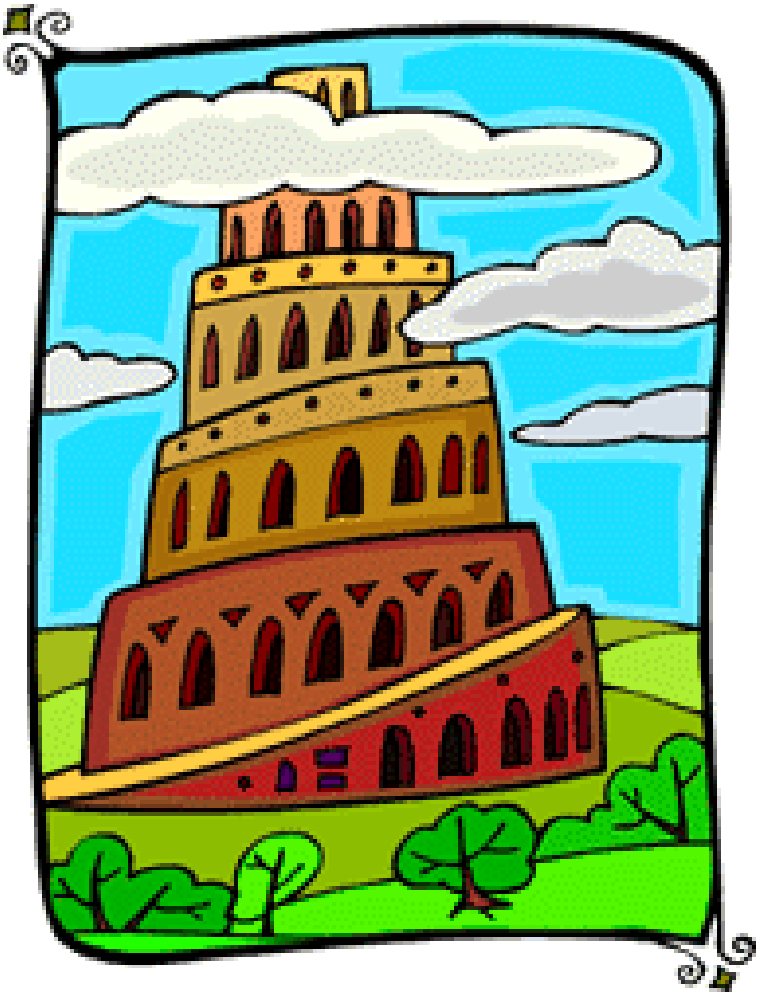
We too, can put our past, whatever it was, to good work.

Thought of the week: Hashem doesn't expect you to save the day. He just asks you to invest in it.

Torah Tavlin

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה – And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and fire them thoroughly" 11:3

R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l would say: Why it is that when the world makes more and more scientific discoveries, it begins to believe in the Almighty less and less?



Before any construction project, people first develop building plans for a structure and later create or purchase materials needed for it.

With the Dor Haflaga, when the people came to the idea of building a tower, they sought to use rocks. Since they did not have proper stones to build in that area, they had to solve their lack with the invention of bricks.

When they figured out how they could build by making bricks, they decided that they were just as creative as Hashem – and decided that they didn't need Him in their lives.

Science is exactly the same!"

If you learn from defeat, you haven't really lost.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיִּשָּׁאֵר אַךְ־נֹחַ וַאֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה – and only Noah and those with him in the ark survived. 7:23

Chazal denote that the word "ach" is an expression of miyut - of exclusion. Rashi cites a few pshatim to explain how this works. In the last one, he cites the famous Chazal that the lion attacked Noach inside the teivah because he was late one day in bringing its food.



This begs an explanation. Noach was literally moser nefesh tending to the task of feeding an entire zoo of animals, day and night, 24/7. Does one act of tardiness deserve such severe repercussions?

I once heard the following pshat. This lion wasn't just an ordinary lion. He was the last of two lions left alive on earth. Each species was on the verge of becoming extinct.

When you deal with an endangered species it requires an even greater sense of dedication and urgency. Thus, seemingly on Noach's level, there was a drop more zealousness that could have been utilized.

Thinking back to the generation of the she'aris haplaita, this idea comes alive. The Yidden who were saved from the inferno of the Holocaust lived with this sense of mission. They were the last Jewish survivors and Klal Yisroel was on the brink of extinction, chas v'shalom. They had such a passion to build and rebuild the world that once was. And with much siyata d'shmaya and assistance from Above, they were successful.

This idea can pertain to us as well. We live in an unsurpassed generation where we have so much good. The sheer number of Bnei Torah are astronomical. Yet we sometimes struggle with the question of, "Do I really make a difference, I' m just a drop in the ocean." If everyone says or feels that way, we will remain stagnant. We all must live, at least a little bit, with the mentality that I'm the last of my kind and I can and will be"H make a difference.

If we live with this ideal, our entire avodas Hashem will become electrified and be felt by our children, inspiring and elevating the next dor, kein yehi ratzon!

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לָיְלָה – And the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. 7:12



When we think of Noach, we immediately focus on the Mabul, the heavy rains that brought a surge of raging waters with such destructive power that they literally destroyed the entire world.

A tornado, hurricane and tsunami put together, do not come close to the terror and havoc that resulted from the "**מי נח**" - the "Water of Noach." The rain cycle is quite miraculous, designed by the Creator of the World in His infinite wisdom to sustain the world.

The oceans of the world hold 97% of the world's water. Two percent is frozen in the polar ice caps. The constant recycling of the

remaining one percent provides us with all the water we use! It is amazing that all the water in the entire world's atmosphere only equals about 10 days of normal rainfall! If water was something that is used up like gas or oil - we would run out of water very quickly. But because water gets re-used over and over, we do not have this problem.

Water is an incredible liquid. It is a combination of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. Each of these two gases alone cannot feed us, yet when they combine together, they form the wonder-liquid from which we live. Would this not be so, the water vapour in the air would never condense and form clouds! Snow wouldn't fall in the winter, and if it snowed, it would never melt.

Although the oceans are full of salty, undrinkable water, it vapourizes into the atmosphere and becomes a blessing for us. It has no colour and no smell. It is pure! We cook with it, bathe in it, it regulates our body temperature, moves out our wastes, lubricates our joints, helps to digest our food - and don't forget swimming!

A rainy day is often called, "nasty weather"; a "rotten summer" means it rained a lot; "the weather was just awful" implies that we do not like to be inconvenienced and thus spurn this most wonderful blessing.

Let's appreciate the magnificent gift of rain from our Beloved Father and, even if it is inconvenient and even if you get wet, please don't ever call rain nasty again!

Anything that happens is for good reason. Anything that doesn't happen is only for a better reason.

Analysis of the Haftorah – R' Tzvi Hirsch Hoffman

כִּי־מֵ֤י נֹחַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֤ר נִשְׁבַּ֙עְתִּי֙ מֵעֲבֹ֣ר מֵי־נֹ֔חַ עֹ֖וד עַל־הָאָ֑רֶץ Yeshayahu 54:9



Yeshaya HaNavi reminds us of Hashem's promise to never again bring such a flood upon the earth no matter what the circumstances would be. Chazal say that neither Noach nor his children, slept for the twelve months prior to the flood since they were constantly busy, day and night, tending to the constant and varied needs of the animals. But if this was a "family project" why does the Navi refer to the mabul as only "the waters of Noach?" Why are his children not mentioned?

R' Chaim Ephraim Zaitchik zt"l explains that although Noach's family did indeed help him care for the animals, they did so only out of respect for their father. At the outset, their belief system and actions were not too different from the rest of the world, however, due to the respect they held for their father and his beliefs, they labored day and night alongside him. It is a testament to their esteem for their father that they acted this way. But although they were saved from the flood waters for their good deeds, Hashem did not credit them fully since they did not believe in the mabul fully.

This idea underscores the concept brought by Chazal of **מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה**- "***a deed not done for its own sake will ultimately lead to it being done for its own sake***." For even though they didn't fully believe in the destruction of the mabul right from the outset, since Noach's children ultimately did what Hashem asked them to do, they were indeed saved from the flood.



וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְנֹחַ קֵץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ - *Hashem said To Noach, the end of all flesh has come before me for the earth if full of violence because of them and I will destroy them from upon the earth. (6:13)*



In the Torah we find three people whom Hashem informed of an impending disaster. Noach was told about the Mabul. Avraham was informed about the destruction of the Sodom and Hashem revealed to Moshe that he wanted to replace Klal Yisroel after the Chet Ha'egel.

When studying these events, we notice that only Avraham and Moshe prayed to Hashem to cancel the decree. Why didn't Noach also daven to Hashem? The answer lies in understanding that there was no practical benefit for Avraham and Moshe to know what was about to happen. The decree would not have any direct effect upon them in any way. Therefore, Avraham and Moshe understood that the only reason why Hashem informed them was so that they should daven.

However, regarding Noach this was not so. It was necessary for Noach to know that the Mabul was about to happen so that he could

build a Teiva to save himself and his family in addition, the way Hashem spoke to Noach indicated that Hashem made a final decision to destroy the world therefore explains the Ohr Hachaim once Noach heard the finality in Hashems words he understood there was no room to daven. Not so by Avroham and Moshe.



וַיָּרַח ה׳ אֶת־רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֶל־לִבּוֹ לֹא אֹסִף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּר הָאָדָם ***And Hashem smelled the fragrance of his offering and said I shall no longer curse the earth because of man ...*** (8:21)

It is noteworthy that this is the only time in the Torah where we find that when Hashem enjoyed a sweet fragrance it resulted in Hashem bestowing a gift. In this case it was a promise not to destroy the world.

Generally, when we find the concept of a sweet fragrance, the ensuing benefit is forgiveness or acceptance, a passive response. Only here did Noach succeed in gaining from Hashem a pledge for the future. He guaranteed the continued existence of this world.

This reveals an unusual power and intensity Noach enjoyed in being able to bring Hashem delight and joy with his offering.

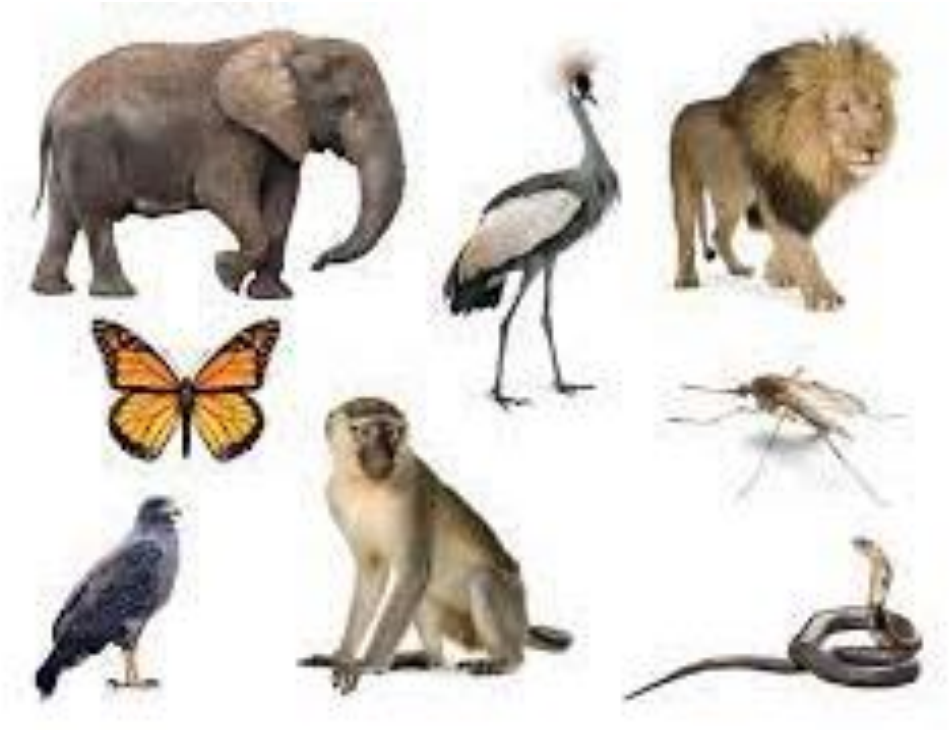
We can now have a greater appreciation of why we mention Noach in the Mussuf of Rosh Hashanah. On the day of judgment we wish to remind Hashem of the unique moments of the good-will and service of man. No better example than the unique achievement of Noach.



"Never think Your tefillah isn't good enough. No matter how it appears, it is special and can bring salvation." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.



וּמִכָּל־הָֽחַי... מֵהָעוֹף לְמִינֵהוּ וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ מִכֹּל רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ



From all the living creatures. bring into the Teiva.. From the variety of the birds. From the variety of animals and from the variety of the insects of the earth (6:19.20)

Why is it that when Hashem instructed Noach to bring the animals into the Teiva, He specified the creatures in this order. First the birds, second the animals and then the insects?

The answer is that the Torah is listing them according to their number. Chazal tell us that there are almost an unlimited number of types of birds in this world. The number of animals is second and insects third. The degree of effort involved in collecting the birds and preparing their food is much greater than the animals. Likewise the effort of collecting the animals and their food is greater than the insects.

The message and lesson is that Hashem rewards a person for his effort. The greater the effort, the greater the reward. The order expresses this idea.

"Never trust the man who tells you all his troubles but keeps from you all his joys."

וַיִּקַּח תֶּרַח אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־הָרָן בֶּן־בְּנוֹ וְאֵת שָׂרַי כַּלָּתוֹ אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנַעַן ***And Terech took Avram his son … and Sari his daughter-in-law… and they went out with them from Ur Casdim to travel to the land of Canaan...*** (11:31)

Chazal tell us that if a person is not successful he should change his place. A change in location can possibly bring about a change in Mazal. Meshaneh Makom, Meshaneh Mazal.

When Terach realized that his son Avram was childless it bothered him. In response he decided to move to a new location so that perhaps Avram would have a better Mazal and merit to have children. In addition, explains the Ohr Hachaim that Avraham was dear to his family that they were willing to uproot themselves to try hand help Avraham change his mazel.



Question: Many rabbonim say we should not discuss in public why the churban of Hitler happened. Why do you, Rabbi Miller, think it is important to discuss it?

Answer: And the answer is this: Because it's one of the most frequent questions against the *emunah*. The public has the impression that everybody in Europe was an observant Jew and therefore there's the argument, "That's what happens to observant Jews." And then there's another argument: "In America they're not observant and it didn't happen."

And so it's important to defend the honour of Hakodosh Boruch Hu and explain to people that in Europe it was much worse than America. Not that there was less observance, no. Less observance than America is hard to find. But in Europe, the people were throwing away the Torah more rapidly than any other place. They had just two generations ago kept everything and now they had revolted against the Torah violently! Not like American ignorami who went to public school and never learned anything and they became *goyim* because of the environment. These Jews in Europe learned to hate Judaism. Not all of them, but there were so many of them that it became a wave of revolt against the Torah.

And Reb Elchonon Wasserman *zichrono livracha* said, "The Jews in Europe declared war on Hashem." And he said, "And now He has declared war on them. And that's why He's sending His armies against them."

So therefore, if you won't speak in this vein, the people will remain with their fatal error and they'll think that the Jews in Europe were all perfect and they were unjustly visited with retribution.



Michael Winner - dvartorah@frum.org

The pasuk states, וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה' "***And Noach found grace in the eyes of Hashem***" (Bereishis 6:8).

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Noach was also condemned to die in the flood, however, he found grace in Hashem's eyes, explaining "there are certain mitzvos that can produce this grace."

While the Ohr HaChaim does not specify which mitzvos these are, **Rav Yaakov Meir Shechter** writes that one can see a hint by the Ohr HaChaim's concluding words: "Even Noach's name reflects this grace, for the letters Noach (nun-chet) are the same letters (but reversed) for the word "chen," grace. And the **Zohar Chadash** says

that Noach was gentle (chen) in his mannerisms, his thoughts and his speech.

From here, says Rav Shechter we see that proper mannerisms, in thought, speech, and action, can reverse harsh decrees, and save a person's life and those of his family.

21 Years After Miraculous Escape From 9/11 Catastrophe, R' Shmuel Katz Passes Away



R' Shmuel Katz used to work on the 85th floor of one of the Twin Towers. Every day he would make his way to Manhattan on the subway but was distressed by being forced to sit in the crowded rush hour trains in which many people were dressed in immodest attire.

R' Shmuel begged his supervisors to allow him to come to work two hours later daily and work later hours at the end of the day in order not to have to contend with the rush hour trains. The supervisors, seeing his industriousness and diligence, agreed to give him a special permit to arrive late.

The permit proved to be a lifesaving device, because when the Twin Towers were blown up by terrorists on 9/11/01 (23 Elul 5761), R 'Shmuel (as well as many other orthodox men who were saying slichos) had yet to arrive at his workplace and was therefore saved from the cataclysm which killed 2,977 people.

This week, 21 years later, R' Shmuel Katz passed away, after having merited married off all of his children. The children told the story of their father's special salvation and Rabbi Elimelech Biderman mentioned the story in his weekly shiur. (VINnews)

When does a non-Jew become Bar Mitzvah? By Rabbi Yehoshua Alt



This may sound like a bizarre question, but it has practical ramifications. Non-Jews are obligated in observing the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach, the seven Noachide laws. [Sanhedrin 56.] Do these obligations begin at age 13, the age when a Jew becomes Bar Mitzvah?

The Chassam Sofer [Sh"ut Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah 317.] writes that a Jew becoming Bar Mitzvah at 13 according to the Rosh is a Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai.[Shu"t Haro"sh, 16]

The Rambam tells us that shiurim, numbers, were only given to Jews. Therefore, a non-Jewish katan (under 13), who reaches the stage of bar daas (intellectual maturity), would be obligated in the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach.[Minchas Chinuch 190]

This would seem problematic because the gemara [Sanhedrin 59a.] says that there is nothing that is forbidden to a non-Jew that is permitted for a Jew.

