

ב"ה **Torah Tidbits**

ISSUE 1680

OU
ישראל

OCTOBER 17TH 2026
ו' מרחשון תשפ"ז

NOACH - נח

**Time to Shine: The Secret
Purpose of Noach's Window**
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Birchot HaShachar: Part II
Rebbetzin Zemira Ozarowski
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היתה הקשת בענן בראשית ט':ט"ז

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT NOACH ZMANIM

CANDLES 5:30 PM • HAVDALA 6:42 PM • RABBEINU TAM 7:22 PM



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OU Israel is honored to welcome three remarkable Torah teachers to the pages of Torah Tidbits.



RABBI ELYADA GOLDWICHT is the founder of the OU Semichas Chaver Program. He serves as the Rav of Kehilat Lev Raanana.



MRS. MICHAL HOROWITZ is a world-renowned Torah teacher and leading instructor for the Women's Initiative of the OU.



RABBI JOE WOLFSON, an exceptionally talented community builder, after seven years leading JLIC at NYU in Manhattan, returned to Israel in 2022 to co-direct the JLIC in Tel Aviv.

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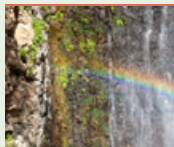


Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad: Wed Oct 14
7 Days After Molad: Sun Oct 18

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: Sun Oct 25



In Israel, one begins to pray for rain (V'ten Tal u'Matar) on the evening of the 7th of Marcheshvan (which is Motzei Shabbat Oct. 17)



COVER PAGE Photographed by Shua Golubtchik

I live in Ra'anana. My family and I made Aliyah 11 years ago from Houston, Texas. I took this photo at the Jilaboun Waterfall, and it's one of my favorites. Reaching the waterfall after a long hike and seeing a rainbow in the mist really makes you ask yourself, "מה רבו מעשיך ה'".

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OTHER Z'MANIM



	NOACH		LECH LECHA	
	Candles	Havdala	Candles	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	5:30	6:42	5:22	6:35
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	5:48	6:44	5:41	6:37
Beit Shemesh/RBS	5:49	6:43	5:41	6:36
Gush Etzion	5:46	6:42	5:38	6:35
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	5:47	6:43	5:39	6:36
Modiin/Chashmonaim	5:46	6:43	5:39	6:35
Netanya	5:46	6:43	5:39	6:36
Be'er Sheva	5:48	6:44	5:40	6:37
Rehovot	5:47	6:43	5:39	6:36
Petach Tikva	5:30	6:43	5:22	6:36
Ginot Shomron	5:46	6:42	5:38	6:35
Haifa / Zichron	5:36	6:42	5:28	6:35
Gush Shiloh	5:45	6:41	5:37	6:34
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	5:47	6:43	5:39	6:36
Givat Ze'ev	5:50	6:42	5:42	6:35
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:46	6:42	5:39	6:35
Ashkelon	5:48	6:44	5:41	6:37
Yad Binyamin	5:47	6:43	5:39	6:36
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	5:37	6:40	5:29	6:33
Golan	5:43	6:40	5:35	6:32
Nahariya/Maalot	5:34	6:42	5:36	6:34
Afula	5:45	6:41	5:37	6:34

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Noach - 7:22 PM • Lech Lecha - 7:14 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat, Nahariya, Maalot and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Bechoros 29

JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat
October 14-24 | 3-13 Marcheshvan**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:51-5:57
Sunrise	6:41-6:49
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:33-9:36
Magen Avraham	8:57-8:59
Sof Zman Tefila	10:30-10:31
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:24-12:23
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:54-12:53
Plag Mincha	4:56-4:47
Sunset (Including Elevation)	6:12-6:01



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Headquarters: 40 Rector St. 4th floor, New York, NY 10006 • 212-563-4000 • website: www.ou.org



Editor: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider | aarong@ouisrael.org
Advertising: Ita Rochel 02-5609125 | ttads@ouisrael.org
Editor Emeritus: Phil Chernofsky
Website: www.torahtidbits.com

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel | aberman@ouisrael.org

I am entering Shabbat Noach with very mixed feelings. For the last thirteen years, despite Shabbat Noach being the first Shabbat back in yeshiva and ulpana, my sons and daughters have always chosen to spend it with our family instead. And it's not because we were staying home for a family Shabbat, as enjoyable as those are. It is because Shabbat Noach is, every year with few exceptions, the staff Shabbaton for the OU Israel Teen Centers. Staff from all over the country come together in Givat Washington with rabbis and other inspirational educators for a Shabbat that I have written about many times in these pages, a Shabbat that literally gives strength to the entire team to do the incredible work that they do for the rest of the year.

Let's be honest. Working with teens at risk in Nahariya, Kiryat Shmona, Akko,

Sderot, Dimona, and so many other cities is not easy. Living in those neighborhoods is not easy either. Our staff work day in and day out with teens in challenging circumstances, and they give their entire hearts to them. To have a Shabbaton to celebrate our staff and recognize their efforts, to give them the strength, the tools, the Torah, and the inspiration, was so, so important to us.

And it really is an incredible Shabbaton. Staff from our Pearl and Harold Jacobs Zula Outreach Center and from our OU Israel Teen Centers across the country all came together for one inspirational Shabbat. Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, the Rav of Tzfat, joins us, together with numerous other rabbis, including Rav Yoni Lavi. Every now and then, we are also joined by politicians who came to see the wonderful work OU Israel does with teens at risk across the country. Staff stay up late Friday night to listen to Harel Hetzroni, who started the Zula 25 years ago and continues to work with our teens at risk. Through Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, Chaim Pelzner, and Oren Asulin, incredible leaders for our programs, were able to expose our staff to amazing stories taking place across the country, and empower them for another year.

One thing changed this year: I will not be attending this year's staff Shabbaton, nor will my children. It was one decision of many as a result of the cutbacks we have had to make at OU Israel due to the drop in the dollar and the downturn in donations. Any extraneous costs, even a few extra

May the Torah learned
from this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of our dear friend

Yehuda Leib Berren ז"ל
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on his sixth Yahrzeit

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תנ"צ"ב

plates of food at a Shabbaton, have to be weighed very carefully.

It leaves me with very mixed emotions. On the one hand, I understand that we have to be fiscally responsible and make cuts where necessary. On the other hand, I have endless love and admiration for our staff, who work day in and day out for these teens across the country. I am personally going to miss this Shabbat with them, and the chance to tell them firsthand how much I appreciate them, and how much the Jewish people appreciate all the work they do for the country, for the Jewish people, and for teens who unfortunately come from homes where they are not receiving that inspiration.

This brings me to this week's parsha. Many commentaries dwell on the question of what it was about Noach that led HaKadosh Baruch Hu to save him from the rest of his generation. Why was he more deserving than others? The Torah describes Noach as an "ish tzaddik tamim hayah bedorotav" - "a righteous man, wholehearted in his generations" (Bereshit 6:9). What is this description of tzaddik (righteous), and what is the concept of tamim (wholehearted)? What was it about Noach that enabled him to overcome the challenges of his generation?

I saw in one of the writings of Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l that he speaks about two different elements that Noach needed in order to overcome what was happening in his generation. The first relates to



the fact that Noach lived in a generation where people were corrupt, where there was stealing and immoral behavior of every kind, and yet he continued to behave in a way that showed everyone he had a moral compass. Most people are influenced morally by those around them. It takes a tremendous amount of morals and ethics to stand up strong and say, "No. That is wrong, and I'm not doing it." But that was the first of Noach's special qualities.

The second element we see in Noach is in conversation with the narrative that precedes the Flood, the Tower of Babel story. Noach had to contend with a generation that was willing to challenge HaKadosh Baruch Hu. It was a generation that said, "Let's build a tower that will be taller than God, where we can even fight against God." Noach, on the other hand, understood that

there is a God who runs the world. When God commanded him to build a boat, he did so for 120 years. He knew that this is what he had to do. After the Flood, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives Noach the basic commands known as the Noahide laws, he takes them on and we believe that any gentile who accepts them and keeps them will be part of Olam Haba.