Would a katan that is a Jew be responsible for the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach since there is nothing that is forbidden for a non-Jew and permitted for a Jew?

This question is answered with the opinion of many achronim that a Jew who is a katan is obligated in the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach.

Chazu Bonai - Chizuk In The Parsha

וְהִנֵּה עֲלֵה־זַ֣יִת טָרָ֣ף בְּפִ֑יהָ 8:11



This **פסוק** describes the **יונה** returning to the **תיבה** with an olive branch in its mouth. The **מדרש רבה** tells us that the **יונה** davened to **ה'** saying: I would rather be fed with bitter (olives) by the Hand of **ה'** than be fed with things as sweet as honey but by the hand of man…. What do these words mean?

One understanding based on the **דברי מנחם** of **רימנוב** is that the olive is a rare and unique fruit. True it can be eaten raw, in its original and bitter state. But to enjoy its true value, one needs to work very hard pressing the olive and grinding it until its oil can be extracted. Only then can it be used for cooking, kindling and its various other wonderful benefits.

Other fruits can also be pressed for their juice but it is an easy and simple process and ultimately, if anything, it reduces their value.

The **יונה**, who **כלל ישראל** is compared to in **שיר השירים** was therefore saying: I would rather a fruit that is initially bitter but that I have worked hard to extract its sweetness and quality from than something that arrives already sweet and does not need much intervention. Because the sweetness of that which has been achieved through toil and effort is ultimately so much sweeter than that which is served on a plate.

This is the **יונה** 's message for life itself: **יגעתי ומצאתי**, I have toiled so I have found. I have found genuine "*geshmack*" and deliciousness because I have had to work so hard to attain it…



Rav Yisrael Salanter had a son-in-law who was about to take for himself, his own son-in-law. The future son-in-law was a tremendous scholar and Rav Yisrael's son- in-law was so impressed with him that he sent a notebook of the young man's Torah insights to Rav Yisrael Salanter, so that Rav Yisrael could see who his granddaughter was marrying.

Rav Yisrael read the Torah insights and he sent back to his son-in- law, "Yes. You've showed me that this son-in-law that you are considering is in fact a Gaon, but the verse does not say 'I gave my daughter to this Gaon'; it does not say 'I gave my daughter to this illui'; it says אֶת־בִּתִּי נָתַתִּי לָאִישׁ הַזֶּה -'***I gave my daughter to this man***' [Devorim 22:16].

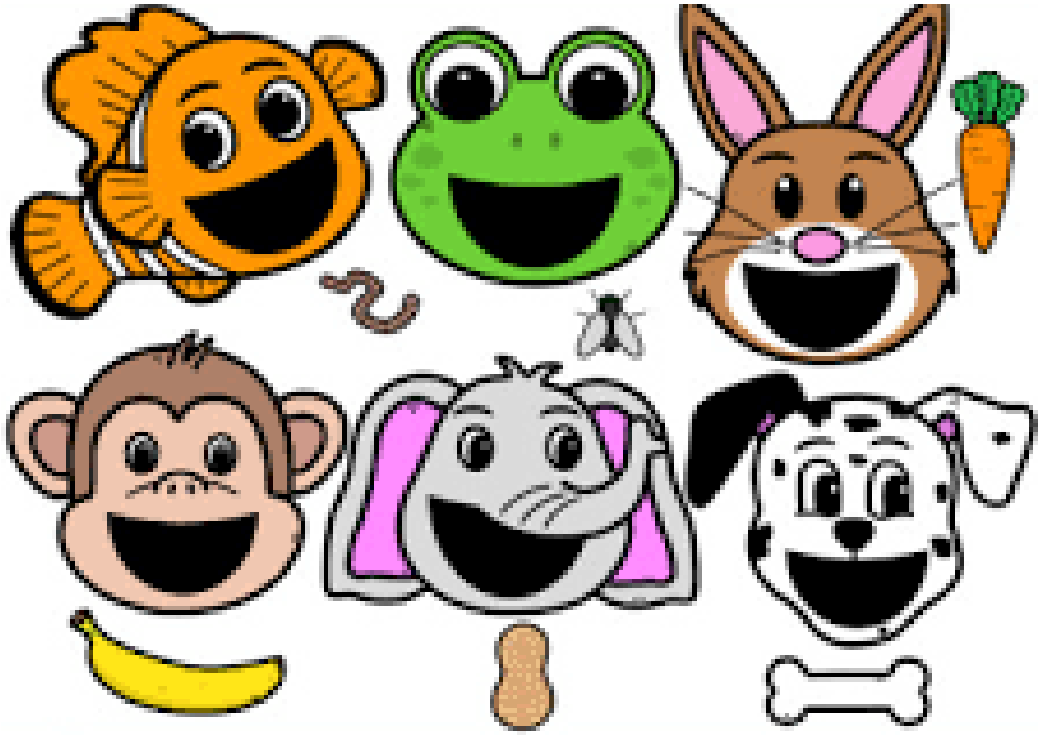
It is nice to be a Gaon and a Talmud Chacham, but first you must impress me that he is a Mensch." (This future grandson-in-law whose chiddushei Torah impressed Rav Yisrael Salanter was none other than **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski**).

Remember that failure is an event, not a person.

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick

The פָּסוּק says וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ מִכָּל־מַאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל וְאָסַפְתָּ אֵלֶיךָ וְהָיָה לְךָ וְלָהֶם לְאָכְלָה - Hashem told Noach, ***"And as for you, take (into the teivah) for yourself of every food that is eaten, and it should be eaten as food for you and for them (the animals)."***

In גְּמָרָא גִּיטִּין דַּף סב it says that one must feed his animals before he feeds himself. According to this, the פָּסוּק should have first said that the food should be used for them (the animals) and then for you (Noach and his family)?



Horav Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל answers that when the Gemara states that one has to feed his animals before he eats, it is referring to animals that one owns. Noach didn't own the animals in the teivah; he was just taking care of them as Hashem commanded him to.

One Rosh Hashanah, **The Netziv, Rabbi Naftali Tvi Yehuda Berlin** זצ"ל was about to make kiddush, when they heard the chickens in the chicken coop crowing for food. The Netziv said that he cannot make kiddush until the chickens are fed.

They couldn't find the key to the chicken coop, so they called a goy to break the lock in order to feed the chickens. Only after the chickens were fed did the Netziv make kiddush for his family.





Midas Rachamim

This whole sedra is one of Midas Hadin. Every single time it mentions Hashems name it uses the term 'EloKim.' There is one exception to this - **וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ לְנֹחַ בֹּא־אַתָּה וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה** 7:1

The Netziv says that Hashem had rachmonos with Noach, and dealt with him with rachamim: How? By allowing Noach to take into the Taivo, all his servants together with all their additional animals and pets (that weren't required for the kiyum of the world.) to enable him to have a more manageable time.

Why? **כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה**

A Big Tzaddik and a Bigger Tzaddik by Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky

נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו ***"Noach was a man a tzaddik"*** *(Bereishis 6:9).*

The passuk presumably illustrates Noach's righteousness among his evil generation. Rashi however, has a different take. He quotes a school of thought who use this passage against Noach. They interpret the passuk as shedding a negative view on Noach. The passuk tells us that Noach was only a tzaddik in his generation, but compared to the generation of Avraham Avinu, he would not have been considered anything special.

Why would our sages interpret this negatively, if they can simply read it as praise?

My grandfather **Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l** embodied not only the timeless lessons of the Torah, but also the lessons of teaching Torah.

Approximately 15 years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Kosel with him. After davening mincha and spending some time saying tehillim, it was time to leave. But when I turned around to escort Rav Binyamin out of the Kosel plaza, he wasn't where he was sitting earlier. After glancing around, I spotted him - sitting a few yards away next to a young boy. As I approached the pair, I saw the young boy reading from a chumash to my zaide, while he followed along with an encouraging smile.

Noticing me, he motioned me to wait, and after a few minutes, he closed the sefer, wished the boy well, gave him a warm bracha, and took my hand.

"Zaide, who was that boy," I naturally asked.

"After mincha, I spotted the boy, and started talking to him," my grandfather responded. "He was just waiting for his father to finish davening while doing nothing. I couldn't watch him doing nothing, so I asked him what he was learning in cheder, and we started to learn together!"

Rav Binyamin Kamnetzky zt"l explains. **The Kozhnitzer Maggid** describes how the Torah illustrates, through the story of Kayin and Hevel, the Mabul, and the Dor Haflagah, how bad character traits and animalistic instincts of man lead to his downfall. Only through devoted adherence to Torah can one navigate his inner complexities and negative desires and succeed.

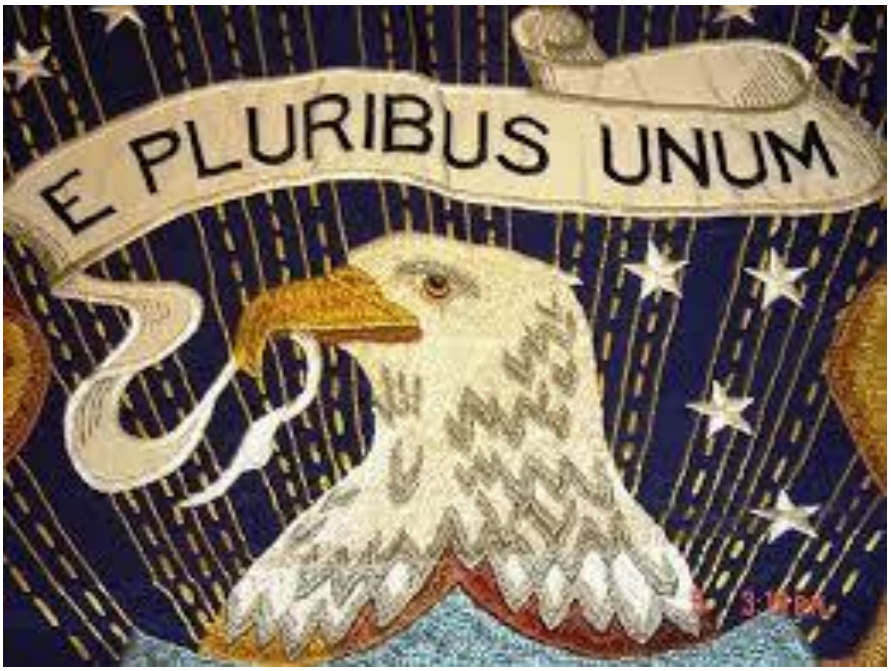
Avraham Avinu took this to heart. As the gemara tells us (Kiddushin 30b) "Hashem created an evil inclination and created Torah as its

antidote. Avraham not only learned Torah, but he also taught it to his generation as well. Through this, he was able to save many in his generation.

Noach however, although he learned Torah (see Rasi 7:2), did not teach those around him. Yes, he himself was a tzaddik, but since he failed to empower his generation to withstand the challenges of his generation, the Torah's praise for him is compromised.

Rabbi Label Lam - Many from One

When entering the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, there's a large heavy door with these words emblazoned there: ***'E pluribus unum, from many, one.'***



And while I can appreciate the sentiment that a large aggregate of people can act with a unified sense of purpose, unfortunately, it reminds me of the harsh realities of the Jewish experience in the last generation in Europe and the United States. From many, we are left with just one. Noach.

I prefer ***'E unum pluribus, from one comes many.'***

The Navi says that Avraham was one. Not only was he unique, but from that one individual, a new nation was born.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

כִּי־אֹתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה "For you have I seen as righteous in your generation…" (Beraishis 7:1)



The Gemara in Eruvin (18b) learns from this verse that we only say half of someone's praises in their presence, and all of it when they aren't there. We see that because here Noach is told to his face that he is a "tzaddik," righteous, whereas elsewhere he is described as, "a righteous man, perfect in his generations."

In his presence he is called righteous but not perfect, and also it is limited by his "generation" while when he's not there, it says, "generations."

But why praise someone at all? Were we not created to serve G-d and be good people? It should go without saying that someone is good. And if he is, why mention it? The answer is that praise is a great motivator, as well as an indication that a person is headed in the right direction. By Hashem telling Noach that he appeared to Hashem as a tzaddik, it let him know to keep doing what he was doing. Had He said, "You are perfect," where would Noach go from there?

It would seem he'd reached the pinnacle of his achievement. Telling him all his praise would be problematic. At the same time, when they are not there, we should not miss appreciating all their fine qualities.

For us, we benefit from recalling them because it gives us something to emulate and strive for. By recognizing the potential other people have realized, we find new goals for us to aim for. When we hear stories of great people; kind people; thoughtful, generous, and

sensitive people, we should try to find ways to incorporate those traits into our own lives. In that way, we will bring the world back from the brink of destruction, and once again make it fruitful and lush.

Etz HaChaim - R' C.T. Blau - There Is Only > ONE WAY!

When I was a young bochur in Yeshiva we had a classmate who used to say, "People think I am not normal! But really, everyone **else** is really not normal and **I** am the only normal person around!!



There is a famous tale that fits the same line of thought. A fellow was driving home from work one day and his wife called him saying frantically, "Honey, I just heard on the news that there is a fellow driving the wrong direction on the highway!" The husband responded, "That is absolutely incorrect there isn't only one person driving in the wrong direction, there are hundreds of cars driving in the wrong direction!!" (This actually happened with **Rabbi Yerachmiel Coffnas ZT'L**)

Hashem saw that there was a lot of corruption and people were swindling each other left and right, therefore Hashem saw that the world would have to be destroyed and started anew.

What was so wrong that there was a need to restart the world?

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky זצוק"ל explains that as long as the justice system has morals and proper values, then there is hope that proper

justice will be met. However, when the justice system of society itself becomes corrupted and what is really corrupt and insane becomes the norm and accepted law, then there is no hope for future justice to possibly be met.

This is exactly what happened in the times of Noach. In the times of Noach it wasn't just that the people were corrupt, rather what was corrupt became not corrupt, what was evil became accepted even by the justice system! Such a catastrophe has internal repair and therefore warrants complete destruction and restart from fresh with the correct ideology and proper morals!

Depending on where you travel in the world today one can see how history repeats itself. There are many [understatement] places in the world where what used to be considered immoral is now legal and moral and the norm! HASHEM YERACHEM

Did something change that now it is okay? The answer is that nothing changed, just the corruption got so bad that the justice system became corrupt enough to make that which is evil and immoral to be considered normal. That is all. What is the solution? Just like by Noach Hashem saw the need to start again from new, so too, for these people, they are so corrupt that they are turning evil into good that there is no solution.

So what does this have to do with us? The answer is that we as the Jewish people we have to stay far away and not get sucked into any of the negative influences from these immoralities that became moral. People get influenced easily by the society that they live in and it is possible to start thinking, "Hey, maybe in fact if such and such is legal it MUST be moral! Chas V'Shalom to fall for such garbage. This is the danger of evil corrupt law and twisted justice. It's baloney and ridiculous to think because it is the law then it is okay! The Torah and our chachamim teach us through the eyes of the Torah what is considered moral and legal and what is considered corrupt and evil!

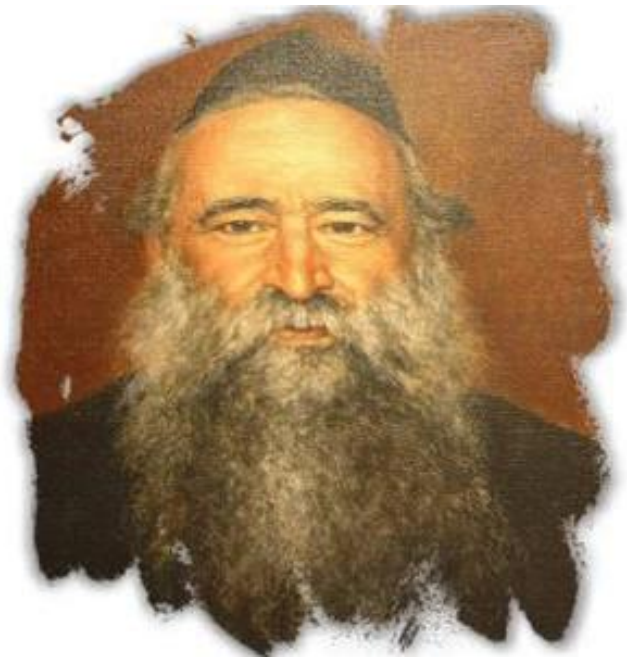
Let us return to the two tales we started with. We discussed the bochur and driving fellow who failed to understand that maybe *they were* the ones with the issue and not the rest of the world! This is an important lesson indeed, first check to see if we are the ones with the issues and not everyone else! In most instances this is the attitude. However, if a person lives in a corrupt world with a corrupt legal immoral ideology. Then there is no other option but to be like that fellow who is driving one direction and everyone else is driving the other!

This is the kedusha and tahara of the Jewish nation! WE know what is really moral! We know what is really proper! We the religious Jewish people, a tiny sheb'tiny minority of the world will show the world real values and what real morals means.

Short Vort: Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וַתִּשָּׁחֵת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס **"*Now the earth was corrupt before Hashem, and the earth became full of robbery*"**. (6:11)

What are the seemingly additional words "before Hashem" adding to this verse; after all, isn't *everything* before Hashem?



Rav Yechezkel Abramsky answered that this is coming to teach us that the corruption was before Hashem — but no one else — because no one else had noticed that the world had become corrupt. To everyone, the morals of civilization were "fine" and "normal," and therefore not worthy of further attention. The slow degradation of society went

unnoticed as people didn't pay too much attention to their moral wellbeing. No one was reflecting on the morality of society; the need to change and grow was not present, and as such, improving their ways was not under consideration.

Perhaps the message that *we* can take is to open our eyes, look around at society and ask ourselves whether we too have become used to the way things are. Are we allowing the world's spiritual decline to become normal in our eyes? Is the obvious corruption of society's morals before us or only before Hashem?