So, Rav Eliyahu zt"l explained, these two incredible compasses made Noach the right candidate to save from the worldwide Flood. But where did Noach get this from? What enabled him to stand strong in his actions and beliefs in these two very challenging times? The answer can be found when we look at the words of our Sages. Noach's grandfather was Metushelach, and his father was Lemech, great leaders of their generations. Rashi (on Bereshit 7:4) quotes the gemara (Sanhedrin 108b) that HaKadosh Baruch Hu postponed the Flood until after Metushelach had passed away. He was so righteous that HaKadosh Baruch Hu spared him the pain of seeing the destruction of the world.

This contains such an important lesson.

Clearly, Noach's amazing attributes were acquired by having the right role models - Metushelach and Lemech. When grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and friends model the right behavior and beliefs, it has a great influence on the next generation. This is why Noach stood out among his entire generation to be saved.

Our staff attending the Shabbaton this Shabbat have chosen for many years to be guides for the next generation. They understand that the more positive role models and positive people we surround the next generation with, the more we will, Baruch Hashem, raise a younger generation that is willing to fight for the country, for their people, for their Torah, for their values, and for what is truly important in life.

When I look at the messages of this week's parsha, it makes me miss our incredible staff even more this Shabbat. I hope that, be'ezrat Hashem, we will be able to raise the funds necessary to hold this Shabbat again next year, and to bring back the things we unfortunately had to cancel this year because of budget cuts. With your help, and the help of Hashem, we will continue inspiring the next generation for many more years to come.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org

May the Torah learned
from this Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of and לע"נ

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OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

From Receiving Support to Giving Back

This Sukkot, teens from OU Israel's Teen Centers stepped up for their communities.

Across Israel, they built sukkahs for families of reservists, senior citizens, and neighbors who needed a helping hand.

In Akko alone, approximately 20 teens helped build more than 25 sukkahs.

But the real impact went beyond the sukkahs themselves.

Many of these teens face challenges of their own. At OU Israel, they find mentors who believe in them, a community that supports them, and opportunities to recognize their own potential.

And this Sukkot, they became the ones others could count on.

Because when we invest in young people, we don't just help them build better futures for themselves. We empower them to build stronger communities for everyone.

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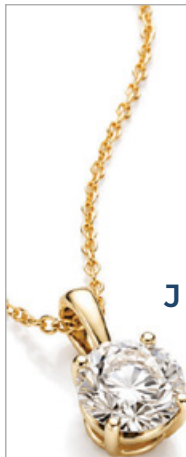
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PARSHAT NOACH

Parshat Noach describes: the destruction of the world through the Flood, Noach and his family, the story of the Tower of Babel and the introduction of Avraham's family.

The theme we will develop in Parshat Noach is that the flood is a second try at creation. Bereishit and Noach are essentially parallel creation stories, or more accurately a creation and a recreation.



1ST ALIYA (6:9-22)

Noach is righteous, while the world is filled with evil. Noach is instructed to build an Ark, for while G-d is to destroy all living beings, He establishes a covenant with Noach to save him. Noach, his family, 2 of each animal and the food are to be brought into the Ark. Noach did all that G-d commanded.

The parsha break is curious. Because the story of the flood begins one paragraph before the beginning of our parsha.

The last paragraph of last week's parsha describes that the world became corrupt.

G-d proffered that He would destroy all living beings, as He regretted creating them. Isn't that the logical beginning to the flood, that the world is to be destroyed? Why begin the parsha with Noach and not with the decision to destroy the world?

Perhaps the parsha break is deliberate. The story could begin with destruction. Or it could begin with the ones *not* to be destroyed. Beginning with the corruptness of the world and G-d's desire to destroy it would frame the story as one of destruction.

But beginning with Noach being a righteous man and describing his family frames the story as not one of destruction but of survival. The flood story is *not* the story of the destruction of the world; it is the story of the *survival* of the world through Noach.

This will become a recurring theme in the Torah; near destruction, deserving destruction. But not doing it. The world deserves to be destroyed. But it isn't destroyed. It is saved. Through Noach.

So, is it a story of destruction or a story of G-d's generosity and kindness, of wanting to destroy but not allowing Himself to do it? Of man deserving to be wiped out entirely, but not allowing Himself to do it.

There is far more detail of the dimensions of the Ark than there is of man's evil that is causing the world to be destroyed. The Torah is more interested in the survival, or more accurately, in the recreation of the world than it is in the story of man's

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our daughter and sister

JUDY YELLIN a"h

יהודית מאשה בת אליעזר ע"ה
on her 32nd Yahrtzeit - ט' מרחשון

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from this issue be in her merit

The Yellin and Weingarten families

failure. The title of the Flood story should not be the destruction of the world, but rather the recreation of the world.



2ND ALIYA (7:1-16)

Noach is again described as righteous. Bring 7 of each pure animal, 2 of the impure, and all the birds into the Ark. Noach was 600 years old and brought his family into the Ark. The waters of the springs of the depths were released and the stores of water above were opened. All entered the Ark, as G-d had commanded Noach.

The world will be destroyed with water. The Torah describes in the second verse in the Torah, that the first thing to exist in the world was water: "The spirit of G-d hovered over the waters". If you want to indicate that the world is getting a reboot, starting again, cover it with water, as it was "In the beginning".

The water floods the world from below and from above. We have seen water below and above before: in Creation, Ch. 1:6, G-d separated between the waters above and below and made the heavens between. Creation involved dividing the waters; here the division of the waters is being undone. Let it all flood the earth. The waters that were gathered in creation are here being released. The Flood is Creation being redone.



3RD ALIYA (7:17-8:14)

The Flood covers the earth. All living things on land die, save Noach and all that are in the Ark. G-d remembers Noach. The waters recede. The Ark rests on Mt. Ararat. Noach sends out the raven. Then Noach sends out the dove to see if the water has receded enough for land to be inhabitable. She returns for she

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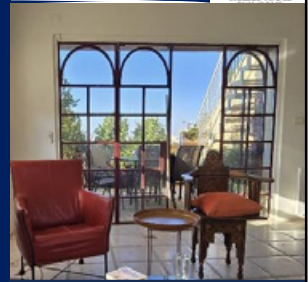


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has found no place to rest. After 7 days, she is sent out again and returns with an olive branch. The third time she is sent out, she does not return. Noach removes the covering and sees there is dry land.

There is a lot of detail of water and of time. The rising water, the receding water, how many days it rained, how many days it took to recede. The whole story, from the first drops of rain, until Noach leaves the ark takes a full year.

This stands in stark contrast to the initial creation of the world. In creation, G-d Said and it was. In this recreation, the covering of the world with water took months; the receding of the water took time. Why?

When looking at a story such as the flood we must think not only about what happened but what did not. How could the world have been destroyed differently?

Well, it could have been destroyed like Sodom and Gemora, with fire and brimstone. And it could have been destroyed in the snap of a finger. And it could have been reduced back to “tohu v’vohu”, to void and emptiness.

Clearly, G-d chose not to revert back to pre-Creation. Rather He is expressing His commitment to the world as it is. He uses the world as we have it to destroy it. Water naturally falling as rain. Water naturally welling up from the underground water sources. Let nature run its course, albeit miraculously, to destroy the world.

This is the most crucial part of this story. The world was *not* destroyed – I mean, not back to “tohu v’vohu – to void and empty”. G-d did not look at the evil of the world – man and animals - and destroy the world. He could have chosen to destroy the world entirely and begin anew with another 6 days of creation. He did not do that. He “recreated” the existing world – saving Noah, saving the world, covering it slowly with the water that existed.

G-d is committed to this world, even binding himself to it; He will flood it and rebuild it but use the world as it is. In fact, He said that to Noah – I will keep my covenant with you (6:18). What covenant was there? What was G-d Himself bound to? It would seem that He Bound Himself to this world, just as it is.

The story of the Torah is G-d’s commitment to man and to the world He created. He saves the world. He saves Noah. But even before this; Adam and Eve sinned and were punished. But not destroyed. Cain killed Abel, the most egregious sin, and is punished; but is not himself killed. G-d is committed to this world and is committed

to mankind. He destroys the world naturally, maintaining it, covering it slowly with water and waiting for the water to recede. That very process communicates His commitment to His world and to mankind just the way it is.