If we conclude that society today is corrupt, the clear and present danger to us is whether we are being dragged down too. Are we being influenced by foreign sources outside of Torah values? The first step is to make an honest reflection of our moral values and ask ourselves whether they are fully in line with Hashem's.



Rav Mordechai Gifter was particularly concerned about this after moving to the largely non-religious community of Connecticut to become their Rabbi. So much so, that when a money-collector came from Eretz Yisrael, Rav Gifter would beg him to look around his home and tell him if there was anything in it which was not appropriate — so worried was the great Rav Gifter that *he* had been corrupted by his surroundings and was unable to determine this himself.

"The purpose of prayer isn't to get us out of trouble. The purpose of trouble is to get us into prayer". – R' Yizchak Hutner z"l

רבי משה שטרנבוך

וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ "***And the rain was upon the earth***..." 7:12



Rashi poses the following question: Why does this pasuk use the word rain while a later Pasuk [7:17] uses the word flood - **וַיְהִי הַמַּבּוּל** ?

Rashi explains that when Hashem first sent down the water, He acted with mercy in order to give people a chance to repent. Had they taken the opportunity to repent, the rain would have been a rain of berachah. Because they remained stubborn, it became a destructive rain.

From here we see the extent of Hashem's kindness. Even though the people committed every possible sin, Hashem was willing to give them this last chance to do teshuvah. Not only would Hashem have forgiven them, but He would have given them a reward for doing teshuvah by turning the rain into a rain of berachah even if the people's teshuvah was done only out of fear of punishment.

We can only imagine how much greater the reward will be for doing true, heartfelt teshuvah out of love for Hashem. One who performs this type of teshuvah will see the fulfilment of the berachah: "and I will shower you with blessings without end."

Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them.

Acts Of Kindness – Rabbi Pini Dunner



There are so many wonderful stories about random acts of kindness. Someone who helps you with your bags at an airport. The unknown person who gives you a kind word when you most need it, in a moment of distress. An official who bends the rules so that you can get something urgent done. We've all experienced it, and we all instinctively know that kindness makes the world a better place – but is there any science to prove it?

Obviously, it is wonderful to be the recipient of kindness, but kindness requires a double act – for kindness to occur there must be a person who is being kind. And while we may utter the mantra "it is always better to give than to receive," in real life we might not always be ready to give. Yes, we give to our children, and we are giving in our relationships – but when it comes to random acts of kindness, giving is not always so easy. And yet, countless research studies have shown the wide and far-reaching benefits of kindness and giving.

In 2018, Dr. Oliver Scott Curry, a research professor at Oxford University who doubles up as the Research Director for something called Kindlab, which is part of kindness.org, got together with his colleague, Dr. Lee Rowland, and they issued a study which revealed that doing acts of kindness has the effect of boosting both happiness and well-being. Critically, the study proved that it makes no difference whether kindness is done for those with whom we are

close or whether it's done for strangers – the effects are exactly the same.

Another study, in 2009, demonstrated that just witnessing acts of kindness produces the hormone 'oxytocin', which more recently has been shown to underly "the twin emotional pillars of civilized life: our capacity to feel empathy and trust." Even more importantly, oxytocin enables us to be more social and to engage in acts of kindness. It's an amazing discovery – apparently, just watching others being kind has the knock-on effect of producing much more kindness in the world.

Last year, Professor George Slavich and Dr. Lydia Roos of UCLA published a remarkable study that described three evidence-based strategies which helped to foster individual and collective recovery from the long periods of lockdown and isolation during COVID-19, as well as resilience in the face of the debilitating effects of the pandemic. Two of the strategies were practicing compassion and engaging in kindness.

In the UK, the Mental Health Foundation has a long-running "random acts of kindness" campaign. Their website offers a list of 50 suggestions for simple acts of kindness, including "call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while," "send a motivational text to a friend who is struggling," and "smile and say hello to people you may pass every day, but have never spoken to before."

The idea behind the campaign is to transform all the research study data into practical action. After all, now that we know being kind to others improves the well-being of the world around us, and of course our own well-being, it is important to turn theory into practice.

There is a fascinating Midrash that records the conversation between Abraham and Noah's son Shem, when they encountered each other after Abraham had triumphed in his battle with the four kings. According to the Midrash, Abraham asked Shem how his

family had earned the right to leave the ark. Shem replied that it was because they had taken care of the animals throughout the period of the flood.

Abraham found Shem's response extremely inspiring. "If this is what one can achieve by being kind to animals," he thought to himself, "how much more so if one is kind to people." Thereafter, Abraham turned his home into a centre of hospitality, and he devoted the rest of his life to random acts of kindness and doing good for others.

But although the Midrash is wonderful in its sentiment, it is actually quite puzzling. Why would Abraham have thought Noah and his family needed special dispensation to leave the ark? The Midrash has to mean just that, and not that they were saved from the flood, as they only took care of the animals in the ark once the flood had begun and were already 'saved'. And yet, even once the rain had stopped and the land was totally dry, evidently Noah still needed permission to disembark, and that permission was only granted because he had been kind to the animals in his charge. Really? Surely leaving the ark should have been automatic. Why did Noah and his family need permission to disembark, and why did that permission need to be based on merit?



Rabbi Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht (1924-1994) offers a compelling insight into this Midrash. It wasn't just about leaving the ark, he suggests, rather it was about creating a new paradigm for the world so that it would never revert to the wholesale selfishness that had dominated humanity before the flood.

Abraham was curious to find out how it was possible that G-d knew Noah would be able to be successful in the quest to reshape the human experience. The simple answer was that Noah had spent the best part of a year toiling tirelessly to look after the menagerie of animals and birds he had been charged with rescuing from the flood.

His kindness and devotion offered a glimpse into the possibilities of a better world, and so it was. Abraham only heard about it from Shem – and was inspired to become an exemplar of random kindness for all time, a characteristic that continues to offer hope and inspiration thousands of years later.

It is Noah's kindness, paid forward, that continues to ensure the survival of humanity. Noah is symbolic of the many studies conducted over recent years, teaching us that kindness is not just a nice thing to do – rather, our lives literally depend on it.

The Weekly Vort

Rashi states that the final edict to destroy the *Dor HaMabul* was because of thievery. Why did their sin of thievery seal their fate when they committed many sins which were much more severe?

The Sefer Yalkut HaGershuni explains: Chazal teach that Hashem, in His mercy, does not initially inflict capital punishment on a sinful person. First Hashem punishes by diminishing one's wealth. However, since the people of this generation had acquired their wealth by way of thievery, it was not really their own. Hashem would not diminish property which did not belong to them.

Thus, Rashi concludes that thievery sealed their fate, for they now deserved the next level of punishment, which was annihilation. (A Gut Vort)



Inspired by Time - Inside the Teivah – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Let us turn to this week's parsha and focus on one particular aspect — a powerful lesson that is not only timeless but deeply relevant to our days. It is a message we must not leave behind as we step out of our own teivah.

There were countless miracles surrounding Teivas Noach. First, every single species — creatures from every corner of the world — made their way to Noach on their own. Imagine standing in a zoo and seeing the vast variety of animals from all over the earth; now picture them all converging upon one man's doorstep!

Then came the miracle of housing them all: How could one teivah possibly hold every creature in the world? Yet it did. The food lasted an entire year without spoiling, despite being exposed to the conditions. And above all, the teivah itself — by human hands — remained afloat upon raging, world-destroying waters.

But amidst all these wonders, the Torah reveals something striking. Noach's year inside the teivah was not a calm cruise through the flood. It was grueling, exhausting, and unrelenting. Rashi comments on the words "Vayisha'er ach Noach — Only Noach remained"—that Noach was coughing blood from exhaustion. He emerged from the teivah a broken man, drained and weakened, having spent every day and night feeding and caring for the animals without rest.

Think about it. Anyone who has ever owned a pet knows how much care and attention even one small creature demands. Feeding, cleaning, noticing its moods — it is a full-time responsibility. Now imagine Noach, surrounded not by one or two animals but by the entire animal kingdom: lions and lambs, eagles and elephants, insects

and reptiles — all depending on him, each with its own needs, habits, and schedule.

The Gemara tells us that Noach fed every creature precisely at the time it required. Those that ate during the day were fed during the day, those at night were fed at night. Noach didn't sleep. He couldn't. Every moment was devoted to sustaining life, to fulfilling the mission Hashem had given him. The sheer selflessness of that year defies comprehension.

Chazal relate that Noach encountered a bird that refused to eat. When Noach asked it why, the bird answered softly, "I see how busy you are. I don't want to trouble you." Noach, moved to tears, blessed it: "Yehi ratzon she'lo tamus"— "May it be Hashem's will that you never die."

Why did Hashem make Noach suffer so much? With so many miracles, Couldn't there have been one more miracle — that every animal would receive its food directly from Heaven, just as the mann fell in the midbar? Would that not have been easier, cleaner, and more fitting for a tzaddik of Noach's stature? Why, instead, was he forced to labor endlessly, day and night, until his body broke under the strain?

The answer reveals the very heart of the teivah's mission. It was not simply a shelter — it was a school, a training ground in rachamim and selflessness. The world had been destroyed because humankind had become cruel and indifferent to others' suffering. To rebuild it, the founder of the new world had to be recreated as a man of compassion.

Every sleepless night, every small act of care, every exhausted moment was refining Noach's heart, preparing him to become not just a survivor but a rebuilder of humanity.

From Ish Tzaddik to Ish Chesed

Rav Avraham Grodzinski, as quoted by **Rav Mordechai Miller**, reveals a profound truth about Noach's journey. Before the mabul, Noach's greatness lay in his righteousness — in his unwavering sense of justice and moral clarity. The Torah calls him an ish tzaddik, a man of integrity, discipline, and fairness. He saw the world as it was: steeped in corruption, steeped in cruelty. In his eyes, justice demanded a reckoning. The righteous must live; the wicked must perish.

From his perspective, Hashem's decree was not only justified — it was necessary. His mission, as he understood it, was to obey, to build the teivah, and to accept the Divine judgment in silence.

But Hashem wanted something deeper. The world had already been built once on justice — and it had collapsed. What was needed now was not another ish tzaddik, but an ish chesed. Because a world sustained only by justice cannot stand. Olam chesed yibaneh — the new world would need to be rebuilt not on the measure of what is deserved, but on boundless compassion.

And so, Hashem placed Noach in the teivah — not merely to survive, but to be transformed. For a full year, Noach lived surrounded by the cries and needs of every living being. Lions and doves, elephants and sparrows, each one hungry, restless, alive. There was no rest, no silence, no escape. Because the teivah was not a boat—it was a beis medrash of chesed. It was where Noach learned what it means to give, to serve, to care, and to suffer for others.

Every moment of fatigue, every act of feeding, every sigh of compassion was molding his heart, softening the justice of an ish tzaddik into the mercy of an ish chesed.

When he finally stepped out onto dry land, Noach was no longer the same man who entered. His tefila—"Atah Rachum" — was no longer a cry of intellect but of heart. It carried the brokenness and

compassion of one who had tended to life itself, who had lived the pain of others. That tefila reached the heavens and drew from Hashem a promise that changed history: "Lo yihyeh od ha'mayim l'mabbul l'shacheis kol basar" — never again would He destroy the world by water.

Noach entered the teivah as an ish tzaddik. He emerged as an ish chesed — a man of empathy, of tears, of giving. Through that transformation, the world was rebuilt. Because it is not justice that sustains creation — it is chesed.

Beneath the Surface by: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(שנים שנים באו אל נח אל התיבה זכר ונקבה (ז:ט - '***Two by two they came to Noach into the ark, male and female***' (7:9)

There is a Midrash HaNe'elam that states: "These are the days that on them we complete Hallel". - The words of this Midrash are amazing and require explanation.

The Meforshim explain that outside of Eretz Yisroel (Chutz La'aretz) where we keep two days of Yom Tov out of doubt, we complete Hallel on these days: The first **two** days of the holiday of Pesach, the **two** days of Shavuos, **nine** days of the holiday of Succos, and **eight** days of Chanukah.

This is what the posuk is hinting at, **שנים שנים באו אל התיבה** – two by two they came into the ark, two by two refers to the first two days of Pesach and the two days of Shavuos; **באו** – they came, which has a Gematria (numerical value) of nine, refers to the eight days of Succos and Shemini Atzeres, **אל נח** – to Noach has the Gematria of **חנוכה** – Chanukah.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

שפת אמת תרנ"ב

Chazal say that **צופה ומביט עד סוף כל הדורות** – '*Hashem sees what will happen in all future generations.*'

When Hashem created the world, He knew that 1000 years later, the mabul would annihilate the entire world. All of creation would be destroyed!

So, why didn't Hashem begin the worlds creation starting from Noach? What was the point in creating a world only to then destroy it later? He could have started the world with Noach!

The Sefas Emes explains it with a Gemarah (Kesubos 5a) **גְּדוֹלִים מַעֲשֶׂה צַדִּיקִים יוֹתֵר מִמַּעֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ** – '*The actions of the righteous are greater than the creation of heaven and earth.*'

Hashem wanted to show us that He created a world but destroyed it. But because of Noach's actions however, let it begin anew! - His righteousness is what sustained the existence of the world!

How far reaching our good deeds are? How powerful they are? '*Greater than the creation of heaven and earth.*'

Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin, Insights on Noach

"He sent out the raven…until the drying of the waters from upon the earth" (8:7) **וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעֹרֵב... עַד־יְבֹשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ –**

During the lifetime of Noah, Hashem decreed that a generation that behaved so immorally had no right to exist. Hashem brought a flood and destroyed all of mankind except for Noah and his family. Hashem commanded Noah to build an ark and he would be saved.

After the flood destroyed the world, the water receded, and Noah sent out the raven to find out if the land was dry.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein wonders why Noah sent out the raven at all. The purpose was to find out if the land was dry so he could leave the ark. But Noah didn't leave the ark until he was commanded to do so by Hashem. Why did he have to know if the land was dried?

The answer is that Noah was in the process of doing teshubah (repentance). He decided he would not leave the ark until he got the command. This was to make up for his mistake when he first entered the ark. At that time Hashem commanded him to enter before the flood began. This would show that Noah believed in Hashem's prediction that the flood was coming.

Noah entered only after the flood began when he had no other choice but to save his life to escape the flood waters. Noach wanted to repent. He sent out the raven to get the report that it was safe to leave. Now Noah did not leave even though he could have, in order to show that he didn't leave until he got the command to leave.

Sometimes in life, we get opportunities to make up past mistakes. It could be because Hashem has mercy on us and gives us another chance. Try not to miss those opportunities. *Rabbi Reuven Semah.*



The verse states, **כָּרַע רָבַץ כְּאַרְיֵה** *"Yehudah stooped down; he crouched as a lion…" (Bereishis 49:9)*

Yehudah's outstanding quality is that even if he falls, even when he is bowed low, he remains as firm and fearless as a lion. Even when he must kneel, he does so with pride. For this reason, the Jewish people are referred to as Yehudim. Yehudah never succumbs to despair; Yehudah never stays down. - Like the lion, Yehudah – and the Jewish people – always gets back up. ~ ***Chiddushei Harim, Reb Yitzchak Meir Alter*** *(1799-1866)*



וַתִּשָּׁחֵת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס - *Now the earth was corrupt before G-d, and the earth became full of robbery.*



This past week, on Sunday morning, a group of thieves broke into Paris' Louvre, the world's most-visited museum, and stole eight priceless objects from an area that houses the French crown jewels. The thieves pulled up outside the Louvre at about 9:30 am with a vehicle-mounted electric hoist, commonly used in Paris to move furniture in or out of a upper story. Wearing yellow and orange vests the thieves posed as construction workers, so they raised no suspicion. They rode undetected up the ladder in broad daylight, broke through the glass windows of an upper window gallery, then proceeded to cut through the thick protective glass guarding the priceless objects inside them.

The entire robbery took six to seven minutes and was carried out by four unarmed people who threatened guards with angle grinders. Nine objects were targeted by the criminals, and eight were actually stolen. The thieves lost the ninth one, the crown of Napoleon III's wife, Empress Eugenie, during their escape.

Due to the speed, the skill and the brazenness of the operation, many consider this robbery the most audacious robbery of living memory!

Nothing is a coincidence. The fact that the story of the most audacious theft of recent history was perpetrated on the week we read in the *Torah* how *Hashem* flooded the world because *"the world was filled with thievery"* - stands for us as a lesson.

Chazal tell us, that if someone is experiencing difficulties, theft, in some sort of form is usually the prime reason for his troubles (**Mishna Berurah** *siman 606*). This story serves as a reminder for this fundamental principle.



Why We Make a *L'Chaim* on Alcohol and Spirits and Not on Apple Juice

When Noach finally gets out the *teivah* he plants a vineyard and drinks from its wine, and as a punishment for doing this, the Torah refers to Noach as an Ish HaAdamah, a man of the land. Therefore, I would like to share with you a *vort* related to drinking wine.

I once heard a beautiful insight from Reb Avraham Fried as to why we specifically make a *l'chaim* on alcohol and spirits? Why don't we generally make a *l'chaim* on juice – grape juice or apple juice?

It is because when you put alcohol into the freezer – into difficult surroundings and circumstances – the alcohol stays true to itself. It never freezes. Similarly, when we as Jews face trying times, we remain strong and spirited that we will make it through, and hope and believe that Hashem will grant us the inner prowess to do so. In that sense, we make a *l'chaim*. It is a *l'chaim* to the strength and commitment embedded within the spirit of the Jew, within the very fiber and fabric of Am Yisroel. We, no matter what comes our way, stay true to ourselves.



Rav Yerucham Levovitz would say, "Oy to one who does not recognize his weakness, but oy vavoy (double woe) to one who does not recognize his strengths." - One who does not recognize their strengths cannot possibly achieve their full potential.



Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

It states (Bereishis 6:8) וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה׳ - "***Noach found favour in the eyes of Hashem***."

Some explain that Noach found favour in Hashem's eyes because Noach believed that whatever happened to him, was, by Hashem's hashgachah pratis.