4TH ALIYA (8:15-9:7)

Noah is told to leave the Ark with his family and with the animals, blessing the animals to teem over the land. Noah offered sacrifices on an altar. G-d committed to never again curse land and animals because of man, nor the constellations. G-d blesses Noah and family to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth. They may eat creatures but may not kill man.

The echoes of Creation continue. Noah and the animals receive the same blessings made to the animals and to man in Creation, to be fruitful and multiply. Noah is the new Adam. But with one dramatic difference. G-d pledges that never again will there be a destruction of land, animals or seasons. This was not promised at Creation.

The notion of G-d promising is shocking. **G-d** making promises to **man**? Really? **He** promises to **us**? Could it be that even with all the horrible evil that man is capable of perpetrating, and has perpetrated in the history of mankind – that in spite of all that evil, He guarantees the world will never deserve to be destroyed?

The Torah is conveying a dramatic philosophy of mankind. It must be that mankind, in just the way it has been created, capable of evil but capable of good, *that* creation of mankind is so precious to G-d that He commits to us, regardless of our failings. As such, the story of the Torah is a love story; G-d’s love and commitment to

mankind, just the way it is.



5TH ALIYA (9:8-17)

G-d tells Noah and his family that He is making a covenant with all living things that the world will never again be destroyed by Flood. The rainbow is a sign of this covenant between us. I will see the rainbow and remember this eternal covenant.

The word “brit”, covenant occurs 7 times in this paragraph of 9 verses. We are so familiar with the story of the rainbow after the flood that its plain meaning slips by unnoticed. G-d is pledging himself to the world. And, as if to make sure He Himself doesn't forget, He places a sign, a reminder of His pledge.

Noah has got to be looking around, wondering, “is He talking to me? What did I do to deserve this? The Master of the Universe, who just covered the world in water due to man's failings, He is committing to us? And binding Himself with a rainbow, lest He forget?”

The Creation story crowned man with majesty, created in the image of G-d. The Flood recreation story is a love story, the love of G-d for man, the commitment He has to man. And while a covenant has two parties, each of whom pledges to the other, in this covenant nothing is demanded of man. Only He pledges to us.



6TH ALIYA (9:18-10:32)

Noah plants a vineyard, becomes drunk and lies exposed in his tent. Cham sees Noah; the other sons cover Noah without looking. Cham is cursed, Shem is blessed, Yefet granted beauty. Noah's numerous descendants are listed, distinctive in geography and in language.

The echoes of creation continue. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, to work it and guard it. Noah plants a vineyard. Adam (and Eve) sinned in that Garden, eating of the fruit they ought not to. And covered themselves with fig leaves. Noah drinks to excess and his nakedness is also covered.



7TH ALIYA (11:1-32)

The Tower of Babel, an attempt to unite mankind results in a dispersion and proliferation of languages. The genealogy of Noah's descendants continues until Avraham's family is introduced, who journey toward the Land of Israel.

The story of the Tower of Babel begins as a desire for unity but ends with people scattered the world over. The desire for unity would seem to be a good thing. However, unity often implies being united under me, coercing all to be like me.

World history is the history of empires seeking to make the world a better place by being just like me. The theme of dispersion, of exile which began with Adam being exiled from the Garden of Eden, and Cain exiled to wander the world has its next chapter with the dispersion, the exile of the builders of the Tower of Babel.

The dispersion and exile of the first 2 parshiot of the Torah will be reversed with the call to Avraham to come to the Land of Israel.

HAFTORAH

YESHAYAHU 54:1 - 55:5

This Shabbat the haftorah for *parshat Noah* is taken from chapter 54 in the Navi, *Yeshayahu*. It describes the nation of Israel after the destruction of the Beit

Hamikdash. The Navi assures the people that Hashem will forever share his kindness and love with His people and He will continue to protect and sustain the people.

The special connection to *parshat Noach* is contained in pasuk 59:9 which refers to the destruction of Yerushalayim as "...this is like the waters of Noach to me..."

The Navi concludes with the reassurance that Hashem remembers His covenant with the world and His Chosen People. The degree to which we reveal Hashem's presence in our lives is the degree to which Hashem's protection and close concern is realized. It is our responsibility to reveal Hashem. We achieve this by observing His commandments and learning His Torah. ■



STATS

2nd of 54 sedras, 2nd of 12 in B'reishit
Written on 230 lines in a Torah, rank: 15
18 Parshiyot; 5 open, 13 closed; rank: 12
153 p'sukim - ranks 4th Largest in B'reishit
- tied w/Vayishlach
1861 words - ranks 11 (6th in B'reishit)
6907 letters - ranks 13 (6th in B'reishit)
Drop in ranking for words and letters is due to Noach's very short p'sukim. Noach ranks 49th in words/pasuk and 51st in letters/pasuk in the Torah.



MITZVOT

None of the TARYAG mitzvot are from No'ach, yet there are mitzvot in the sedra, specifically (but not only) references to the Noahide laws. So too is P'RU URVU repeated to No'ach - it is counted as a mitzva from B'reishit, when it was commanded to Adam.



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A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

ואתה קח לך מכל מאכל אשר יאכל...והיה לך ולהם לאכלה (ו:כא)

"And you, take for yourself from all the foods that are eaten ...and it will be for you and for them to eat" (6:21)

Why the need for the pasuk to add the words "that are eaten"? Is it not sufficient for the verse to simply write "take for yourself from all the foods"?

In addition, how can Noach collect enough food for all those animals that were to be housed in the Ark?

The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Luntschitz 1550-1619) emphasizes the word "take for yourself" implies that Noach should take only what "he" needs, and with G-d's blessing and miracle, it will provide the needs for all.

The Vilna Goan (Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman 1720-1797) based on the Talmud Yoma (80a) which notes that the words "from all the foods that are eaten" (Vayikra 11:34) instruct us how much is normally eaten at one time. G-d commanded Noach to prepare that one unit of food, the size of an egg, and that would satisfy each creature in the Ark, based on G-d's blessing. Even if you only eat the amount of food "that is eaten" you will still be satisfied. This is the meaning of the verse "and it will be for you and for them to eat."

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THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
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“Easy Spirituality”

The French poet Baudelaire once remarked that the devil’s greatest success is his ability to convince us that he does not exist.

Whereas Judaism does not believe in the devil quite as Baudelaire does, it does believe that there is a “devilish” force called the *yetzer hara* within each of us, and that that force works in very subtle ways. At the same time, with ambivalence, we definitely do tend to believe that this *yetzer* does not exist.

Jewish writings through the ages have debated the nature of this force. All these writings ultimately trace back to a verse in this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Noach*: “The devising of man’s mind are evil from his youth.” (*Genesis 8:21*)

And to a similar verse in last week’s Torah portion: “The Lord saw how great was man’s wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was

nothing but evil all the time.” (*Genesis 6:5*)

Thus, there most assuredly is an inclination for evil in each of us. He or she who wishes to live the life of a good person is well advised to guard against this natural inclination. This *yetzer*-force rarely commands us directly to do what is wrong. Instead, it tries to craftily delude us into thinking that what is wrong and evil is right and good.

A favorite strategy for the *yetzer* is to persuade us that it seeks the same ends and objectives as God does, but that alternate ways of achieving those ends are also legitimate. Take spirituality, for example. How does one achieve a sense of spirituality?

For Judaism, spirituality and the emotions which accompany it can only be achieved through hard work: prayer, study, sacrifice, and above all, charity and compassion. No easy “grace!” The *yetzer*, while not denying the value of spirituality, tempts us with short cuts, and cheap and ersatz methods to achieve the same results as the more arduous methods prescribed by the Torah.

A wonderful illustration of this dynamic is found in this week’s Torah portion, just after the story of the great Flood. Noah and his family are beginning anew, rebuilding their lives, rebuilding the world. What is the first thing Noah does? He plants a vineyard. His grapes grow and ripen, he makes wine and drinks it and gets drunk.