This emunah is essential during these turbulent times. We shouldn't think that the frightening situation in Eretz Yisrael happened by chance. Everything occurs according to Hashem's hashgachah.

Ohr Hachaim

Why had meat had not been permitted as food to Adam whereas now Hashem permitted Noach to enjoy a meat diet? (see Ramban Bereshis 1:29)

There may have been three reasons why Noach was permitted to eat meat. 1) His care for the animals during a whole year in the ark kept the whole species alive. 2) He expended a great deal of tender care on these animals. 3) Hashem was in a favourable frame of mind having promised not to destroy all flesh. Hence He permitted Noach to eat of the fruit of his labours.

Noach was allowed to eat fish which spontaneously generate, as well as the animals, so as not to cast jealousy among the creations.

משך חכמה בראשית ט׳:ג׳ כל רמש אמר הוא חי לכם יהיה לאכלה – דאדם לא הותר לו בשר לאכילה. רק נח זכה בהן בשכר טפולו וקיומו אותם כל זמן היותו בתיבה והכין להם מדור לקיים מיניהם, לכן בשכר זה נתנו לו לאכלה, והדגים שבים שלא נמוחו במבול (קדושין י״ג) נתנו לאכילה **שלא להטיל קנאה במעשה בראשית** (מגילה כ״ה

אֶת־קַשְׁתִּי נָתַתִּי בֶּעָנָן וְהָיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ - I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 9:13



The Ramban says: It would appear from this sign that the rainbow in the cloud was not part of creation and that now G-d created a new thing by making a rainbow in the heavens on a cloudy day.

Now commentators have said concerning the meaning of this sign that He has not made the rainbow with its feet bent upward because it might have appeared that arrows were being shot from heaven.

Instead, He made it the opposite of this — [with the feet bent downward] — in order to show that they are not shooting at the earth from the heavens. It is indeed the way of warriors to invert the instruments of war which they hold in their hands when calling for peace from their opponents. Moreover, [with the feet of the bow being turned downward towards the earth, it can be seen] that the bow has no rope upon which to bend the arrows.

Therefore, we shall explain the verse thus: "The rainbow which I have set in the clouds from the day of creation will be from this day on a sign of covenant between Me and you; whenever I will see it I will remember that there is a covenant of peace between Me and you." - Moreover, when the above-mentioned rainbow is seen in its inverted form, [namely, with the feet of the bow turned downward], it is a reminder of peace. Thus, whether the bow was a newly established phenomenon or one that always existed in nature, the significance thereof as a sign is the same.



The rainbow

The rainbow occupies a special place in the human experience - as a display of great beauty, a fascinating scientific phenomenon and a potent religous symbol. So too in Jewish thought and practice - hashkafa and halacha - rainbows have a unique position.

After the flood, the rainbow is identified as the sign of the Bris with humanity and with all creatures on the planet! This covenant obligates Man to behave in a moral and ethical manner. Hashem in turn commits never again to destroy the world. As such, the appearance of the rainbow has a special and positive connotation - something that we should want to look at.

At the end of Yechezkel's vision of the Chariot - Ma'aseh Merkavah - he sees a halo of light like a rainbow in the clouds. He understands that this is an insight into the glory of G-d and falls on his face in terror. - Clearly, in this context, the rainbow is something awesome which we would NOT wish to look at!

Chazal (Berachos 59a) understand the duality of the rainbow. Based on the verse in Yechezkel there is a suggestion that, like Yechezkel, one should fall to the floor and bow when seeing a rainbow! This is rejected since it could resemble idolatry, but the Gemara concludes that one should make a beracha of praise because its positive connotations. [This seems to contradict another Gemara (Chagigah 16a) which prohibits looking at a rainbow. This seen as improper behavior when dealing with Hashem's honor.

The compromise position of the Shulchan Aruch (229:1) is to rule that one may 'see' the rainbow and then make the beracha, but must not 'stare' excessively at the rainbow.

The Mishna Berura rules that one should quickly look at the rainbow before the beracha and not stare. (229:5)

Even though the appearance of the rainbow seems to be a positive sign - Hashem will not destroy the world - the implication is negative - that the world is worthy of destruction! Based on the chaser writing of the word 'לְדֹרֹת' in Bereishis 9:12, Chazal understood that there were two generations in which the rainbow did NOT appear - that of Chizkiyahu and that of the Anshei Kenesset Hagedolah, or alternatively R. Shimon bar Yochai. - The non-appearance of the rainbow in a specific generation appears to be a very important hallmark of the existence of a true tzaddik in that generation. (Kesuvos 77b)

Based on this idea, the Chayei Adam (early 19C Europe) writes that he saw somewhere that one should not inform another person that there is a rainbow as this is, effectively, spreading bad news about the world! - One should always avoid giving bad news or try to soften the blow. (Pesachim 3b). The Mishna Berura writes that one should not tell other people about a rainbow (229:1). [Yalkut Yosef (Rav Yitzchak Yosef) rules that one **can** tell someone else to come and see the rainbow.] - The Biur Halacha raises the question of how much of the rainbow needs to be seen to make the beracha and leaves the issue undecided. - Rav Moshe Sternbuch rules that one should not make a beracha unless one sees a full arc of the rainbow. - Yalkut Yosef that one can make the beracha on part of a rainbow and through glass.

Sometimes there is a double-rainbow. This occurs when the light reflects twice secondary rainbow in which the order of the colors in the bow is reversed. The Seforno understands that the actual sign of the Bris is a DOUBLE rainbow. It is that rare phenomenon which indicates that the generation is not worthy, so that they can do teshuva! - R' Yonasan Eiberschutz learns that the 'real' sign of the Bris, which indicates the potential destruction of the world, is a

rainbow of pure blue techeiles color. A regular rainbow is not the real sign.

Tosafot Rid explains that, just as one cannot really discern clearly the distinctions between the colors of the rainbow, one cannot clearly discern the ways of Hashem in the world. Staring too closely indicates a lack of appreciation of this important reality.

The Ramban says that the imagery is also of an upturned bow - to indicate that Hashem is now at peace with us and no longer 'firing' down at us.



A Little Extra And A Huge Difference

וַיִּקַּח שֵׁם וָיֶפֶת אֶת-הַשִּׂמְלָה, (ט',כג)

רש"י asks: since we are talking about two people; it should have written וַיִּקְחוּ, (plural) why does the **פסוק** write וַיִּקַּח (singular)?

רש"י answers: the **פסוק** is teaching us that **שם** put in extra effort (that's why it is written singular). And we find that they both received a reward of covering — yet their rewards were extremely different. **שם**, who acted with enthusiasm (**התלהבות**) and a passion for doing a **מצוה** was rewarded that his descendants would receive the **מצוה** of covering themselves with **ציצית**. However, **יפת**, who just tagged along and joined in the **מצוה** without any feeling will be rewarded when the war of **גוג** and **מגוג** will take place; his descendants will merit burial and be covered.

ר' זלמן סורוצקין זצ"ל explains the **מידה כנגד מידה** in their rewards. **שם**, who did the **מצוה** with life and **התלהבות**, received as his reward that his descendants have a **מצוה** of **ציצית** during their lifetime. However, **יפת**, who did the **מצוה** lifelessly, received as his

reward that his descendants will merit burial after their life has ended.

We see that two people can be doing the same **מצוה** but their rewards can be drastically different. A **מצוה** done with **התלהבות** and **זריזות** is not just a better **מצוה** it is worlds apart from the same action done without **התלהבות** and **זריזות**.

The wife of the **גאון ווילנא** would go collecting **צדקה** every **ערב שבת** with her friend in order to distribute money to poor families for **שבת**. One **ערב שבת** as they were both walking down the street in Vilna the Rebbetzin's friend noticed that there was a known **בעל צדקה** on the other side of the road. She pointed at him with her finger to tell the Rebbetzin to approach him for **צדקה**. They both crossed the road and asked him for a donation.

These two women were both great **צדקניות** and they made an agreement between themselves that whoever would be **נפטר** first, would come back to the other in a dream and tell her what is happening in **עולם הבא**. The friend was **נפטר** first. She appeared to the Rebbetzin in a dream and told her, "You should know that everything is written down, and everything is known. Do you remember that **ערב שבת** when we were both walking down the street and I pointed out to you the man on the other side...We then both asked him for **צדקה**... Well, that pointing with my finger was written down as my **זכות** and for that I shall get an extra portion of **שכר**—which is beyond description -and the **מצוה** of **צדקה** was written down for both of us. (**אוצרות התורה**)

Because of Noach's faith, the world endured.

Never underestimate the power of one person's emuna.

A childhood friend of the **וויילנא גאון** once met the **גאון** after he had become famous, and asked him, "We were both together to **חדר**. At that time there was no recognisable difference between you and me. How did you reach such great heights?!!"

The **גאון** replied, "Have you ever learnt the **גמרא** in **חגיגה** which says, 'you can't compare someone who learns something 100 times to someone who learns it 101 times?' " The friend replied, "Of course I know that **גמרא**."

The **גאון** continued, "Do you believe in the words of this **גמרא**. - "Of course!" was the immediate response. - "Well," said the **גאון**, "I didn't just believe it. I tried it!" (**לקח טוב**)

After the **חתם סופר** became famous, someone who had been his **חברותא** in **ישיבה** met him and asked him, "Tell me, we learnt so many years together, how come you became the Rebbe of **כלל ישראל**?!"

The **חתם סופר** replied, "Do you remember that at the end of **זמן** we would travel home together in a wagon to our city?"

"Of course" was the answer. To which the **חתם סופר** replied, "Well, during those trips you would look out of the window at the passing scenery and countryside and I didn't" (The **חתם סופר** used that time for learning) (**ארחות סופר א/תתרא**)

"The Torah calls Noach a 'tzaddik tamim'—a righteous and complete man—not because he lived in easy circumstances, but because he remained faithful to Hashem in a corrupt generation. The true measure of greatness is not how high a person rises when surrounded by saints, but how firmly he stands when surrounded by those who pull him downward." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

תמים היה בדורותיו (ו/ט)

רש״י brings down two opinions; one says it is a praise of **נח** -if he would have be in the generation of **אברהם** he would have been even greater. The other opinion is that it is a criticism -only in his generation he was considered a **צדיק** but if he would have been in the generation of **אברהם** he would not have been considered as a **צדיק**.

Asks the **חפץ חיים**: if we can learn it to mean a praise, why would we want to learn out a negative comment?

The **חפץ חיים** answers: it is coming to teach us that someone who lives in a weaker generation and he elevates himself, even if they don't reach the great heights that **גדולים** attained in earlier generations, he is still considered in **שמים** as a **צדיק**.

Reb Shimshon Pinkus זצ״ל would say, "when I come up to **שמים** and **רבי עקיבא איגר** will take out his magnifying glass to look at me and will ask me, 'did you mange to take out the **קושיות** like I did?' I will answer, 'with all due respect to you **רבי עקיבא איגר** did you ever walk past a newspaper stand and turn around so as not to see the immodest picture? Well I did.'"

In today's generation we might not be as great as **רבי עקיבא איגר** but we can reach great heights by overcoming today's **נסיונות**.

שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם בָּאוּ אֶל-נֹחַ (ז/ט)

The **רמב״ן** explains: Seven [sets] of the **כשר** animals were required, but only the first two came by themselves. The other six [sets] that were going to be used for **קרבנות** did not come by themselves; rather **נח** himself had to go and find them. The **ספרים** explain that since the other six sets were being used for a **מצוה**, **נח** had to work for it and it did not come without effort. (**גידולי תורה**)

Once, Rebbe Yiddle Horwitz **זצ״ל** (who is buried in London) who lived in Klausenberg before the war was once notified that his uncle was

in hospital in Klausenberg. His father said to him, "Come let's go by bus to the hospital to visit our sick relative."

He asked his father, "Father, the hospital is within walking distance. Why do you want to take a bus?"

His father answered, "For a **מצוה** one must pay."

After two stops on the bus his father said to him, "Come, let's get off."

In surprise, he asked his father, "Father, the next stop is right next to the hospital. Why do you want to take a bus?"

His father answered, "For a **מצוה** one must exert **כוחות**." (**להגיד/תורת הברכה/410**)



הבה נרדה ונבלה שם שפתם אשר לא ישמעו איש שפת רעהו וגו׳ (יא-ז) - *Come, let us descend and confuse their language, so that one will not understand the language of his companion.*

Rashi writes that the idea to mix up the languages was that if one would ask his friend to bring him bricks, the other would bring mud or clay, thereby angering the first person and he would rise up and crack the other person's head, effectively killing him.

The Brisker Rov, R' Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"L questions the reason for this: If the whole purpose was to stop the people from continuing to build their tower, confusing their languages should have been enough. Why was it necessary that they should rise up and kill each other?

However, answers the Rov, when people are totally unified in perfect harmony and absolutely determined, with one mindset, to perpetrate an act, nothing can stop them and nothing will get in their way. So

too, the people of the **דור הפלגה**, worked with perfect **אחדות** and unity to fight against Hashem, and confusion alone was not enough of an impediment to stop them - they would have found a way to overcome this. It was therefore necessary that their confusion should lead to in-fighting and eventually to one killing the other.

אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו וכו' (ו-ט)

The Bnai Yisroel are referred to as "**בני אברהם יצחק ויעקב**" - The children of Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, however, the rest of the nations of the world are known as "**בני נח**" - The children of Noach. Why don't we consider ourselves to be children of Noach, who was a Tzaddik and the greatest man of his generation, but only seem to trace our roots back from Avrohom Avinu?

R' Moshe Alshi"ch ZT"L explains that Noach was a just and righteous man, but he was not the typical Jewish Tzaddik. The Torah tells us "**את האלקים התהלך נח**" - And Noach walked with Hashem - with Hashem, and not with the people. He did not worry about the environment and the rest of mankind. Hashem commanded him to build an ark, and he did so, nail by nail, board by board, for 120 just and pure years. It never occurred to him to attempt to annul the decree and save the world from extinction.

Avrohom Avinu was different. His and Sarah's mission was to teach the world proper conduct, ethics and the existence of Hashem. Like a true Torah Jew, Avrohom was concerned with helping the people, and when Hashem wanted to overturn Sodom, Avrohom tried to save even the wicked people through his Tefillos, alas to no avail.

"The worst part of idling away and wasting time, is not knowing when to stop!" ~ R' Nosson of Demille ZT"L.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

During the mid-1800's, the city of Frankfurt-Am-Mein was fortunate to have one of the Gedolei Hador as its Rov. **R' Avrohom Abish Field ZT''L** was known as a giant in Torah, **בנגלה ובנסתר**, and was extremely well-liked by his people: Anyone who required help in any way, knew that R' Avrohom Abish's door was always open to them.

A meeting was once held by the Frankfurt city elders, and a decision was rendered regarding the lead Chazan of the large, main city Shul. It was felt that this Chazan was lax in his observance of Mitzvos and displayed an ambivalent attitude toward his religious responsibilites, and therefore, they intended to relieve him of his duties as head Chazan in the main synagogue.

When the Chazan learned of his fate, he was quite distressed and immediately ran to the home of the Rov to ask him to intercede on his behalf and to have the city council's decision nullified, allowing him to keep his job.

Intending to drive home his point, the Chazan turned to the Rov and said, "Just look at the strength of my prayers and the impression that they make in Heaven: On **שמיני עצרת**, I davened before the Amud and just as soon as I finished reciting **תפילת גשם**, the skies turned cloudy and rain followed not long after!"

R' Avrohom Abish knew who he was dealing with and was in total agreement with the decision of the council. As a matter of fact, he had wanted to do this even before the council mentioned it. After thinking for a moment, he looked up at the Chazan and retorted, "So what! You davened for the Amud, benched Geshem and a little drizzle began to come down. For your information, people like you once brought on the earth not just a little rain, but an entire **מבול** - a flood that destroyed the whole world!"

וישלח את העורב ויצא יצוא ושוב עד יבשות המים וכו' (ח-ז)

We find that Noach first sent out a raven to check and report back if the land was dry, and only later did he send out a dove. Why?

R' Zvi Hirsh Berliner ZT"L, explained this with a true story that occured to him. When R' Zvi was offered the position of Rov for the city of Berlin, a city that maintained a reputation of non-observance of Mitzvos, he sent a "modern" person, instead of a friend of his who was a *Talmid Chochom*, to visit Berlin and report back to him the state of affairs there. He felt that had he sent the unsuspecting *Talmid Chochom*, the sly and cunning Berliners would have been able to pull the wool over his eyes and make him think that they were utterly religious. By sending someone who was somewhat less religious, he felt that the "modern" citizenry of Berlin would trust him completely and thereby enable him to make a capable and accurate evaluation of their actions.

So too, *Noach* felt that had he sent out the innocent dove, any remaining wicked people would have been able to fool the dove into thinking that they were righteous. Instead, he sent a raven, an unkosher bird, which would be able to assess the situation accurately.

In Parshas Noach it says, "צהר תעשה לתבה" - A light shall you make for the ark.

We may also learn from these words that a person must be extra careful, that the words that he davens should be pure, with no profane or wasted thoughts. One should take care that צהר תעשה לתיבה - a pure light should be made to his words of prayer." ~ The Ba'al Shem Tov.

Torah Gems

שנים שנים באו אל נח אל התבה זכר ונקבה וכו' (ז-ט)

The *Medrash* tells us that this *posuk* is referring to those days on which the entire *Hallel* is recited. Where do we see this from the *posuk*?

Answers **R' Shimshon of Ostropoli ZT"L** that the **סימן** to remember those specific days on which the entire *Hallel* is recited outside of Eretz Yisroel, is with the word **"בבט"ח"**. The **"ב"** equals 2, referring to the first two days of the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach*. The second **"ב"** equals 2, which refers to both days of *Shavuos*. The **"ט"** equals 9, which alludes to the nine days of *Succos* and *Shemini Atzeres*. The **"ח"** equals 8, referring to the eight days of *Chanukah*.