May the Torah learning
from this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of

Vivian Chesner ע"ה
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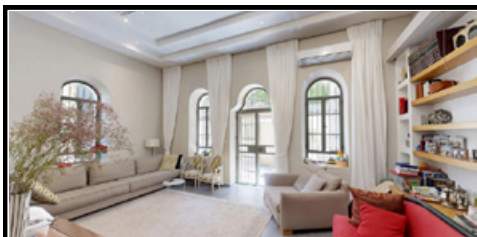
What prompted Noah to make wine his first priority? Let me suggest the following imaginary scenario to answer that question. Noah walked with God. He enjoyed the sense of spirituality for which many of us yearn. He experienced a spiritual “high.” In the past, he achieved that level of spirituality by virtue of hard work: obedience, construction of the Ark, gathering the animals of the world, tending to them, offering sacrifices. Along came Noah’s *yetzer*-force, and said, “Noah! There must be an easier way! You can achieve the same spiritual high, the same sense of wholeness and holiness without all that work. All it will take is a few drinks of one of God’s own juices. Plant a vineyard, make some wine and drink it and you will feel all the good feelings you felt before, and then some.”

For, you see, the *yetzer*, or if you wish the devil, knows of the connection between addiction and spirituality.

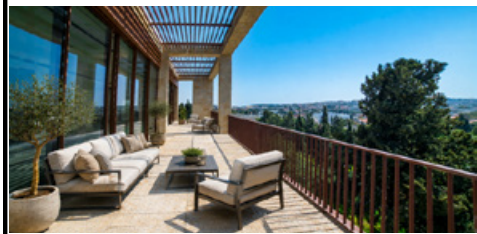
How well I remember the 1960s, and the many gifted spiritual seekers who resorted to alcohol and more potent substances to generate moods of spirituality.

Judaism cautions us not to be seduced by facile techniques, even in the service of achieving higher and holier states of conscientiousness. That is why the Torah shifts next week into the story of Abraham, whose spirituality was based on service, on the courageous search for social justice, and on compassionate concern for others in need. In short, Abraham was dedicated to the very arduous methods that Noah sought to circumvent by drink.

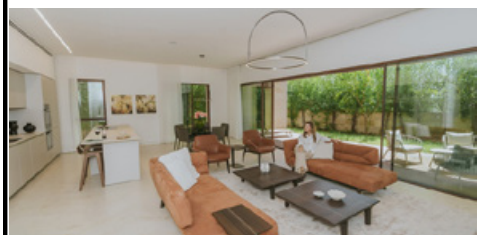
Join us next week as we examine the impressive personality of Abraham and learn from him how to achieve a sober sense of spirituality. ■



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THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l

A Story of Heaven and Earth

Set between the pre-history of humanity as a whole and the particular covenant with Abraham, the story of the Tower of Babel is one of the turning points of the biblical narrative, central to its vision of what can go wrong in civilisations and societies.

The story itself - told in a mere *nine verses* - is a compact masterpiece of literary and philosophical virtuosity. The first thing to note is that its historical background is exceptionally precise. The tower - or ziggurat - was the great symbol of the ancient Mesopotamian city states of the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley, the cradle of civilisation. It was here that human beings first settled, established agriculture, and built cities.

As the Torah makes clear with unusual attention to what seems like a peripheral fact, one of the great discoveries of Mesopotamia (along with the wheel, the arch, and the calendar) was the ability to manufacture building materials, especially bricks, made by pouring clay into moulds, drying them in the sun, and eventually firing them in kilns. This made possible the construction of buildings on a larger scale, and reaching greater heights than hitherto. From this came the ziggurat, a stepped building of many stories, which came to have a profound religious significance.

Essentially these ancient towers - of

which the remains of at least thirty have been discovered - were man-made “holy mountains,” the mountain being the place where heaven and earth most visibly met. Inscriptions on several of these buildings, decoded by archeologists, refer, as does the Torah, to the idea that their top “reaches heaven.” The largest - the great ziggurat of Babylon to which the Torah refers - was a structure of seven stories, 300 feet high, on a base of roughly the same dimensions (further details can be found in Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*).

Not only is the story of Babel historically precise, it is also shot through with literary devices: inversions, word plays, ironies, and puns. One of the most masterly is that the two key words, *l-v-n*, “brick,” and *n-v-l*, “confuse”, are precise inversions of one another. As so often in the Torah, literary technique is closely related to the moral or spiritual message the Torah wishes to convey. In this case it is the phenomenon of inversion itself. The results of human behaviour are often the opposite of what was intended. The builders wanted to concentrate humanity in one place (“Let us build a city . . . and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth”). The result was that they were dispersed (“from there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth”). They wanted to “make a name” for themselves, and they did, but

the name they made - Babel - became an eternal symbol of confusion.

Their pride lay in their newfound technological ability to construct buildings of unprecedented grandeur. They did not realise (the message signalled in the opening verses of the Torah) that the greatest creative power is language ("And God said . . . and there was"). It was not a technical problem that caused them to abandon the project but the loss of the ability to communicate. What is holy for the Torah is not power but the use to which we put it, and this is intrinsically linked to language - the medium in which we frame our ideals, construct imaginative possibilities, and call others to join us in realising them. The word is prior to the work.

What, though, was the builders' sin? The narrative signals this, again, by a series of verbal cues. The first is the phrase with which the episode both begins and ends, *kol ha-aretz*, "the whole earth." It begins, "The whole world spoke the same language" (Gen. 11:1), and ends, "From there the Lord scattered them all across the face of the earth" (Gen. 11:9). The phrase *kol ha-aretz* appears five times in the nine verses: all three-, five- and especially seven-fold repetitions in a biblical passage signal the presence of a key theme. A framing device of this kind is highly significant.

The second is the phoneme (a basic unit of sound) *sh-m*, either as *sham*, "there", or *shem*, "name". This appears seven times in the passage. It is clearly linked to the word *shamayim*, "heaven" - the place the builders attempted to reach in building the tower. The thematic elements of the narrative are thus clear. This is a story



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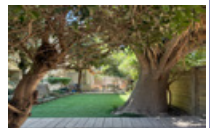
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about heaven and earth - but in what way? To understand the point at issue we must return to the opening chapter of Bereishit and its description of creation.

Two words in that account are decisive. The first is *tov*, “good”, which appears seven times. God says, “Let there be”, there is, and God sees “that it is good”. Creation in Bereishit 1 is not primarily about the power of God but about the goodness of God and the universe He made. In historical context, this is an extraordinary statement. For the most part, the ancients saw the world as a dangerous and threatening place, full of dangers, disasters, famines and floods. There was no overarching meaning to any of this. It was the result of clashing powers, personified as conflicts between the Gods. Religion was either an attempt to assert human power over the elements through magic and myth, or a mystical escape from the world into a private nirvana of the soul. Against this, Judaism made the astonishing assertion that the world is good. It is intelligible. It is the result not of blind collisions and random mutations but of a single creative will. This alone is enough to set Judaism apart as the most hopeful of the world's faiths.

There is however another key word, the root *b-d-l*, to “separate”, “distinguish”, “divide”. This appears five times in Bereishit 1. The goodness of the universe is itself a matter of order, boundaries and distinctions. God separates the different domains (day 1, light and dark; day 2, upper and lower waters; day 3, land and sea) and fills each with its appropriate objects or life-forms (day 4, sun and moon; day 5, birds and fish; day 6, land animals and mankind). So important was this idea

to Judaism that we have a special ceremony, *havdallah*, to mark the end of Shabbat and the beginning of each cycle of “the six days of creation.” Like God, we begin creation by *havdallah*: making, noting and consecrating distinctions.

This too is fundamental to the Judaic world view. Goodness is order; evil is disorder, an act or person or entity in the wrong place. The word *chet*, sin, comes from a verb meaning “to miss the target.” The word *averah*, like its English equivalent “transgression”, means to stray across a border, to enter forbidden territory. Many of the *chukim* or “statutes” of Judaism are about inculcating respect for the inherent orderliness of the universe - and thus not mixing milk (life) and meat (death), wool (an animal product) and linen (a vegetable product) or sowing a field with “mixed kinds” of seed.

Creation itself is seen as the slow emergence of order from chaos. This, as the physicist Gerald Schroeder points out (in *Genesis and the Big Bang*) is implicit in the Hebrew words *erev* and *boker*, “And it was evening (*erev*) and it was morning (*boker*).” *Erev* in Hebrew means an undifferentiated mixture of elements. *Boker* comes from a root meaning “to reflect, contemplate, seek clarity.” Much recent work in physics, biology and cosmology has converged on the discovery that the birth of stars, planets and life itself is a matter of the slow emergence of ever more complex systems of order swimming, as it were, against the tide of entropy.

An ordered universe is a peaceable universe in which every form of being, inanimate, animate and human, has its proper place. Violence, injustice and conflict are

forms of disorder - a failure to respect the integrity of each life-form or (in the case of humanity, where “every life is like a universe”) each person. That was the state of the universe before the Flood, when “all flesh had corrupted its way on earth.”

This was not an abstract idea. The world of myth, against which Judaism is a sustained protest, was one in which boundaries were not observed. There were human beings who were like Gods and Gods who were like human beings. There were strange mythological hybrids - like the sphinx, half human, half animal. Religious ecstasy was often accompanied by a ceremonial breaking of boundaries in various ways. To the Judaic mind this is paganism, and it is never morally neutral. God creates order; man creates chaos; and the result is inevitably destructive.

The most fundamental boundary is stated in the Torah’s first sentence - that between “heaven” and “earth”. Never before or since (except among religions or cultures influenced by Judaism) has God been conceived in so radically transcendent a way. God is not to be identified with anything on earth. “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord”, says the Psalmist, “but the earth He has given to man.” This ontological divide is fundamental. God is God; humanity is humanity. There can be no blurring of the boundaries.

That was the sin of the builders of the tower. Their aspiration (to “reach heaven”) was laughable, and indeed the Torah makes a joke of it. They think that their construction - three hundred feet high - has reached heaven, whereas God has to “come down” to look at it (in general, the one



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Effi came down to this world a pure soul on Yom Kippur; 37 years later he returned his still purer soul Ram Chesvan 7, 2025. Effi served continuously in gaza for 751 days from the Holocaust which began Oct. 7, 2023 - Oct 28, 2025 with utmost heroism to protect troops, return captives, and guard Am Yisrael, the 473rd soldier to fall there; during a “cease fire.”

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For over a decade, Effi, his wife and the children prepared banquets for thousands of lone soldiers. His nickname in the IDF was “Effi Sour Pickles.”

In order not to need to stop to eat a meal during long missions, he filled his uniform pockets and helmet with bags of pickles to sustain himself and comrades.

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thing that makes God laugh in the Torah is the pretensions of human beings when they think of themselves as like the Gods). However, it was worse than laughable. The Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin, 1817-1893), writing in Czarist Russia and prophetically foreseeing the worst excesses of communism, sees Babel as the world's first totalitarianism, in which to preserve the masses as a single entity, all freedom of expression is suppressed (that, for him, is the meaning of "the whole world had one language and a unified speech"). Intoxicated by their technological prowess, the builders of Babel believe they had become like Gods and could now construct their own cosmopolis, their man-made miniature universe. Not content with earth, they wanted to build an abode in heaven. It is a mistake many civilisations have made, and the result is catastrophe.

In modern times, the re-enactment of Babel is most clearly associated with the name of Nietzsche (1844-1890). For the last ten years of his life, he was clinically insane, but shortly before his final breakdown he had a nightmare vision which has become justly famous:

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the marketplace, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" . . . Whither is God?" he cried. "I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I. All of us are his murderers . . . God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? . . . Is not

the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become Gods simply to seem worthy of it?"

As George Steiner pointed out (in his *In Bluebeard's Castle*) there was less than three-quarters of a century between Nietzsche and the Holocaust, between his vision of the murder of God and the deliberate, systematic attempt to murder the "people of God" (Hitler called conscience "a Jewish invention").

When human beings try to become more than human, they quickly become less than human. As Lord Acton pointed out, even the great city-state of Athens which produced Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, self-destructed when "the possession of unlimited power, which corrodes the conscience, hardens the heart, and confounds the understanding of monarchs, exercised its demoralising influence." What went wrong in Athens, he writes, was the belief that "there is no law superior to that of the State - the lawgiver is above the law."

Only when God is God can man be man. That means keeping heaven and earth distinct, organising the latter only under the conscious sovereignty of the former. Without this there is little to prevent human beings from sacrificing the many for the sake of the few, or the few for the sake of the many. Only a respect for the integrity of creation stops human beings destroying themselves. Humility in the presence of Divine order is our last - best - safeguard against humankind arrogating to itself power without restraint, might without right. Babel was the first civilisation, but sadly not the last, to begin with a dream of utopia and end in a nightmare of hell.

A world of *tov*, good, is a world

of *havdallah*, boundaries and limits. Those who cross those boundaries and transgress these limits make a name for themselves, but the name they make is Babel, meaning chaos, confusion and the loss of that order which is a precondition of both nature (the world God creates) and culture (the world we create). ■

Rabbi Sacks zt”l was the Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. These weekly teachings are part of his ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.



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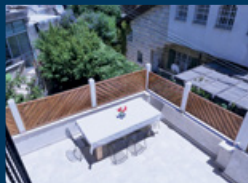




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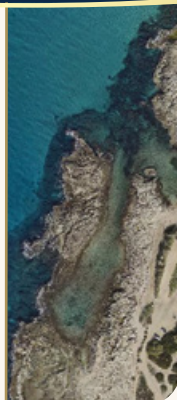
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Two Haftarot in One?

The haftarah that is read for Parashat No'ach is taken from two p'rakim, perek 54 and perek 55. But that is true only for those following the minhag of the Ashkenazim. The custom of the Sefaradim is to read the first chapter alone - the perek that we read after Tish'a B'Av, during the seven weeks of consolation. In truth, this earlier chapter seems to connect more closely to the theme of Parashat No'ach, including Hashem's reference to the flood itself ["Ki mei No'ach zot li..."] as well as His promise that His mercies remain even though 'the mountains might move' ["Ki heharim yamushu..."]. It is for this reason that the Sefaradi tradition uses only the first ten

verses of perek 54 as the fitting haftarah for our parasha.

We might rightfully wonder, however, why the Ashkenazim made the decision to extend the haftarah reading by including the final seven p'sukim of that same perek (54) and then, by adding the first five verses of the next perek (55) as well? Our bewilderment would grow even more upon studying and comparing these 'two' (?) haftarot.

Beyond the fact that (as mentioned before) the opening haftarah reading included references to No'ach, something that the following section does not, we would find, upon analyzing the two parts, that the two segments of the prophetic message are quite different!

Yishayahu opens his message by calling out "Roni akara" to his nation, telling the 'barren woman' to "break into song", for her children would eventually outnumber those of the wedded mothers. The subsequent p'sukim describe a glorious future for Israel, portraying an upsurge of population growth, restoration of the neglected land and renewal of the loving relationship between Israel and G-d. It is a prophetic promise of consolation and hope that is understandably read during the weeks of consolation.

And then, we turn to the second part of our haftarah, that which is read in the Batei Knesset of the Ashkenazi tradition. And note how this section begins in contrast to the prophet's opening call of the

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*Their daughters,
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first section: “Aniya so’arah-lo nuchama”, “O, Unhappy, storm-tossed one, disconsolate”. In but ten p’sukim, Yishayahu goes from encouraging Israel and telling them why they should rejoice - to lamenting a nation he describes as unhappy, storm-tossed and UNcomforted! Nonetheless, the navi’s message found in the second part of the haftarah is also one of comfort, as Rav Moshe Lichtenstein explains, however, the solace promised in the second nevu’ah is based upon a different theme.

The difference we find between the opening segment of the haftarah and the “addendum” read in Ashkenazi tradition reflects contrasting relationships that we may have with the Divine One. The more “optimistic” prophecy calling for Israel to ‘rejoice’ opens Yishayahu’s message that reflects a close relationship of G-d and Man, insisting that, although there may be times of punishment and exile, Hashem’s enduring love for His children will never permit Him to abandon or reject His chosen nation. As a result, we find that the nevu’ah emphasizes G-d’s loving relationship with Israel as a husband with his wife of youth and reiterates that He will bring his children back again, with vast love and everlasting kindness [v. 7,8].