Explains R' Shimshon, the *Medrash* wants to convey to us that this very same idea is concealed in this *posuk* "**שנים שנים באו אל נח**" - Two by two they came to Noach. **"שנים"** means 2, referring to the first two days of *Pesach*; **"שנים"** again means 2, referring to both days of *Shavuos*; **"באו"** has a numerical value of 9 - the nine days of *Succos*; **"אל נח"** has a numerical value of 89, which is the same numerical value as **חנוכה**.

84 Fasts In An Instant

The Admor R' Yehoshua of Belz said: "If you have an urge to say something offensive to someone, and you restrain yourself, that restraint brings joy to Heaven. We have a tradition that it is considered as if you fasted eighty-four fasts consecutively." In my view, it's worth much more than that.



Torah Gems

אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו וכו' (ו-ט)

In the well known Rashi at the beginning of this parasha, we learn that some sages compared Noach favorably to Avrohom, and some found him to be unfavorable.

R' Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai ZT"L - the Chid"a, explains that in truth, both views can be considered correct. **The Medrash Shocher Tov** relates that Avrohom asked Shem, the son of Noach, "In what merit were you able to leave the ark?" Shem answered, "In the merit of the charity which we performed and caring for the animals." Immediately, Avrohom said to himself, "If such is the reward for caring for animals, how much greater must be the reward for caring for humans!" At that moment, Avrohom established an inn, "**אש"ל**", in Be'er Sheva for wayward travellers to rest.

It turns out that Noach, through his son Shem, was a major influence on Avrohom. Therefore, in that sense, Noach was really the greater of the two, for Avrohom learned from him how to act. On the other hand, Avrohom carried the lesson which he learned to its logical conclusion - one must help and care for people before animals - while Noach did not. Thus Avrohom would be considered greater.

"One of life's mysteries is how a two-pound box of sweets, can make a person gain five pounds of weight!"

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ויבא נח ובניו ואשתו וכו' אל התבה מפני מי המבול וגו' (ז-ז)

The famous parable is told that in a small town there was once a severe drought. The community synagogues each prayed separately for rain, but to no avail. The tears and prayers failed to open up the gates of Heaven, and for months no rain fell.

Finally, the town's eldest sage held a meeting with prominent community rabbis and lay leaders. "There are two items lacking in our approach, faith and unity. Each one of you must impress upon his congregation the need to believe. If we are united and sincere, our prayers will be answered!" He declared that all the synagogues in the city would join together for a day of tefillah. Everyone, men women and children would join together for this event. "I assure you," he exclaimed, "that if we meet both criteria - faith and unity - no one will leave that prayer service without getting drenched!"

There was no shul large enough to contain the entire community so the date was set to gather and daven in a field! For the next few weeks all the rabbis spoke about bitachon - faith and achdus - unity. On the designated day the entire town gathered in a large field whose crops had long withered from the severe drought. Men, women, and children all gathered and anxiously awaited the old sage to begin the service.

The elderly rabbi walked up to the podium. His eyes scanned the tremendous crowd that filled the large field and then they dimmed in dismay. The rabbi began shaking his head in dissatisfaction. "This will never work," he moaned dejectedly. "The rain will not come." Slowly he left the podium.

The other rabbis on the dais were shocked. "But rebbe everyone is here and they are all united! Surely they must believe that the rains will fall! Otherwise who would have bothered to come on a working day!"

The rabbi shook his head slowly and sadly. "No. They don't really believe," he stated. "Rashi brings down the Medrash which proclaims that Noach, to a small degree, lacked faith as he only entered the ark, **'מפני מי המבול'** - because of the waters of the Flood. It would appear that Noach did not enter the ark until the rain forced him to."

The rabbi let out an exasperated sigh. ***"I scanned the entire crowd. Nobody even brought a raincoat!"***

ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם. וישת מן היין וישכר וכו' (ט-כ'א')

Rashi quotes the *medrash* that when Noach emerged from the **תיבה** - *ark*, he debased himself by planting a vineyard, which eventually led him to drink from the wine and become drunk. Getting drunk is a profane act but why does Rashi seem to imply that the actual planting was itself debasing?

The **Dubno Maggid, R' Yaakov Krantz ZT''L** explains with a parable: A man who visited a *tzaddik* received a blessing, "May your first venture flourish." Upon his return home, his wife berated him for having tarried so long. Instead of bearing her shouts with silence, he responded angrily and they eventually engaged in a violent exchange of words.

Later, the man came to the *tzaddik* and complained that his business ventures had not succeeded like the *tzaddik* had promised. Said the *tzaddik*, "I blessed you that your first venture should flourish. Had you not responded to your wife, the blessing would indeed have applied to your business. Instead, you made your argument with your wife your first venture and it did indeed flourish!"

Similarly, Noach had received a Divine blessing when he exited the ark - "*Hashem blessed Noach .... Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land.*" Instead of utilizing his precious blessing for the good of the

world, he foolishly applied it to planting grapes and making wine. This is what Rashi quotes, is the debasement - "**ויחל נח**" - which led to his undoing.



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו את האלקים התהלך נח וגו' (ו-ט)

One of the greatest Chassidishe masters was the famed Rebbe, **R' Zusha of Anipoli ZT"L**. R' Zusha was an extremely poor man, never having enough money to support himself and his family. However, as it was well-documented, he was a man who never worried and never fretted. R' Zusha was always happy with his lot and believed with perfect faith that Hashem would take care of him.

The story is told over that it happened once again, and R' Zusha found himself in debt, absolutely unable to come up with the money. With the repayment date the next morning and the resources with which to repay nowhere in sight, another man might have felt hopeless. R' Zusha however, was a tzaddik of perfect faith. Long ago he had placed himself totally in the hands of the Creater of the World, and he had no need to be concerned.

But R' Zusha felt that that was not enough. So R' Zusha, wanting to further demonstrate to his Creator how perfect his faith and trust was, sat down the night before with a piece of paper and in a burst of inspiration began to write. On the piece of paper, he recorded 25 different scenarios in which the money needed to pay back the debt would wind up in R' Zusha's hands. He strained to use his imagination, however realistic or unrealistic a scenario might be, whereby Hashem would ensure that the funds come his way.

When he finished writing, he laid down the pen and paper and left it be. The rest of the evening passed, and R' Zusha gave the situation no further thought.

The morning came, and R' Zusha went to shul to daven like on any other day. No sooner did R' Zusha finish his morning prayers, than did the required sum manifest itself. It was miraculous and unusual, but the money came to R' Zusha, in a 26th way, according to a scenario that he had never even thought of to record. R' Zusha gratefully thanked Hashem and proceeded to pay off his debt. But for some time afterwards, R' Zusha remained thoroughly troubled.

"Oy yoy, oy yoy," he moaned, extremely disappointed with himself. "Is the Creator of the World limited to the feeble ideas of R' Zusha!?"



Once at a Fabrengen, **Reb Mendel Futerfas zt"l** said, "even Noach knew that the first thing one needed to do after the Mabul was to drink a Lechaim. Therefore, he took branches of vines into the Teiva - ark, in order to plant them after the Mabul and grow grapes."

"If so," asked Reb Mendel, "how could such a tragedy happen as the Torah tells us with Noach becoming drunk and his son Cham behaving so inappropriately?"

"The answer is very clear, that's what happens when one drinks on one's own. 'Lechaim' one drinks together!"

R' Yisroel Meir Kagan ZT"L (The Chofetz Chaim) would say:

"There is no need to talk about another person. If you wish to praise someone, praise Hashem. If you wish to find fault with someone, you would do better to look for faults within yourself!"



פרשת נח The Meaning of זכירה — Divine and Human Memory - Dr. Sholom Springer 8th of October ל׳ תשרי 2010

Good morning everyone, and Gut Chodesh. We are all familiar with the dramatic story of the Mabul. Right in the middle of that narrative we find a remarkable פסוק **ויזכר אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה, ויעבר אלקים רוח על הארץ וישכו המים.** This verse appears not only in Parshas Noach, but prominently in **זכרונות** on Rosh Hashanah. And it raises a fundamental question:

What does it mean that Hashem "remembered" Noach? Does that imply He had previously forgotten?



Of course not. When we speak of **זכירה** in relation to Hashem, it cannot mean what memory means for us. Hashem does not forget. So what *does* **זכירה** mean?

1. Divine Memory — A Change in הנהגה

Rashi tells us that the Name **אלקים** represents **מידת הדין**, yet through the **תפילות** of the **צדיקים** it can be transformed into **מידת הרחמים**. That shift — that change in Divine focus — is called **זכירה**.

זכירה does not mean recalling something forgotten. It means Hashem directing His attention toward a particular reality.

When Hashem focuses on the righteousness of a **צדיק**, His **הנהגה** becomes **רחמים**. When He focuses on the wickedness of a **רשע**, His **הנהגה** becomes **דין**. His knowledge never changes — only His interaction with the world does.

Rashi on **ויעבר אלקים רוח על הארץ** calls it **רוח תנחומין**— a shift in Divine conduct, not Divine awareness.

2. Why Are the Animals Included?

The Ramban asks: Why does the **פסוק** say Hashem remembered the animals? They have no **זכות** or **חובה**.

He explains: **ברא מזוני – ברא חיה**. When Hashem creates life, He creates its sustenance. Divine **זכירה** here means Hashem turning His attention to the very purpose of Creation — **קיום הבריאה**.

After a year in the Teivah, the world was ready to begin anew. Hashem's **הנהגה** shifted from **דין** to **רחמים**, allowing Creation to continue.

We see the same in Egypt: **וישמע אלקים את נאקתם, ויזכר אלקים את בריתו**. Their cries brought about a new Divine focus. Rashi says: **נתן לב עליהם ולא העלים עיניו**— Hashem turned His attention toward them.

Thus, **זכירה** = transition from **הסתר פנים to גלוי פנים**.

3. Human Memory — What We Keep Alive

Human memory works very differently.

The Chofetz Chaim tells of a man in his nineties who vividly remembered seeing Emperor Franz Joseph at age five — every detail of the horses, the carriage, even the gold buttons.

Why? Because powerful experiences are **revisited**. We think about them, talk about them, retell them. Repetition keeps memory alive. Other memories fade because we don't reinforce them — or because we suppress them when they make us uncomfortable. Modern psychology calls this **cognitive dissonance**.

4. Torah's Memory System — Built-In Reminders

The Ramban (end of Bo) explains that mitzvos like **מזוזה, תפילין,** and **קריאת שמע** serve as constant cues.

והיה לך לאות על ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך... למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך.

The Torah ensures that the great truths — especially **יציאת מצרים** — remain **תמיד במחשבה**, always present in our consciousness.

Without reminders, even the greatest events would fade.

5. A Reciprocal Relationship

The **בעלי מוסר** teach that Hashem's attention toward us mirrors our attention toward Him.

כי בי חשק ואפלטהו... אשגבהו כי ידע שמי. Closeness brings protection.

רק אתכם ידעתי— knowledge as intimacy.

When we attach ourselves to Hashem, His **הנהגה** becomes clearer. When we drift, His **הנהגה** becomes more concealed.

6. The Yamim Tovim — Three Models of Memory

Each Yom Tov expresses a different kind of **זכירה**.

Chanukah & Purim — Remembering the Past

We say: **שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה** - We thank Hashem for miracles done long ago. This is historical gratitude.

Pesach — Reliving the Past

The Haggadah says: **חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים.**

We don't remember the Exodus — we **experience** it. We place ourselves inside the story. That's why we do *not* say **שעשה נסים לאבותינו**— it would distance us from the event.

Shavuos — Bringing the Past Forward

קול גדול ולא יסף— the voice of Sinai never ceased.

On Shavuos, we don't travel back to Har Sinai. We bring Har Sinai into the present. Every sincere moment of learning is part of that same Revelation.

Three forms of memory:

1. Remembering the past with gratitude — Chanukah, Purim
2. Reliving the past as participants — Pesach
3. Bringing the past into the present — Shavuos

7. Ya'aleh VeYavo — The Ascent of Prayer

Ya'aleh VeYavo contains eight expressions: **יעלה ויבא ויגיע ויראה וירצה וישמע ויפקד ויזכר**

The Vilna Gaon explains:

- **יעלה**— lifting ourselves above the material
- The next seven correspond to the **seven רקיעים**, ascending levels of spiritual reality.

Rosh Chodesh is **זמן כפרה**, a time of renewal and forgiveness. When we say **ויזכר**, we ask Hashem to turn His attention toward us — again, not recalling something forgotten, but responding with closeness.

Conclusion

Throughout Torah, **זכירה** never means forgetfulness. It means **Divine attention**, a shift in **הנהגה**, a movement from **הסתר פנים** to **גלוי פנים**.

Human memory must be cultivated — through mitzvos, through repetition, through living our history.

And the Yamim Tovim teach us three powerful ways to remember:

- to **thank** Hashem for the past,
- to **relive** the past as if we were there,
- and to **bring** the past into the present so it continues to shape our lives.

May our **זכירה** of Hashem be constant and alive — and may His **זכירה** of us be for life, blessing, and peace.

Gut Chodesh and Gut Shabbos.

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Mind Over Matters - Lessons from the Modzitzer Rebbe and others to help us deal with stressful times

One of the צדיקים who survived World War II, I can't remember if it was the סאטמאר רב or the קלויזנבורגער רבי, said that only after the war were they able to understand why נח, upon leaving the תיבה, came out, planted a vineyard, made wine and got drunk. It seemed so inappropriate for someone who is described as such a צדיק. After the war they said they understood, because so many people who did survive ran back to the towns that they came from, hoping to find family, friends, and they came oftentimes to discover that there was no one left, everyone had been destroyed.

The entire world that they knew no longer existed. This put them in an incredible state of pain, and they looked for some way to numb the pain, and some of them turned to alcohol just to try and save themselves.

The רב said, "So you'll ask me, what about me? Didn't I also feel such pain?"

He says, "I did."

"Didn't that pain also drive you mad?"

He said, "It did, but it made me crazy to build. And I took that pain and I transformed it into the energy of building, and that really built so much of the world of תורה that we see and live in now."

That dynamic, that power illustrates the ability to somewhat control the mind, to stop the mind from going to negative places, and instead to have it go to positive places.

This is something that we need, especially in wartime. Throughout the day we'll often find our mind going to many places that are painful, depressing, frightening, and it really isn't useful or purposeful. We're supposed to have empathy for people who are

suffering, we're supposed to be aware of the situation, but we're supposed to control our minds so that it doesn't weaken us, as the **רמב״ם** brings in the laws of war that soldiers have to be careful about what they think about, that it shouldn't weaken their morale and weaken their strength in war. So, too, everyone at times of war should try, as much as we can, to control those thoughts.

The **מאדזשיצער רבי** in World War II, I heard from **ר׳ פישל שכטר**, someone met him once during the wartime, and he looked at the **רבי** and he was amazed. He said, "**רבי**, you don't seem worried."

He said, "I worry. I have five minutes a day that I worry. The rest would simply be repetition."

It's very true if we think about it. Obviously that's a very high level that's hard to reach, but we have to at least set our sights on learning and hoping to control things more. We often view our world of thought as totally uncontrolled, not our responsibility, and our thoughts will go where they go.

They say that a **חסיד** once came to the **בעל שם טוב** and asked him for help in controlling his thoughts. The **בעל שם טוב** said, "I'm going to send you to someone who can help you." He told him the name of a man in a certain village and said, "Go to him, he can help you."

The **חסיד** traveled to the village, he arrived there in the nighttime. He came to the man's house, the lights were on, and he knocked on the door. Nobody answered. He knocked louder, again nobody answered. Tried yelling out, "Hello!", nobody answered.

The lights in the house eventually went off. In a last effort he tried throwing some gravel up at the window to get somebody to come out. Nobody came out. The village was shut down. With no other choice, he curled up on the doorstep and went to sleep.

The next morning the owner of the house opened the door on his way out to **שול**, and the traveling **חסיד** looked up from where he'd been

sleeping and said, "Why didn't you answer the door last night? Why didn't you let me in?"

So the man said, "The **בעל שם טוב** sends people to me who need help controlling their thoughts. That's lesson number one. Your mind is like your home: you can choose whom to let in and whom not."

Again, it's a high level, but it's something we have to aspire to.

In the **הושענות** which we said on **סוכות**, one of the **הושענות** speaks about all sorts of agricultural dangers. It lists different plants and fruits and the natural enemies that can destroy them, whether it's a locust that can eat a plant, whether it's a worm that can get into fruit, and then it has a line, "**הושענא נפש מבהלה**", *save people from panic.*

צדיקים say that we have to pay attention to that. The ultimate enemy of **נפש**, of the human being, is **בהלה**, is panic.

And there were **צדיקים** who used to repeat that phrase in times of stress in order to remind themselves that they have to save themselves from panic.

One final example just of this power, during the time of Napoleon, there was **מחלוקת** among different communities in the Jewish world as to how they related to Napoleon. The **אלטר רבי**, the **בעל התניא**, was opposed to Napoleon, and one of his **חסידים** even spied on Napoleon's troops for the other side.

Now, the way the French would try to detect spies was if there was someone they suspected of spying, they would simply surprise him and yell, "You're a spy!" and then check his pulse, his heartbeat, to see if it was racing.

So this **ליובאוויטשער חסיד** who was spying on them got that treatment. They came and they said, "You're a spy!" They checked his pulse, they checked his heart, calm and cool, even though he really was a spy.

Later people asked him how he did it, he said, "That's what our **רבי**, the **בעל התניא**, taught us: **מוח שליט על הלב**. The mind can and should rule over the heart."

If we take small steps and at least define this as a goal, hopefully we'll be able to succeed, and hopefully **השם** will give us quieter times where we'll be able to focus our minds from one positive thing to the other without having to try to lock out those dark thoughts.

Wishing everyone a good and peaceful **שבת**.

The Weekly Vort

■ **ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה** – ***The dove came to him toward evening, and behold it had plucked an olive leaf with its beak*** (8:11).

Rashi, quoting a Midrash, recounts that the dove said to Noach: *"Let my food be as bitter as an olive – as long as it is provided by the Hand of Hashem – and not as sweet as honey – if it will be provided by the hand of flesh and blood."*

Asks the Dubno Maggid: Why would the dove make such a statement to Noach before taking leave of him and the *teivah*? Had not Noach so graciously provided for it and cared for all of its needs over the course of an entire year?

The Maggid answers – The dove was concerned that Noach would suspect that it had returned not because the flood had ended, but because it knew that it would receive all of its food in the *teivah*. So the dove told Noach, "I have not returned for food. For I prefer to be sustained with food bitter as olives, as long as it is provided by Hashem, rather than with food sweet as honey but provided by man! If the land had dried, I would not have returned." (A Shabbos Vort)

■ **מכל הבהמה הטהורה תקח לך שבעה שבעה איש ואשתו וגם מעוף השמים שבעה שבעה זכר ונקבה** – ***Of every clean animal take unto you seven pairs… of the birds of the heavens also, seven pairs*** (7:2,3).



Why does the Torah refer to the animals, and not the birds, as *tahor*?

The physical signs that show whether an animal is kosher or not, such as split hooves or chewing its cud, are external and easily identifiable. But the signs of kosher birds are internal and cannot be seen externally. This is why Hashem commanded Noach to take animals that were *tahor*, for he was able to discern between them and choose only those that fit the description of kosher animals. He could not, however, identify the *tahor* birds just by looking at them, so he discerned their status by seeing whether they came seven at a time. (**Meshech Chochmah**) (A Shabbos Vort)



The Chofetz Chaim said that an ehrlicher Yid is often called a "hechere Yid," a high Yid. It can be compared to a person standing near a fence who can't see over it. But someone tall can see above the fence. He sees so much more than others. - Similarly, a hechere Yid is a person who can see the world from a higher perspective, and such a person knows that the world is run with chesed and rachamim.

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Authentic Hashkofa from Gedolei Yisroel

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ֙ תֵּבַ֣ת עֲצֵי־גֹ֔פֶר קִנִּ֖ים תַּעֲשֶׂ֣ה אֶת־הַתֵּבָ֑ה

"You shall make the ark with compartments (kinim)" (6:14).

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin said that if one wants to be saved from the birth pangs of *Moshiach* one has to disconnect completely from the way of life, mentality, and outlook of non-Jews or those erring Jews who live a non-Jewish way of life. This can only be achieved by constructing a *tevas Noach.*

The *medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 38:14) says that in the above *pasuk* Hashem was telling Noach that just as a bird offering (*ken)* purifies the *metzorah*, so too will the *tevah* purify us. *A metzorah* is punished for speaking *lashon hara.* He wanted to show off to people how smart and knowledgeable he is, and so he is punished by being forced to live in isolation from his fellow man, until he becomes used to not speaking at all.

Similarly, Hashem wanted to demonstrate to Noach that when one is surrounded by wicked people, the solution is to live in isolation from them. The *tevah* serves as a reminder for Noach's descendants in future generations when faced with similar situations, to imagine that they are living on their own and not be influenced by their environment.

The *medrash* (*ibid.*, 39:6) says that even though Hashem made a covenant not to bring another flood to the world, that refers to a flood of water but not to a "flood" of fire.

Our generation is engulfed in an inferno of heresy and immorality, which is constantly increasing, and in order to be saved from this conflagration we have to follow in the footsteps of Noach by separating ourselves completely from the people in the street, since their speech and notions are very far removed from Hashem's world. Someone fortunate enough to spend the entire day in a

yeshiva or *kollel* is privileged to live in Hashem's world even in *olam hazeh*.

The late Satmar Rebbe, **Rav Yoel Teitelbaum**, once met the Chazon Ish and told him that in light of the ***Rambam's*** statement that if a person finds himself in an environment full of wicked people he must run away and live in the desert (*Hilchos Dei'os* 6:1), since the streets in our times are full of *kefirah* (heresy) ,we should follow the Rambam's advice.

The Chazon Ish responded that there was no need to do that since the yeshivos and *kollelim*, which are full of Torah and fear of Heaven, are our "deserts." They serve as a type of *tevas Noach*, separating the Torah world from the world outside, so that we can remain impervious to the pernicious atmosphere prevailing outside our holy domain.

Burst of Inspiration – Rabbi Jeremy Golker

Lowly *emunah* or *emunah* in the lowly

Let me share with you an amazing idea at the beginning of this week's **פרשה**. The **פרשה** says, **ויבא נח ובניו ואשתו ונשי בניו אתו אל התיבה**.. So they go into the Teiva **מפני מי המבול**

What does it mean **מפני מי המבול**? So Rashi says the following, famous Rashi: **אף נח מקטני אמנה היה**. - **נח** himself was also someone of little faith, **מאמין ואינו מאמין**, he believed and yet didn't believe, **שיבא המבול**, that the **מבול** would come, **ולא נכנס לתיבה עד שדחקוהו המים**, and therefore he only entered the **תיבה** because the the waters forced him to do so.

Asked the **Vorker Rebbe**, the first Vorker Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael Yitzchak Kalish of Vorka, he died in 1848, a **תלמיד** of Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, he's the father also of the first Amshinov Rebbe: How

can it be that **נח**, the great **נח**, who the Torah itself testifies **צדיק תמים**, that he was **מקטני אמנה**?

So he reads the Rashi a bit differently. He reads the Rashi as follows: **אף נח מקטני אמנה היה מאמין**. He believed in those who had little faith. He felt that they would turn around.

ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול, and he didn't believe that the **מבול** would come because he had faith in those who had little faith. And he hoped that they would do *teshuvah*, they would turn around, and therefore that would prevent the **מבול** from coming.

Therefore we see, **אף נח מקטני אמנה היה מאמין**, he also had *emunah* in those who had little faith, **ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול**.



Ultimate Moral Fabric

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: **בְּצֶדֶק תִּכּוֹנָנִי רַחֲקִי מֵעֹשֶׁק כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי וּמִמְּחִתָּה כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלָיִךְ**

– *Establish yourself through righteousness, distance yourself from oppression, for you need not fear it, and from ruin for it will not come near you.'"* (Yeshayahu 54:14)

What is the connection between righteousness protecting us from oppression and ruin? In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story:

Originally from Poland, Moshe Kaufman came to Germany with his family, got married, and opened a linen manufacturing business in Berlin. Aside from his top quality work, Moshe had a reputation for honest business practices that drew customers from all over the country. Herr Belgardt was one such customer who successfully sold linens throughout Germany. He and Mr. Kaufman shared a cordial relationship built on trust and mutual goodwill.

WWI hit Europe, and when the dust finally settled four years later, people tried to rebuild their shattered lives. However, the entire continent suffered the economic blow of the Great Depression, and suddenly people who had been loyal customers for many years found it difficult to pay Mr. Kaufman.

He wasn't surprised when Herr Belgardt came one day, "*I have bad news. The economy is killing my business. Stores that used to pay me punctually owe me large sums of money. And that's in the cities and towns where people are still buying linen. Many stores have stopped selling these goods entirely. Nobody can afford new linen or quilt covers anymore. Business is dead. I wanted to return the last delivery of merchandise that I purchased, since I don't see any way of repaying the money that I owe you and don't want to sink even deeper in debt.*"

Mr. Kaufman told the surprised German, "I am unwilling to accept the merchandise. You have always been a loyal customer. I trust you implicitly, and I want you to hold on to everything you took from me until times improve."

Belgardt pushed back, but Mr. Kaufman firmly said, "You'll pay me back whenever you're able."

Belgardt filled with gratitude, told his three sons the story and ordered, "*If you ever meet a Jew, and certainly if ever have the opportunity to help the Kaufman family, do it.*"

One day in September 1938, someone knocked authoritatively on the door of the Kaufman home in Berlin. The visitor was a tall, blond-haired man clad in the fearful uniform of the feared Nazi police. One did not ignore a knock on the door by the police if you wanted to stay alive.

To their immense relief, the officer introduced himself as Otto Belgardt and told them he was a son of their father's old client. "*I've been promoted to lieutenant of the police department at the*

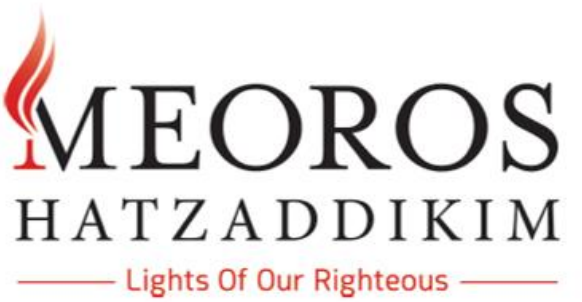
Hackescher Markt here. My father told me what Herr Kaufman did for us 15 years ago, and we've never forgotten it. If you ever need anything from me, don't hesitate to ask. I will do whatever I can for you."

The Kaufman family served the lieutenant coffee and cake and presented him with a beautiful set of down quilts for his family as a token of their appreciation.

Two months later, on a peaceful November afternoon, Otto Belgardt called. This time, they could hear the tension in his voice as he relayed the kind of information that could cost him his life if caught. "*There's going to be a raid on the Jewish community tomorrow morning at six. Every Polish-born Jewish male over the age of 15 will be sent in cattle cars over the border into Poland. Your husband must not be at home when the raid is taking place. Tell him to hide in the hospital, which is not going to be searched.*"

The Kaufmans immediately called all the Polish-Jewish families in the area, saving countless families who fled the country…Shortly afterwards, on the night of Kristallnacht as Germans burned shuls and Torah scrolls, lieutenant Belgardt arrived at the Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue and stopped the mob, at risk to his own life, on the pretext that the building should be preserved as a historical site. He even forged false certificates for many Jews, enabling them to flee Germany before the war broke out – all from one incredible kindness.

Rav Schwab (Yeshayahu 54:14) beautifully explains that when we charitably give beyond our comfort zone, we will not fear outsiders because they will see our high level of ethical business and care. We cannot underestimate the profound power of transcending ourselves to support others – just like Moshe Kaufman.



Rav Avrohom Moshe Der Groisse Reb Moshe of Pshevorsk (Cheshvan 9)

A Lesson Learned From Thieves

Rav Moshe of Pshevorsk was once traveling in the forest and lost his way. After wandering about some three hours with no sense of direction he happened upon a small cottage, from where he saw a light shining. As he reached the window and peered inside, he was seized by great fear, for he saw a band of robbers and highwaymen plotting theft and murder. Unfortunately, the band of thieves spotted him, grabbed him and tied him up.

As he awaited his fate, he began to recite the *Viduy* (confessional prayer) and *Shema Yisrael* over and over, as one prepares himself to take leave of this world. Just then, among the thieves, a Jewish robber spotted and recognized the *Tzaddik.*

"Wait, my friends! Do not harm this man, for he is a *Tzaddik* and has the power to bless us." Thus he convinced his friends not to harm or touch Rav Moshe.

The ringleaders approached him and said, "Honorable Rav, please bless us and then please offer us your sage advice." - Rav Moshe agreed.

"Here is a young lad who is in training. We wish you to observe our initiation and offer your sage advice as to whether he is fit to join us or not."

So saying, they asked the lad to fetch a candle, but he returned with a loaf of bread. When they challenged his mistake, the brazen youth stood his ground, arguing. He endured a beating but would not admit his error. This scenario repeated itself over and over again: the robbers requested he fetch an object and he would return with

something else, and each time, rather than admit any mistake or wrongdoing, he accepted a beating that grew harsher and harsher.

After the last beating of one hundred blows, almost enough to kill a man, the robbers turned to the *Tzaddik* and asked his advice. "You see, Rav, we are training the lad; by these blows, he learns never to admit his mistake. That way, if he is caught he learns that in the end all beatings cease, and if he never admits and confesses, he will go free and we will never be discovered."

"I have learned a valuable mussar lesson," remarked Rav Moshe Pshevorsker. "Even if someone is beaten and downtrodden by *yissurim* (suffering), it must always come to an end, for He is merciful."



It Costs Nothing Yet It Is So Valuable!

The parsha starts by praising Noach. "These are the generations of Noach. Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation. Noach walked with Hashem." (Bereishis 6:9).

Later in the parsha, when Hashem told Noach to enter the ark, "Hashem told Noach, 'Come into the ark, you and your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before Me, in this generation.'" (Bereishis 6:9).

Rashi (6:9) points out that when Hashem told Noach to enter the ark, Hashem left out a descriptive praise that the first pasuk of the parsha had used. The Torah left out the word of praise, "perfect", that the Torah had used at the beginning of the parsha.

This is based on the Talmud (Eruvin 18B). Rabbi Yirmiya ben Elazar said that one should only say part of a person's praise in his presence.

One may say all of a person's praise when not in his presence. When referring to Noach while not in his presence, Hashem, in the Torah, refers to Noah as a righteous and perfect man. In Noach's presence Hashem just referred to Noach as "righteous".

Rashi (Eruvin18B) explains that if you praise a person in totality in front of him it appears as if you are trying to flatter him. **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** points out something very interesting. Hashem could have simply told Noach to come inside the ark. Hashem did not have to add the words of praise, "For you I have seen to be a righteous person before Me in this generation."

We see that giving compliments is one of the Attributes of Hashem. This teaches us a very fundamental lesson. We, too, should give compliments to other people. Everyone likes a compliment, no matter how successful and how important they are. A compliment makes a person feel good and gives him confidence.

A sincere compliment, a word of encouragement, or an expression of appreciation can make a difference in someone's life. Some people are desperate to hear a good word. Sometimes Each of us should freely give compliments to other people. We will be copying the attributes of Hashem. It does not cost us anything. In doing so, we can boost another person's confidence as well as help change another person's life!

The Neshama Knows

Our physical bodies may not recognize the incredible pleasure of learning Torah, but our neshamos do. Every moment of Torah learning brings our neshamos immeasurable pleasure, even when we cannot feel it.

Remember this, and you will find greater joy each time you learn! ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

Lacking Emunah?

Chazal describes Noach as miktanei amanah, someone lacking in faith (Rashi, Bereishis 7:7, s.v. mipnei mei hamabul). How could Noach, whom the Torah itself calls an ish tzaddik tamim (Bereishis 6:9), a righteous and pure man, be described as lacking emunah? How could those two descriptions co-exist?

The Kedushas Levi explains that Noach certainly believed in Hashem. What he lacked was sufficient belief in **himself**. Noach did not fully recognize the power that he, as a tzaddik, possesses. He did not believe that his tefillos could actually overturn the decree and save his generation.

In his humility, he thought, "Who am I? What can my tefillah possibly accomplish? I don't have the greatness to make an impact on these people. This generation needs to be much better for me to really make a difference." - That, says the Kedushas Levi, was the deficiency in Noach's emunah.

A person cannot afford to be miktanei emanah in themselves. Hashem gave us our particular personality, our specific strengths and weaknesses, our precise mind, talents, and abilities.

Rav Shimon Schwab, ZT"L, comments on the bracha we say every morning, "She'asah li kol tzorki - Who has provided me with all that I need." He points out that we need to recognize that this is a very personalized bracha. We are recognizing that Hashem has given each of us what we need to fulfil the particular mission He has given us. Of course, we need to grow. We need to learn. We need to become better parents, but we don't need to become somebody else.

The Kedushas Levi teaches us that Noach's mistake was not recognizing how much power Hashem had already placed within him. Perhaps, when we say "she'asah li kol tzorki", it should remind us not to make the same mistake.



Maximizing Our Potential and Soaring to Lofty Spiritual Heights

מֵהָעוֹף לְמִינֵהוּ וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ מִכֹּל רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ שְׁנַיִם מִכֹּל יָבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ לְהַחֲיוֹת (6:20)

מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה ... וּמִן־הָעוֹף וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־רֹמֶשׂ עַל־הָאֲדָמָה׃ שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם בָּאוּ אֶל־נֹחַ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה (7:8-9)

Parshas Noach revolves around the *teivah* that Hashem instructed Noach to build to save himself, his family, and all the species of birds and animals from the flood that destroyed the earth.

Interestingly, when Hashem initially commanded Noach to build the *teivah*, He told him to bring into the *teivah* two of each kind of birds, animals, and creeping creatures, mentioning birds first. When the time came for Noach to go into the *teivah*, the Torah records that he entered together with the animals, birds, and creeping creatures, listing the animals before the birds. What is the reason that the Torah reverses the order of the birds and the animals in a span of only ten *pesukim*?

Rav Chaim Zvi Senter suggests that birds are considered superior to animals due to their ability to fly above them, so they are listed first. However, this advantage is only relevant when they are living naturally in the wild and free to fly around. If, on the other hand, the birds are restricted to a confined area, their inherent advantage becomes irrelevant, and their unutilized potential renders them inferior to other animals.

In light of this distinction, it is now understandable that when Hashem initially approached Noach to discuss the impending flood with him, He mentioned the birds before the animals, as they are naturally considered superior. When the time arrived to enter the *teivah*, which would negate the birds' ability to soar toward the

heavens, they no longer had any edge over the animals and were listed after them.



Rav Senter adds that the Gemara (Shabbos 130a) says that Klal Yisrael is compared to a bird: a dove. Just as the dove's wings enable it to fly, so too the Torah is the wings of the Jewish people.

If we elect to lower ourselves to the restricting decadence of the immoral nations that surround us, we give up our advantage and become inferior to them, due to our wasted abilities. When we use the Torah properly, by studying and keeping its laws, we can actualize our potential for greatness by soaring to lofty spiritual heights.



Pninim U'Peliyos on the Weekly Parsha

Q Every child knows that Noach's *teivah* was divided into three levels: one for people, one for animals, and one for refuse. But have you ever wondered why an entire floor was devoted to rubbish?