The second segment that addresses the “unhappy, storm-tossed” nation reflects the bond of the All-Powerful King to His subjects - a King Who cares for, and, therefore, guards and defends his ‘citizens’. For this reason, we find this second prophecy to be one focusing on Hashem as The Supreme Creator [v. 16] and as Israel’s Protector [17].

The extended haftarah of the Ashkenazim reminds us that Israel’s Geulah may come about through a bond of love One to another or through the appreciation of those in need who recognize their only, true Guardian.

One way or the other, Israel’s redemption will, undoubtedly, come true. ■

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Saving the World or Saving His Home?

There are few personalities in the Torah as difficult to define as Noach. The Torah calls him:

נח איש צדיק תמים הָיָה בְּדֹרֵתּוֹ

Noach was a righteous man; he was wholehearted in his generation.¹

And yet, Chazal famously compare Noah with Avraham and seem to suggest that Noach did not reach the level of greatness that Avraham achieved. Was Noach a great tzaddik who simply lived in a terrible generation? Was there something missing from his greatness?

NOAH'S MISSION WAS DIFFERENT

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky² offers an insightful approach to this question. Instead of asking, “Why wasn't Noach more like Avraham?” Rabbi Yaakov asks us to

appreciate the possibility that Noach had an entirely different mission.

The Midrash makes a remarkable statement:

אָמַר רַבִּי סִימּוֹן: מִצִּינּוֹ שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד עִם הָאַחֲרֹנִים בְּזִכּוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנִים. וּמִנֵּיין שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה עִם הָרִאשׁוֹנִים בְּזִכּוֹת הָאַחֲרֹנִים? וְנַח מִצָּא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה', בְּאִיזוֹ זְכוּת? בְּזִכּוֹת תּוֹלְדוֹתָיו.

Rabbi Simon said: We find that Hashem acts kindly toward later generations in the merit of earlier generations. And from where do we know that Hashem acts kindly toward earlier generations in the merit of later generations? ‘Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem’, in whose merit? In the merit of his descendants.³

At first glance, this is difficult. How could Noach be saved because of his children? His children were not yet the great figures they would eventually become. The Torah itself makes clear that Hashem's instructions regarding the Ark were given to Noach. What does the Midrash mean?

NOAH'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENT: HE PROTECTED HIS FAMILY

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky explains that the Midrash is revealing something profound about Noach's greatness. Chazal⁴

1. Bereshit 6:9
2. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, Emet L'Yaakov

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3. Bereshit Raba 29:5
4. Bereshit Raba 30:9

famously debate the meaning of: נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורו

Rabbi Yehudah says: בדרתיו היה צדיק, אלו היה בדורו של משה או בדורו של שמואל לא היה צדיק.

Noach was righteous in his generation; had he lived in the generation of Moshe or Shmuel, he would not have been considered righteous.

Rabbi Nechemiah disagrees: ומה אם בדורותיו היה צדיק, אלו היה בדורו של משה או בדורו של שמואל על אחת כמה וכמה – *If he was righteous in his generation, how much more so would he have been righteous in the generation of Moshe or Shmuel.*

Rabbi Nechemiah then gives a remarkable metaphor: משל לצלוחית של אפרסמון, מוקפת צמיד פתיל, ומנחת בבית הקברות, והיה ריחה נודף. ואלו היה חוצה לו על אחת כמה וכמה. It is like a sealed flask of perfume lying in a cemetery, yet its fragrance still spreads. If it had been outside the cemetery, how much more so would its fragrance have spread.

Rabbi Nechemiah is not criticizing Noach. He is defending him. The generation of the Mabul was not merely a generation with a few bad people. The entire environment had become corrupt. The Torah says: ותשחת הארץ לפני האלקים ותמלא הארץ חמס. The earth had become corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.⁵

Noach was living in what Rabbi Nechemiah compares to a cemetery. What did he do? He sealed himself. He protected his family. He built a spiritual environment in which his family could survive. That may not have been the mission of Avraham. But perhaps it was exactly the mission of

Noach.

THE TENT OF THE UPRIGHT WILL FLOURISH

The Midrash interprets another pasuk in Mishlei: בית רשעים ישמד, ואהל ישרים יפריח. The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.⁶ The Midrash explains: בית רשעים ישמד זה דור המבול. ואהל ישרים יפריח זה נח. The house of the wicked will be destroyed, this refers to the generation of the Mabul. The tent of the upright will flourish: this refers to Noach. Why specifically a tent? Noach's greatness was that he protected his tent. He understood that the world outside had become spiritually toxic. His task was not necessarily to transform that world. His task was to make certain that the world did not transform his family.

That is a form of greatness that we sometimes underestimate. We tend to measure influence by how many people we reach. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky teaches that there are times when the greatest influence is exercised inside the home. Noach could not save the generation. But he saved his family. From that family came Shem. From Shem came the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever. From that Beit Midrash came Yaakov Avinu.

WHY DID YAAKOV NEED FOURTEEN YEARS IN THE BEIT MIDRASH?

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky consistently uses this explanation to answer another famous question. Yaakov is sent to Haran. His parents tell him to go to the house of Lavan. Yet before he gets there, Yaakov spends fourteen years studying in the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever. Why the detour? Yaakov had already learned Torah for

5. Bereshit 6:11

6. Mishle 14:11

decades from Yitzhak. Why did he suddenly need another fourteen years of Torah?

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky answers that Yaakov needed a different kind of Torah. Until now, Yaakov had grown up surrounded by tzaddikim. His grandfather was Avraham. His father was Yitzhak. His mother was Rivkah. He had lived in an environment saturated with holiness. Suddenly everything was changing. Yaakov was going to Lavan. He was entering a world of deception, dishonesty, manipulation, and spiritual hostility. He needed to learn something he had never needed before: How do you remain a Jew when the environment around you is not Jewish? How do you remain honest when everyone else is dishonest? How do you remain faithful when the people around you do not share your values? How do you maintain your identity without allowing the environment to redefine you?

That was the Torah of Shem and Ever. Where did Shem learn it? From Noach. Shem had been raised in the generation of the Mabul. Ever had been raised in the generation of the Dor Haflagah. They had learned how to remain righteous in HOSTILE environments. Yaakov needed precisely that Torah.

THE TORAH THAT YAAKOV GAVE YOSEF

This also explains a remarkable comment of Rashi. When Yaakov later teaches Yosef, Rashi tells us that Yaakov transmitted to Yosef the Torah he had learned in the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever.⁷ Why only to Yosef? Because Yosef was about to enter a world even more foreign than the world Yaakov had encountered. Yosef was going

to Egypt. He would be completely alone in a foreign land without a spiritual support system. He would be surrounded by a culture whose values were radically different from his own. He needed the Torah of Shem and Ever.

That is the greatness of Noach. Noach did not have a community reinforcing his values. He was surrounded by a spiritual cemetery. Nevertheless, he remained Noach and he made sure that his family remained part of that same world.

Avraham was the great outward-facing tzaddik. His greatness was measured by how many people he could bring closer to Hashem. Noach was the great inward-facing tzaddik. His greatness was measured by whether he could preserve holiness in an environment that was trying to destroy it. Both are necessary. There are times when we have to go out into the world and influence it. Yet, there are times when we have to recognize that the world is influencing us and we need to protect ourselves. The wisdom lies in knowing which moment we are living in.

WHAT KIND OF TEIVAH ARE WE BUILDING?

The Torah tells us that Noach built a teivah. We usually think of the teivah as the vehicle that saved Noah from the Mabul. Perhaps there is another way to understand it. The teivah was not merely a boat. It was a protected environment. Outside was chaos. Inside was Torah, family, responsibility, and the preservation of life. There are times when every Jewish home needs its own teivah. We cannot always control what happens outside our homes. We cannot determine what our children will see, what society will value, or what

7. Bereshit 37:3

messages will surround them. But we can determine what happens inside our tent. What do our children hear? What do they see us value? What happens on Shabbat? How do we speak about other people? How do we respond when someone needs help? What role does Torah play in our lives? Do our children see Judaism as something we merely practice, or as the framework through which we live? That is the challenge of Noah.