After all, the *teivah* floated for a full year upon an endless expanse of water. Why not simply throw the garbage overboard? It would hardly have disturbed the world beneath. The oceans were vast, and the waste would surely have disappeared over time. Why endure the discomfort, odour, and inconvenience of storing an entire year's worth of refuse inside the *teivah*?

A **R' Label Lam** derives a profound lesson from here:

The inhabitants of the *teivah* were destined to become the builders of a new world. Had they spent an entire year casually tossing their rubbish out of the window, that behaviour could easily have become second nature. What would happen once the *mabul* ended and they returned to dry land? They might well have continued discarding waste wherever and whenever they pleased.

Therefore, they were required to live for an entire year with a floor dedicated to rubbish, enduring the inconvenience in order to ensure that they would not develop habits destructive to the world they were about to rebuild.

Sometimes discomfort is a small price to pay for preserving proper character.

Q When Noach wished to determine whether the *mabul* had ended, he sent out the raven and later the dove. Why did he not simply ask Og who was outside the *teivah*?

According to *Chazal*, Og, King of Bashan, survived the *mabul* while remaining outside the *teivah*. The Gemara in *Zevachim* (113b) states that a miracle occurred whereby the waters around the *teivah* did not harm him. *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* relates that Og sat upon a ladder attached to the exterior of the *teivah*, swore allegiance to Noach, and received food daily through an opening in its side.

If Og spent the entire year outside, surely, he knew exactly what conditions were like. Why not simply ask him whether the waters had receded?

A Several answers have been suggested:

i) The *Radal* explains that Og's survival proved very little. *Tosfos* teaches that exceptionally powerful beings, such as Og and

the *re'em*, were capable of withstanding conditions that would have been fatal to ordinary creatures.

Even if *Og* survived, the world might still have been uninhabitable. The dove, by contrast, could demonstrate that normal living conditions had returned by successfully locating a place to rest.

ii) Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fisher, in *Even Yisrael*, suggests that Noach simply did not regard *Og* as a fully reliable source of information. Consequently, he preferred to verify conditions through the signs provided by the raven and the dove.

iii) Perhaps *Og* departed immediately when conditions improved. By the time Noach sought confirmation, *Og* was no longer present. Yet his absence could not serve as proof that the earth was habitable, since other explanations were possible.

iv) The *Daf Al Daf* (*Zevachim* 113b) cites a beautiful explanation:

Noach intentionally chose not to rely upon *Og* because he wanted to impress upon him that his survival had not made him indispensable to the future of mankind.

Had Noach depended upon *Og*'s information, *Og* might have concluded that he occupied a central role in rebuilding the world. By sending the dove instead, Noach demonstrated that the future depended solely upon the will of Hashem, not upon any contribution from *Og*.





Did Noach survive the *mabul* unscathed, or did he become ill because of it?



The Medrash Rabbah comments on the *pasuk*:

"*Vayisha'er ach Noach* — Only Noach remained."

The word "*ach*" ("only") implies limitation. The Medrash explains that Noach was not entirely spared. Throughout the year in the *teivah*,

he suffered greatly and even coughed up blood because of the harsh conditions and penetrating cold.

The *Yefeh To'ar* explains that although the waters of the Flood were initially boiling hot, this was primarily during the forty days of rain. Afterwards, Hashem cooled the waters, and it was then that Noach suffered from the intense cold.





At the end of this week's *parsha* we encounter the story of *Migdal Bavel*. Everyone knows it was extraordinarily tall, but just how tall was it?



Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (*Perek* 24) relates that the builders completed only a portion of the structure they originally intended to build, and yet it reached an astonishing height of seventy *mil*.

According to the calculations of the *Chazon Ish*, this amounts to approximately eighty kilometres.

The tower was so tall that bricks and mortar passed from workers at the bottom to workers at the top required an entire year to complete the journey.

The Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (109a) teaches that ultimately one-third of the tower was swallowed into the earth, one-third burned, and one-third remains.

Even if only a third remained, the resulting structure would still stand at a staggering height of roughly twenty-seven kilometres.

To put things into perspective, the tallest building in the world today, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, stands at less than one kilometre high. The remnant of the Tower of Bavel, according to these calculations, would dwarf anything humanity has ever built.



וַיַּ֣רְא אֱלֹקִ֔ים אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ וְהִנֵּ֣ה נִשְׁחָ֑תָה כִּֽי־הִשְׁחִ֤ית כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ אֶת־דַּרְכּ֔וֹ עַל־הָאָֽרֶץ



The city of Carlesbad, Germany, was renowned in earlier times for its spas and hot springs, which attracted countless vacationers seeking relaxation, comfort, and the healing properties of its many springs.

Among those who frequented the resort were prominent *Roshei Yeshivah* and *Chassidic Rebbes*, who would spend time there to refresh their minds and find relief from various physical ailments. **R' Dovid Shapira *zt"l*** - known affectionately as **R' Dovid'l of Dinov**, author of the *Tzemach Dovid* - once visited Carlesbad and its famous hot springs, intending to remain there for several days and benefit from its therapeutic qualities.

However, after only a short time in the city, he had seen enough. He was deeply shocked to discover that many people who had come from prominent Jewish communities throughout Europe, individuals who ordinarily led modest, spiritually fulfilling lives and were renowned in their hometowns for their righteous conduct and good deeds, had abandoned their usual restraints. At the resort, they indulged in inappropriate levity and frivolous behavior.

R' Dovid'l could hardly believe what he was witnessing. These were respected members and leaders of Jewish communities, people who appeared to embody the highest standards of *Torah* observance and moral conduct back home. Yet, away from their communities and the watchful eyes of their fellow Jews, they seemed to behave as though their usual standards no longer applied.

To the *Rebbe*, this revealed a disturbing truth: perhaps their upright behavior at home was maintained not by genuine inner conviction, but by the pressure of social expectations and the fear of public scrutiny. In their hometowns, they knew that improper conduct would be noticed and condemned. At a vacation resort,

however, removed from their constituents and fellow community members, they felt free to act without restraint. Their behavior suggested that the righteousness they displayed at home had not become an integral part of their character.

R' Dovid'l was visibly distressed by what he had seen. One of the *chassidim* accompanying him noticed his agitation and asked what was troubling him. "Now I truly understand," the *Rebbe* replied with a sigh, "what the *Gemara* means when it teaches us that the hot springs found in this world are remnants of the boiling waters that burst forth from the earth's depths during the Mabul, the great flood in the times of Noach, destroying the sinful generation." *(Sanhedrin 108b)*

The *chasid* looked at the *Rebbe* in bewilderment, unable to grasp the connection between the behavior he had witnessed and the *Gemara's* account of the Flood.

"I will explain," said R' Dovid'l. "If someone were to read the story of Noach and the *Mabul* in a simple, straightforward manner, he might wonder whether *Hashem's* punishment was excessively severe. After all, *Chazal* teach that *gezel*, robbery and theft, was the principal transgression of that generation. While theft is certainly a serious offence, one might ask whether it justified the complete destruction of an entire civilization. Why not simply punish the guilty individuals and allow the rest of humanity to continue living?"

The *Rebbe* looked intently at his young *chasid* before continuing. "This is why *Hashem* allowed these hot springs to remain in the world. They serve as a lasting lesson for anyone willing to observe human nature honestly. When a person sees the levity and moral carelessness that can emerge when people gather around these springs, away from the restraints of their usual surroundings, he can begin to understand the deeper meaning of the generation of the *Mabul*. Their wrongdoing was not merely an isolated act of theft. It

reflected a profound moral corruption that had permeated their society.

"When people abandon their principles as soon as they are free from the scrutiny of others, it reveals that their apparent righteousness may be little more than an outward performance. The absence of witnesses does not make a person more virtuous; rather, it reveals the character that was there all along.

It is for this reason that *Hashem* allowed these few hot springs to remain in the world. So that anyone who observes the **קלות ראש** and levity, with which people behave when in the proximity of these springs, will understand that *Hashem* was truly just and correct in His judgment!"

Power in Numbers - Rabbi Yehoshua Berman

In Parashat Noach, one of the major themes that we find is that of the **דור הפלגה**, the generation of the dispersion. And it's a very difficult section to understand because, apparently, it seems that just all the nations of the world wanted, was to get together and build one all-inclusive country at which the center would be this gigantic tower, and that way they would be unified.

So what exactly was it for which they were deserving of this punishment to be scattered and dispersed that each group would have its own language and they wouldn't understand each other?

The approach of the **Ran**, in his Derashos, he says as follows: really, they were not getting punished. They didn't do anything wrong in this particular act, not in thought and not in deed.

So what was going on?

They wanted to be unified, and that itself Hashem decided was not a good thing. Why? Because the overwhelming majority of people in

that time were idolaters, and they were quite vindictive about those that did not want to follow their path.

Says the Ran, the basic idea is as follows: if you have countries all over the world, so if things get a little bit too hot for those that are following Hashem in one particular place, so worse comes to worse, at least some of them will be able to escape to a different country, and so on and so forth, which was of course the story of the Jews for, and to an extent still is, throughout the diaspora, throughout the galut, throughout the exile.

However, if they would all get together, and all these countries are primarily comprised of idolaters, so then there would be no escape hatch. And that's a terrible thing, because there's tremendous power in numbers. And he explains that that's literally what it means when it says, **וזה החלם לעשות**, this is what they're beginning to do, **ועתה לא יבצר מהם כל אשר יזמו לעשות**, nothing will be withheld from them, that which they plan to do. So that's how the Ran explains it.

It wasn't a punishment, it was simply that Hashem decided this is not good. When resha'im, when wicked people get together, even if they're not actually doing something bad right now, but just the fact that they're creating themselves, merging themselves, and amalgamating themselves into one unified corporation, that's not good. That's a bad thing, because what that does is that it enables and facilitates the ability for very terrible things to happen.

Now, the Ran points out, almost parenthetically, that the same thing is true on the flip side, that when good people get together, and when good people form a union that comprises all of them together, that joins all the disparate groups and people, that in of itself is positive.

Now, of course, there's power in numbers, and, of course, we know that Hashem wants His children, He wants the Jewish people to be unified, as it says, **ויהי בישורון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל**, that the glory of the kingship of the Almighty is only really

expressed when the Jewish people are unified. Beyond that, though, it's important to be aware of the fact that our effectiveness, our ability to be effective is much more potent as a unified whole than when we're in disparate, separate, individualized pockets.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

A New Beginning: The Lesson of the Mabul



Rav Wolfson זכרונו לברכה once shared a beautiful thought based on Rashi in Parshas Noach.

According to Rabbi Eliezer, when did the Mabul begin? On the seventeenth of MarCheshvan, as the Torah tells us:

"In the six hundredth year of Noach's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that very day, all the fountains of the great deep burst forth."

There is a fascinating point here that we often overlook when learning Parshas Noach. The Torah initially says, **ויהי הגשם על הארץ ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה** — that **rain** fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. It calls it ***geshem*, rain**, rather than *mabul*, the Flood. Only later does the Torah describe it as the Mabul.

Rashi explains the difference with the words: **אלו כשהורידן הורידן ברחמים, שאם יחזרו יהיו גשמי ברכה** - Initially, Hashem brought down the rain with mercy, giving the people an opportunity to do teshuvah. Had they repented, the rain would have become a blessing rather than a flood.

Rav Wolfson **זכרונו לברכה** drew a remarkable lesson from this.

Every believing Jew knows that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the days when our fate for the coming year is written and sealed. Yet here we see that even after the decree had been made, Hashem still left the door open. Even for the generation of the Mabul, a generation so corrupt that we can scarcely comprehend its wickedness, Hashem continued to hope that they would repent.

The decree had been sealed, but Hashem was still waiting for them to change. And that, Rav Wolfson explained, is the message the Torah is teaching us specifically here, in Parshas Noach, after the Yamim Nora'im have already passed.

We may feel that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are behind us, that the month of Tishrei has ended, and that the decrees for the coming year have already been sealed. Perhaps we think that it is too late to change anything. But the Torah tells us otherwise.

Even now, Hashem waits for us to do teshuvah. Even now, a person can turn things around and transform what was destined to be a difficult year into one of blessing.

As Rashi teaches us, "**אלו כשהורידן הורידן ברחמים**" — Hashem brought the rain down with mercy, still hoping that the people would return to Him.

Hashem never gives up hope in us. And now, after all the holy days have passed, we are beginning again. As the tzaddikim teach us, after all the Yomim Tovim, we return to *Bereishis*. We start afresh.

This is our opportunity to become a new person, to begin again with renewed commitment and renewed determination. Every Yid, wherever he may be holding, can begin anew.

The Yamim Nora'im may be behind us, but the opportunity to change our lives is still very much before us.

Wine, Water, Aquaphobia & Cheers! - R' Aharon Pessin



Why do we say l'chayim when we drink wine? You don't normally see people drinking apple juice or tomato juice and saying l'chayim. But drink wine, everybody says l'chayim. – Why?

Da'as Zekenim miBa'alei HaTosafos in Vayikra brings a few answers. **Sefer HaChaim**, the brother of the **Maharal** he says, look at what happened last time people drank wine. That was the shevatim. The shevatim drank wine, what happened after that? They sold their brother.

חטא העגל, where did it come about? Because they were partying. They ate and they drank, and we know the rest of the story. And he says just look, it's a practical thing. When people drink, they start fighting.

M'meila we ask that this drinking should be l'chayim, to life, and not chalilah for the opposite. Fine.

When was wine invented? By Noach.

Noach, who told you? Did you see a bottle made by Noach and that's the first bottle you ever saw with such a sticker? It didn't appear in the Torah before that.

Why does Noach plant a vineyard davka now? He comes out of the **תיבה**, oh, it's time to plant a vineyard. Rabosai, you're not going to believe what I'm going to say now, you're not going to believe it. **Radak and Abarbanel**, you don't have bigger heavyweights than that, says the Radak, until the time of Noach, people used to eat grapes like you eat apples.

It's a fruit. They never drank wine. They had a lot of grapes around and they ate them as fruits, but they didn't have a vineyard, rows after rows after rows of grapes. Noach is the first one who did it.

He came out of the **תיבה** and he planted a vineyard, which means a lot of grapes together, rows and rows. Why? Says the Abarbanel, and he says again similar to what the Radak says, but he expands: before Noach, they only ate grapes as fruits until Noach came along and came out of the **תיבה**.

I'm reading to you the Hebrew, because you're not going to believe if I just say it in English: **אולי כאשר קץ בחייו**, he couldn't stand life anymore, **מפני מי המבול**, because of the water. He saw the devastating power, the lethal power of water. **ביקש לעשות יין לשתות ממנו**. You know what, I don't want to ever drink water again! I want a new beverage. And therefore he created wine. Why did he do this?

כדי שלא ישתה עוד מים ולא יראה אותם לעולם. I don't want to drink water ever again, and I don't want to see water ever again. Could be it's the first case of aquaphobia in the world. Noach had a trauma from water. I saw what water does.

Oh, when Rosh Hashanah when we daven, **מי במים**, he said it with all the **כוונות** in the world. He knew what water does. I don't want to see it ever again, and therefore he plants a vineyard. So the obvious kashya is, when you when you squeeze grapes, you get grape juice.

To get the wine, it's a whole long process .. Not a kashya. The Midrash says the day that he planted, it grew.

So you have a kashya how he speeded up the process? Not a problem. Nachon. There's an opinion in Yerushalmi in **עירובין פרק ג הלכה א, אמר רב לוי: מים הם מין קללה**. Water is a type of a curse.

Noach understands it very well. And when Noach's saw the **קללה** and the **קלקלה**, the damage, the harm that water can bring about, the curse, he says, I'm staying away from that. But based on this Yerushalmi we have a new question. Uh-oh.

Rav Levi says **מים** is a **מין קללה**, how is this possible? There is a Mishnah in **ברכות פרק ג פרק ו משנה ג, אמר רבי יהודה: אין מברכין על הקללה**. When you want to drink water, you love water, you enjoy it,

you're thirsty, do you say a bracha? That's the only time you say a bracha, when you enjoy it or you're thirsty. How is it possible? Rabbi Yehuda teaches us a rule, **אין מברכין על הקללה**. What is Rav Levi going to do with Rabbi Yehuda? Rav Levi says water is a **מין קללה**, you're not allowed to say a bracha.

So you want to tell me Rav Levi never said a shehakol? Maybe Rav Levi didn't like water. But Rav Levi would instruct other people who do like water and enjoy it, and they're thirsty, to apply the rule that we learned from Rabbi Yehuda. So some explain, there are different types of water. There is water of a **קללה** like the water of the **מבול**, but there's other water.

The water that you enjoy, and you're thirsty, and you take from the from the from the faucet, from the well, etc, that's not a **מין קללה**, and you can say a bracha for it. The **הלכה למשה**, he says we have a mistake in our version of the Yerushalmi. Don't read it **מין קללה**, but **מין כלילה** which means it's a lower degree type of food, and that's why you don't use it for an eruv. But back to our girsa, which appears in our Yerushalmi: **מן קללה**! What are we going to do with the first rain that falls in Sukkos? What do Chazal say about the first rain, the rain that falls on the first day of Sukkos, at least the first day? What is it called? - **סימן קללה**.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I'm not interested in your service." Like a **משל חז"ל** bring, the **עבד** comes, the slave comes to the master, and he wants to give him soup, and the master says, "No thank you," and he takes the soup and he throws it on his head. That's a **סימן קללה**! So that rain from the first night of Sukkos, you collect it, and you want to drink, should you say a beracha for that? Rabbi Yehuda says, a **מן קללה**. So maybe **בדוחק** we should say that's a **סימן קללה**, it's not **קללה**. So even with Rabbi Yehuda it can work, it's not a water of **קללה**, it's a **סימן** of **קללה**.

No, for **סימנים**, for **סימן** you can still say a beracha. But based on all this, we just gained a new idea, perhaps, why you say **לחיים דווקא**

when you drink wine. Since Noach saw the lethal, devastating power of water, he went and he invented wine. Why? So this beverage should be for life! So we continue Noach's path, and we say when we drink, this beverage, in fact, should be for life.