This explains why the Midrash claims that Noah was saved in the merit of his children. The Midrash is telling us that the way a person builds his home becomes part of his own *zechut* (merit). The children are not merely the recipients of a parent's values. They become the parent's legacy. A person may not be able to change the entire world, but he can change a home. A home can change a family and a family can change generations. Shem learned from Noah. Yaakov learned from Shem. Yosef learned from Yaakov. Through Yosef, the Jewish people survived Egypt.

Before we can influence the world, we must make sure that we have built a strong foundation in our homes. Noah teaches us that saving a family is not a small form of leadership. Sometimes the greatest thing a person can do for the future of Klal Yisrael is to build a home in which the future can survive. ■

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Two brothers, both acting in a like manner, yet garnered significantly different rewards. *“Vayikach Shem v’Yefet et hasimlah vayasimu al sh’chem sheneihem vayelchu achoranit vayechasu et ervat avihem u’fneiheim achoranit ve’ervat avihem lo ra’u—* And Shem and Yefet took the garment, and they placed [it] on both of their shoulders, and they walked backwards, and they covered their father’s nakedness, and their faces were turned backwards, so that they did not see their father’s nakedness.” (*Bereishet* 9:23) The word *“vayikach”*

expresses the singular; Rashi teaches that Shem exerted more effort to fulfill the mitzvah of covering his father and therefore his children merited the mitzvah of tzitzit,

while Yefet’s descendants merited burial. What is the significance of each of these rewards? And why the apparent disparity in consequence?

Rav Meir Chodosh zt”l in *K’Ayal Ta’arog* explains that clothing has two functions. The first is to cover one’s body to avoid the shame of physical exposure, the second is to afford him honor and dignity. Yefet was motivated by his desire to cover his father’s disgrace. Thus, his descendants merited

burial, thereby providing their bodies with a physical cover and protection. Shem, however, was motivated by his desire to protect his father’s honor and dignity so his descendants merited a mitzvah that brings honor to one’s body and soul.

Another approach is offered by R’ Gedalya Schorr zt”l, Rosh Yeshivat Torah V’da’at.

He explains that each reward is perfectly aligned with the manner in which Shem and Yefet performed their actions. Shem was driven by an inner passion and



Rabbi Gedalia Schorr zt”l



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energy to carry out this great act and was therefore rewarded with a mitzvah that is performed when one is alive. In contrast the singular “and he took,” reflects Yefet’s more passive manner, hence his reward is bestowed on those who are no longer alive. This is a clear example of *middah k’neged middah*, measure for measure. The attitudes we invest in actions result in a corresponding consequence.

Clearly the Torah is teaching us how important it is to invest energy and effort in our actions and deeds. Rav Avraham Yaakov Gordon zt”l emphasizes that Chazal underscores here that small differences in effort render major differences in rewards. Of course, Yefet did the right thing and his reward, burial, is monumental. However, the mitzvah of tzitzit, compared to the entire Torah, is eternity itself. Often, we allow ourselves to be satisfied with just “getting something done,” when we really should stretch ourselves that much more to infuse mindset and effort to achieve immeasurable dividends. Rav Wachtfogel zt”l adds that the difference may have been minute, even barely perceptible, yet, the Torah is keenly aware of the small nuances, and so should we.

The month of MarCheshvan, the month containing no holidays, is the perfect month for us to concentrate on infusing our actions with purpose and life force. Let us transform the ordinary into the superordinary, thereby reaping tremendous dividends in this world and the next one. ■


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UPCOMING ISRAEL EVENTS



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Celebrate Yom HaAliyah through flavors, stories, and traditions from around the world, honoring the diverse cultures that shape Israel.

Sunday, October 18 | ANU Museum, TLV



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Tuesday, October 20 | NBN TLV Center

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Wednesday, October 28 | Beit Daniel, TLV



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Executive Director, Camp HASC
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Sweet Talk

Rebbe Yitzchak Luria, zy'a, was undoubtedly the greatest expositor of the secrets of Torah since Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar. Known by the acronym *Arizal* or 'the *Ari HaKadosh*', the prefix *alef* stands for *Eloki*, "the Godly Rebbe Yitzchak". No other sage in Jewish history has been granted this honorific. Revolutionized the way we understand and live with *pnimiyus haTorah*, revealed an interpretive system of *Kavanos*, spiritual intentionality toward the direction and application of the Kabbalah in prayer and mitzvah observance.

Who could begin to imagine the awesome *Yamim Nora'im tefillos* of the holy Arizal? A familiar yet invaluable ancient tale perhaps holds a tiny glimpse:

One year, following the busy holiday period, the Arizal sensed that while the prayers he had led in the company of the scholars and kabbalists of Tzfas were impactful, there was something missing in them. In an effort to seek out a *tikun*

and gain clarity on this intuition, the Arizal entered a deep meditative state and ascended to the upper worlds. There, in his state of expanded consciousness, a dream-like vision was shown to him of a Yid whose *tefillos* were remarkably favored on high.

Summoning his devoted disciple, Rav Chaim Vital, the Arizal insisted they embark on a journey to find out who this fellow was and how he had achieved so much in his prayers. After a days of mystical travels, they arrived at a small hut in a far flung Galilean town, and were taken aback by the luminous visage of the holy man when he came to the door. The sage greeted him and asked, "Please tell me dear brother, have you learned the depths of the Zohar's comments on *tefillah*?"

"Rebbe," the man swallowed shyly, "I am sorry to say, I'm unfamiliar with that.... And, well, honestly, I've never studied much Torah."

"But you do daven with *kavanos*, with lofty intentions, do you not?"

"Rebbe! ...I don't even know what that means!"

The Ari and Rav Chaim looked at each other in wonder. "My friend, tell me please of your *avodah* during the High Holy Days, I must know!"

"Alright, if the Rebbe really wants. To be honest, I grew up in poverty, I never had the opportunity to learn even the basics of Torah and *tefillah*. In fact, I barely know half of the letters of the *alef-beis*. I'm not

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so comfortable in the shul, but of course I went anyway. Rebbe,” he grinned with embarrassment, “I confess, I wanted desperately to fit in and daven with the congregation; everyone was davenning so eloquently in Hebrew.... My heart was so broken, I didn’t know what to do, so finally I just shouted out the handful of letters I know: ‘Aleph, beis, gimmel, daled, hei, vav, zayin, ches...!’ And then I said, ‘Master of the World! All I can do is give You what I know. That’s all I have, just a handful of ‘A-B-C’s’. Please help me — please string these letters together into words in a way that will bring You *nachas*...!’”

Deeply moved by the sincerity of this Jew, the Ari haKadosh bowed his head and praised him, “*Ashrecha*, fortunate are you! ...My friend, you’ll never know what a great gift you have given me today. Thank you!” Smiles remained on the lips of the two great teachers of Am Israel until they had returned to their holy *beis medrash* in Tzfas.

...Needless to say, in the following year their prayers rose to an even greater level.

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו
אֲתֵּיָא לֵהֶם הַתְּהִלָּה נַח

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was an *ish tzadik tamim b’dorosav*, righteous and wholehearted, perfect, in his generations. Noah walked with God” (*Bereishis*, 6:9).

Hashem praises Noah as an *ish tzadik tamim*. The Hebrew word *tam*, sometimes translated as ‘perfect’, is more accurately ‘innocent’ — while implying simplicity, purity, wholeheartedness, sincerity, and completeness.

A lack of *temimus* takes a devastating toll

on our inner world. Consider the core of our daily religious practice, Torah and tefillah. While we may be able to intellectually explain numerous *p’shatim* and *peirushim* with fancy, highbrow language, engaging modern and ancient literary devices and analytical tools, it is the *midah* of *temimus* that *connects us* to what we are learning, saying and doing. Rather than merely articulating a mass of eloquent theoretical information, davening with *temimus* brings alive a simple truth: we are speaking with the Creator, Sustainer and Master of the World.

This past week marked Rosh Chodesh Mar-Cheshvan. A number of explanations are suggested regarding the root of the name and essence of this month. The prefix *Mar* means ‘bitter’, a reference to this month being broken-hearted over its lack of any festivals. *Mar* also means ‘drop’, referring here to the first rains (the *Yoreh*), which fall in Cheshvan. *Sefer haAruch* suggests a word play: this month is *Merachesh-van*; *merachesh* (flowing) *vahn* (with water), as this is the month when we begin to pray for winter rains.

The Gemara (*Taanis*, 25b) recounts how, during a severe drought, the great Rebbe Eliezer rose before the community and

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prayed for rain, reciting the six extra blessings for rain ordained by the Sages to be added into the *Amidah*. Despite his twenty-four blessings, rain did not fall. Rebbe Akiva then went before the ark and cried out:

אֲבִינוּ מִלְכֵּנוּ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹה אַתָּה. אֲבִינוּ מִלְכֵּנוּ
לְמַעַן רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ!

Our Father, our King, we have no king other than You. Our Father, our King, for Your sake, have mercy on us!”

His prayers were answered immediately. The Gemara then points to Rebbe Akiva’s forgiving nature as the reason his prayers were more effective than those of his teacher Rebbe Eliezer. The Arizal (*Sefer haKavanos*), however, asserts that Rebbe Akiva opened his heart and cried out to Hashem with unscripted words and with complete humility and self-effacement, davening with *temimus*.

The Gemara (*Megillah*, 27b) considers the length of time that one prayed as the time it is *קְדוּרָה בְּפִי*, ‘arranged in his mouth,’ meaning the period it continues to linger *after* one has completed his formal davening. If we have prayed with *temimus*, our lips may still be subtly and even subconsciously articulating those prayers for quite some time.

Arugas haBosem relates that in the month of Marcheshvan, *marchushei merachshin*, “our lips are still moving,” with the the holy songs and prayers of the past month of Tishrei. Whispers of the elevated nigunim, songs and tefillos of Selichos, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kipur and Sukos still echo in our ears.

Before our memories of the High Holy Days and our *kabbalos*, our holy resolutions for the new year, begin to fade, let us take up the opportunity of Cheshvan. Let us take this time to process and reflect on our Tishrei prayers, and the lingering taste of their words and letters. In this way, may Mar-Cheshvan be sweetened with the afterglow of those festivals.

And may the *Ribbono Shel Olam* always hear our sincere prayers, accept our service of *temimus*, and ‘make it rain’ with floods of blessing!

*Excerpt from newly released **Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah**, (Mosaica Press, Elul 5786) ■*

Rav Judah Mischel is executive director of Camp HASC, the Hebrew Academy for Special Children. He is the founder of Tzama Nafshi and the author of the “Baderech” series. Rav Judah lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife Ora and their family.



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

RABBI SAM SHOR

Director, Torah Initiatives, OU Israel

There is a fascinating teaching in the *Zohar HaChadash* that offers an interesting take on the narrative of *Noach*.

Upon emerging from the *teiva* and witnessing the destruction in the world following the flood, *Noach* began to weep, and then called out to *Hashem*- questioning how it could be that the world was decimated. *Hashem*, according to this teaching, answers *Noach*, calling him a foolish servant- I told you that you were righteous before me, and that the world was destined for destruction, and you did nothing! You had the capacity to *daven* and intercede, and you did nothing to convince me that the world was worth protecting!

The Beit Yaakov of Ishbitz zy'a, similarly points out that there is a familiar *pasuk* in *Yeshaya* which refers to the flood as the **Mei Noach**- the waters of *Noach*. The Rebbe explains, since *Noach* did not advocate for the salvation of others before the flood, the flood's destruction is subsequently referred to as the waters of *Noach*.

The great Chasidic Master **Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, zy'a** points out

something interesting in this teaching. In not advocating at all, by not making any effort whatsoever to show concern for others, *Noach* was not simply selling others short, but rather was selling **himself** short! *Noach* simply did not understand or believe that he, as a righteous person, had the ability to both advocate for or influence others! He simply didn't understand that he, like each of us, can indeed make a difference-that we are all given the gift of *koach hatefila*, the power of *tefila* to transform ourselves, and transform the world!

Reb Levi Yitzchak teaches us so powerfully that each of us should reflect on this important lesson, that we should appreciate the capacity each of us has been endowed with, that our actions and *tefilot* do have the ability to impact others, and to lift up the entire world.

This idea is reflected in a powerful short teaching from **Reb Tzadok HaKohein MiLublin zy'a**, in his work *Tzidkat HaTzadik*, **Reb Tzadok** taught:

K'sheim She'Adam Tzarich L'Haamin B'Hashem Yitbarach, kach tzarich achar kach l'haamin b'atzmo-Just as a person must believe and be faithful to Hashem, so too one must believe and have faith in oneself!

Hashem bestows each of us with incredible capabilities-each of us must look inward with confidence and ask ourselves-how can I contribute to making the world a better place?

Each year, we read the story of *Noach*, just a few short days after we emerge from

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the proverbial *teiva* of the experience of the days of *Elul*, and the *chagim* of *Tishrei*. As we begin to settle into a more consistent routine, each of us must ask ourselves-how can we begin to bring the inspiration and growth we experienced these past many weeks, and actualize our innate individual strengths to make our mark in improving the world?

Yehi Ratzon, may we be blessed to take to heart each of these meaningful insights, and may we each merit to channel those inner strengths, and collectively bring about a transformation of the entire world. ■

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David & Ilana Goodman and family
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8:30 pm

Semichat Chaver
Program

Rav Elyada Goldwicht

Bet Knesset Ohel Yitzchak,
Keren Hayesod St. (The Bais)

TUESDAY, OCT 20

9:15 am

Women's Division
Torah Tapestries

Shira Smiles

Beit Knesset HaNassi,
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

9:20 am

Understanding Tefillah

Rabbi Yossi Goldin

10:10 am

Rambam: Letters and
Introductions

**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

11:25 am

P'shat in the Parsha

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

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9:15 am

Rav Soloveitchik on the
Parsha

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

10:20 am

Contemporary Issues in
Halacha and Hashkafa

Rabbi Anthony Manning

Community Beit Midrash Program

Beit Knesset
HaNassi,
24 Ussishkin St.,
Rechavia

11:25 am

Building Character and
Midot: Rav Kook on Pirkei
Avot

**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

12:30 pm

The Turbulent Nineteenth
Century of European Jewish
History

Dr. Deborah Polster

THURSDAY, OCT 22

9:15 am

Parshat HaShavua

Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:30 am

Parshat Hashavua

Rabbi Baruch Taub

11:25 am

Trailblazing the Text of Tanach

Rabbi Neil Winkler

12:20 pm

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Rabbi Sam Shor

Community Beit Midrash Program

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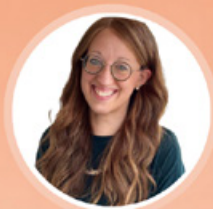


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MARINE BIOLOGY

כל אשר נשמת רוח חיים באפו מכל אשר
בחרבה מתו: (זכ"ב)

*All in whose nostrils was the merest
breath of life, all that was on dry land,
died.*

רש"י: "אשר בחרבה" - ולא דגים שבים
(סנהדרין ק"ח ע"א).

*"(All) that was on dry land (died)" –
and not the fish in the sea (Sanhedrin
108a).*

The Torah describes the devastation of the *Mabul*: "*Kol asher nishmas ruach chaim b'apav*" – anything that breathed, anything alive, anything that had life within it, died. Then, almost redundantly, a second clause appears: "*Mikol asher b'charavah meisu*." Anything on dry land died. That second phrase seems to qualify the first. Why repeat the point?

Rashi explains that the fish in the ocean did not die, *lo dagim shebayam*. Because

they were not part of the *charavah*, the dry land, they were spared. The Gemara in *Sanhedrin* supports this. The fish were exempt from this destruction.

Why is it important for the Torah to tell us that the fish survived?

One answer, from the Gemara in *Zevachim*, is that the fish were less implicated. The moral breakdown that began in the human world spread outward to land animals. There were forms of corruption described by Chazal, including unnatural mixing that distorted the created order. The corruption had spread into the moral and ecological order. The fish, however, remained largely untouched by that corruption. They were spared.

In other words, the *Mabul* was not a blind or indiscriminate act. Where guilt existed, devastation followed; where innocence remained, life remained. The fish stand as a counterpoint to how other animals behaved. Hashem preserves what does not deserve destruction, even when the rest of the world is collapsing.

There is also a broader theological layer. The *