Noach's Salvation - R' Ari Neuwirth



If Hashem was working with miracles, why didn't He do the following? It could have been instantaneous. Why did the savior of Noah and his family have to be so prolonged? Why did it have to take a year?

First of all, the whole building of the boat. Going into the boat, bringing in the food, bringing in the animals, feeding the animals for a year, sending out the raven, sending out the Yonah, and then, okay Noah, now you could leave. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* could have said, listen, destroy everybody in an instant.

And then Noah, he'll be safe, we'll put him in a capsule, let's say. And at the end of the day, Noah comes out of the capsule, the world is now rejuvenated, and life moves on. Why was it necessary for Hashem to prolong this whole redemption?

This is **Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l's** *kashya*. He says we learn an intriguing lesson.

As everything in the Torah, it's about a lesson. Of course, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* could have done anything, like we learned last week. Hashem could have finished off the water in one day. Hashem could have destroyed the people of that generation in one day.

He could have saved Noah in a minute. Why all this time? This is the profound lesson, and it teaches us something for life.

We live in an instant generation, instant gratification. You know, used to be if you wanted instant coffee, you would have to boil the water and pour it over the coffee. That was called instant coffee. Today, Keurig. Just turn on the Keurig, and within 20 seconds, you got a freshly brewed coffee to your liking, to your taste, to your flavor, whatever you want. So if we're living in a generation that if you want a freshly brewed coffee in 20 seconds, then what do we expect when we *daven*?

We *daven* that we should have *parnasah*. We *daven* that we should have a *refuah sheleimah*. So as soon as we close the *siddur*, boom, we should be healed? The person we're *davening* for should be healed!

We live in an instant messaging age. If I need a message to be received or sent, takes a second. So I would assume that that plays out in every part of my life. That as soon as I finish *davening* to Hashem, I expect that shot to be made. But that's not true. And what happens? I become despondent. I say, *Ribono Shel Olam*, I'm so used to this type of lifestyle, that why is it when I *daven*, I'm not answered? Yom Kippur was over. How come my problems haven't been solved yet? It's a new month already, we're in Cheshvan. Well, *nu*? *Nu*? Everything's the same. Why?

So Rav Schwab says, this is why. Hashem was teaching us, yes, I could have done this instantaneously, but Hashem wanted to show us that things take time. Salvation takes time. Redemption takes time. Noach, you had to be in the **תיבה**. We don't understand Hashem's calculations, when things will happen.



R' Pinny Brandeis

I heard a lovely idea in the name of **Rabbi Roberts**, of blessed memory. He says that **Rabbi Yisrael Salanter** says that the Shulchan Aruch, the code of Jewish law, is just the minimum requirement. And he has a nice idea on our *parsha*, he says like this:

Noach, after he came out of the **מבול**, of the flood, he got drunk and he was uncovered, and his two children Shem and Yefes went and covered him over. And the *pasuk* tells us, **ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה**, and Shem and Yefes took the garment (and covered him.)

So the question is, why does it say **ויקח**, and he took in the singular, when two people did it? It should really say **ויקחו**. We also find that Shem got a reward, and his reward is for generations to come, they will do the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. And Yefet also got a reward, his generations, which are Gog u'Magog, will be eventually buried in Eretz Yisrael.

We find that when Shem did his *mitzvah* of covering over his father, he put a lot of effort and excitement and his own ideas into things, whereas Yefes just did it, he just ticked the box.

We learn from here when it comes to doing a *mitzvah*, let us go out of our way and put our own passion and excitement in it, and don't make it like just a tick box idea.

Let's all realize this great idea and have a great Shabbos.

R' Yitzchok Meir of Gur ZT"L (Chiddushei Hari"m) would say:

"A person who is gravely ill and his spirits are low, must never despair of hope. Remember, it is a mitzvah even to want to live!"

The Difference a Mitzvah Makes – Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita



Rabbosai, we learn again *Parshas Noach*, a parsha containing many difficult episodes. One particularly puzzling incident occurs at the end, after Noach emerges from the **תיבה**.

The pasuk tells us: **וַיָּחֶל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּטַּע כָּרֶם**. Noach planted a vineyard, became intoxicated, and was found exposed in his tent. His sons reacted very differently. Cham acted disgracefully, while Shem and Yefes joined together to cover their father and restore his dignity.

The pasuk says: **וַיִּקַּח שֵׁם וָיֶפֶת אֶת הַשִּׂמְלָה**

Rashi asks a grammatical question: since two people performed the action, the pasuk should say **וַיִּקְחוּ** — in the plural. Why does it say **וַיִּקַּח** , in the singular?

Rashi explains that Shem exerted himself more than Yefes in performing this mitzvah. Although they appeared to do the same thing, Shem invested more effort and enthusiasm. Consequently, the mitzvah is attributed primarily to him.

But the difference becomes even more remarkable when we examine their reward.

Rashi tells us that Shem's descendants were **זוכה** to the mitzvah of **ציצית**. Shem used a garment to cover his father, and his descendants were rewarded with the mitzvah of tzitzis, a mitzvah that accompanies a Yid throughout his life and brings reward for generations.

Yefes, meanwhile, was rewarded with a more limited form of honour: his descendants would merit burial, as described in the pesukim concerning the burial of Gog and his multitude.

Consider the enormous difference. Shem's act became the source of a mitzvah for Klal Yisrael, bringing reward across countless generations. Yefes's act, although worthy, earned a much more limited reward. They seemingly performed the same mitzvah. What made the difference?

Rashi gives us the answer: Shem was **נתאמץ במצוה יותר** — he exerted himself more in performing the mitzvah.

This teaches us a fundamental principle: mitzvos are not measured solely by the external action. They are also measured by how much we care, how much effort we invest, and how wholeheartedly we perform them.

Two people may attend the same minyan, give the same amount of tzedakah, or perform the same act of chesed. From the outside, their actions may look identical. But one may simply do what needs to be done, while the other invests energy, enthusiasm and genuine commitment. - That difference can transform the entire mitzvah.

When we get up in the morning to daven, for example, do we simply go through the motions, or do we make an effort to come on time, prepare ourselves and daven with enthusiasm?

The same applies to every mitzvah. **The more we invest ourselves in a mitzvah, the greater its significance and the reward it can bring.**

We should ask ourselves: are we performing mitzvos like Yefes, doing what needs to be done, or like Shem, investing our hearts and energies into fulfilling the **רצון השם**?

There is another beautiful point in this episode.

After Noach realised what had happened, he gave his sons their respective berachos. Regarding Yefes, he said: **יַפְתְּ אֱלֹקִים לְיֶפֶת** - May Hashem grant beauty and expansion to Yefes. But regarding Shem, Noach added something far greater: **וְיִשְׁכֹּן בְּאָהֳלֵי שֵׁם** - May Hashem's Presence dwell in the tents of Shem.

Rashi explains that this refers to the **השראת השכינה** among Klal Yisrael, the descendants of Shem. Once again, the berachah given to Shem was on an entirely different level.

Why should this particular act lead to the berachah of **השראת השכינה**?

Perhaps we can suggest the following: The Torah tells us in Parshas Ki Seitzei: **כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶךָ** - Hashem's Presence accompanies us. But the Torah immediately warns us to maintain kedushah and tznius, concluding that we must not allow an inappropriate situation to cause the Shechinah to withdraw.

Shem's action was precisely the opposite. At a moment when his father's dignity and tznius had been compromised, Shem made an effort to cover him respectfully. He restored the dignity that had been lost.

Perhaps this is why Noach specifically blessed him, **וְיִשְׁכֹּן בְּאָהֳלֵי שֵׁם** — that the Shechinah should dwell in the tents of Shem. Shem had acted to preserve modesty and dignity, and his descendants would merit the **השראת השכינה**.

So we have two remarkable consequences of one seemingly simple act: the mitzvah of tzitzis for generations, and the berachah of **השראת השכינה** among Klal Yisrael.

The lesson is powerful. We should never underestimate an ordinary mitzvah. What matters is not merely that we do it, but **how we do it** — with how much effort, enthusiasm, care and simchah.

May the Ribbono Shel Olam help us approach our mitzvos like Shem, investing ourselves wholeheartedly in fulfilling His **רצון**, and thereby merit all the berachos that come from a life of Torah and mitzvos.

A gut Shabbos!

The Echo of Effort - Mr. Josh Brody

The Torah relates that following the episode involving Noach and the planting of a vineyard following the Mabul, his sons Shem and Yefes took a garment and respectfully covered their father. In recognition of their conduct, both were rewarded. Rashi, though, draws our attention to a remarkable detail in the Torah's description of their actions.

The Pasuk states, "*Vayikach Shem vaYefes es hasimlah*—And Shem and Yefes took the garment" (*Bereishis* 9:23). Although two brothers participated in the act, the Torah employs the singular expression *vayikach*, rather than the plural *vayikchu*.

Rashi explains that this distinction is deliberate. Shem demonstrated greater initiative and exerted himself more fully in performing the mitzvah than did Yefes. Consequently, although both brothers received a reward, Shem merited an additional and extraordinary distinction: his descendants would be privileged to fulfil the mitzvah of *tzitzis*.

Consider the significance of this. The mitzvah of *tzitzis*, which has accompanied the Jewish people throughout the generations, is connected to the exceptional effort that Shem invested in honoring his father.

But this raises an obvious question. Both Shem and Yefes participated in precisely the same act. Both took the garment, approached their father, and covered him respectfully. If their actions were essentially identical, why should their rewards have differed so dramatically?

The answer, as Rashi explains, lies not in what they accomplished, but in the effort they invested in accomplishing it.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz draws from this episode a profound insight into the way Hashem evaluates human achievement. We tend to measure people by their accomplishments. We observe what they

have achieved, the contributions they have made, and the results they have produced. When two individuals perform the same act or reach the same objective, we naturally assume that their achievements are equivalent.

Yet this perspective overlooks one of the most fundamental dimensions of our relationship with Hashem. The ultimate measure of a person's spiritual achievement is not simply what he accomplishes, but how much of himself he invests in the pursuit. After all, the results of our endeavors are never entirely within our control. We may plan, prepare, persevere, and dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to a particular objective, but whether those efforts ultimately succeed rests in the hands of Hashem. What remains within our control is the effort we choose to invest.

And that is precisely what Hashem values.

An individual may accomplish something extraordinary. He may enjoy remarkable success, earn widespread admiration, and leave behind an impressive record of achievement. Yet when he arrives in Shamayim after 120 years, the question will not simply be how much he accomplished.

For Hashem, so to speak, can say, "The opportunities you received, the abilities you possessed, and the success you experienced were all gifts that I provided. I enabled those accomplishments to become possible. But what did you contribute? How much effort did you invest? How fully did you utilize the abilities and circumstances I entrusted to you?"

Conversely, another individual may appear to have accomplished very little. His efforts may have yielded few visible results. He may have struggled repeatedly, encountered disappointment after disappointment, and fallen short of the objectives he desperately hoped to achieve. From the outside, his life may seem unremarkable. Yet in the eyes of Hashem, that very individual may possess extraordinary greatness.

Hashem sees what others cannot see. He sees the struggle and the determination required simply to continue trying and He recognizes the effort that never translated into public recognition or measurable success. And Hashem can look upon such a person and declare, "This is the individual I cherish. This is someone who continued striving even when success seemed beyond his reach."

This perspective has enormous implications for the way we evaluate ourselves.

How often do we look around and compare our lives with those of others? We see individuals who appear to be advancing, succeeding, and accomplishing remarkable things. We observe their achievements and begin questioning our own worth. *What have I accomplished?* Such comparisons can gradually undermine our confidence, diminish our sense of self-worth, and leave us feeling inadequate. But they are based upon a fundamentally mistaken understanding of what constitutes genuine achievement.

Another person's accomplishments tell us very little about our own standing before Hashem. We do not know the abilities with which that person was endowed, the opportunities he was given, or the challenges he was required to overcome. And we certainly do not know how Hashem evaluates the effort invested in those accomplishments. The only meaningful question we can ask ourselves is whether we are sincerely striving to fulfill our own potential. Because in the spiritual realm, effort is not merely a means of reaching an objective. It possesses intrinsic value.

Noach is introduced by the Torah as אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים— a righteous and wholehearted man. Yet the incident of the vineyard became part of his enduring story. - Even a single mistake can remain in people's memories for generations. ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Look Out!

A good **ערב שבת**, my dear friends of Project **מסורה**. This is your friend Rabbi **פסח קראן** speaking to you **ערב שבת פרשת נח**.

השם says to **נח - צהר תעשה לתבה** , you should make a form of light into the **תיבה**. (6:16)

So **רש״י** has a **מחלוקת**. What does it mean? Either **חלון** or a window, or **אבן טובה**, or a big, like, shiny diamond that shines light into the **תיבה**.

So Rabbi **רפאל שמואלביץ** once told me, what's the **נפקא מינה?**

The **נפקא מינה** is like this: If you have a **חלון**, so it brings in light into your home, into your **תיבה**, but you could also look out and see those that have less. And **אבן טובה** just produces light, and shines into your house.

And he told me that he always tells the **יונגעלייט** in his **כולל**, every house has to have a **צהר**. And that's what I'm saying to all of you: have a **צהר** that's like a **חלון** that looks out at other people that have less than you: less money, less food, less **נחת**, less payments for tuition. Try to care about other people. That's what that **צהר** is all about.

That's a **חלון** that not only brings in light to you, but helps you see others and try to help them. And that's really what it's all about.

And so to the men I say, **יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹקִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה**, and to the women, **יְשִׂמֵךְ אֱלֹקִים כְּשָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה**, and to everyone,

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה׳ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָּ

יָאֵר ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ

יִשָּׂא ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

You should have a **פריילכן שבת** and a **ליכטיגן שבת**, and let's remember try to help those that have less than you. Have a great **שבת**.



The Dove Could Not Find A Resting Place – Michael Winner

The sefer "Perach Shoshan" explains the following pesukim from this week's parsha:

"He sent forth the dove from him to see if the waters had abated from the face of the earth."

The dove (yona) is often the bird that the Jewish people are compared to. Hashem sent out the Yona "from Him," from the Beis HaMikdash and Eretz Yisroel. Why? Because…

"The water had abated from the face of the earth."

And the Torah, which is often compared to water, was lessened in the world. Hence, the dove (the Jewish people) needed to be driven out.

What happened when the dove was in "exile"?

"The dove could not find a resting place for the sole of its foot."

No matter which country the Jewish people went to in their history, they never stayed there for long, for they were pushed out from one land to another. So, in the end, what did the dove do?

"And she returned to Noach, to the ark."

She returned in tshuva to Hashem and His Torah, to the protection of the ark.

"Because water was on the face of all the earth; he sent out his hand and took her and brought her to him, to the ark."

And when there was enough Torah in the world, Hashem "sent out His hand and took her and brought her to him…"

When Yidden Tragically Worked on Shabbos

"וְיָנוּחוּ בּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַדְּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ" - "*And may Israel, who sanctify Your Name, rest therein [in them].*"

This specific phrase is part of the *Kedushas HaYom* of the *Amidah* recited on Shabbos. Depending on the specific time of the day, we alter the pronoun used for "therein" to reflect different spiritual and grammatical dimensions of the holy day:

Friday Night (Maariv) **וְיָנוּחוּ בָּהּ**

Shabbos Day (Shacharis & Musaf) **וְיָנוּחוּ בּוֹ**

Shabbos Afternoon (Minchah) **וְיָנוּחוּ בָּם**

The Shoproner Rav (*Rav Shimon Yisrael Posen of Sopron and Williamsburg*) explained the variation of **בּה, בּו, בּם** in a humorous but sad way.

It is well known that *Shemiros Shabbos* was a tremendous struggle in America of yore, and many *Yidden* sadly succumbed to the *nisayon* of going to work on Shabbos. And so, said the Shoproner Rav, on Friday evening, the man and the wife are both in the shop, but the woman leaves for home to light the Shabbos candles, while the husband remains at work, and so we say "**בּה**".

On Shabbos morning, the husband goes to daven early in Shul, while his wife precedes him at work, and for this reason, we say "**בּו**" as only he rests. Later in the afternoon, when both man and wife go strolling in the streets, we say "**וינוחו בּם**"

R' Abraham J. Twerski would say:

"Laziness is not necessarily being slow. A lazy person may sometimes act too quickly because he is too lazy to think about what he is doing!"

Secrets of the Sages - Kedushah Beis Hamedrash as espoused by the Tzaddikim

Rav Meir Shapiro, zt"l, Lubliner Rav Yahrzeit 7 Cheshvan 5694, (1933)

In the name of Rav Leib Broida, the Lubliner Rav said: "I can understand every yetzer hara in the world, but the temptation to talk during kaddish and chazaras hashatz, and not to answer amein... this, I simply cannot understand. (Rav Shmuel Wosner)

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

When Noach entered the Ark, the Torah tells us: "**וַיִּסְגֹּר ה' בַּעֲדוֹ**" — "And Hashem closed the door behind him." - The Targum translates this phrase as "**וְאַגֵּין ה' בְּמֵימְרֵיהּ עֲלוֹי**" — Hashem protected Noach through His word. In other words, Hashem was shielding Noach and protecting him.

Sometimes, a person feels that everything in life is closed off. His livelihood is blocked, his shidduchim are not working out, he is waiting for a refuah, or he is hoping for a yeshuah. Wherever he turns, it seems that every door is closed.

The word "**וַיִּסְגֹּר**" — "He closed" — seems to suggest that Noach was shut in, with no way forward. Yet the Targum reveals a deeper meaning: Hashem was protecting him. What appeared to be a closing of doors was, in truth, an act of protection.

Sometimes, when everything seems closed to us, we must recognise that we may actually be under the protection of Hashem. What looks like a barrier may itself be our magen — our shield. It may appear that Hashem has closed the door, but in reality, He may be shielding us from what lies outside it.

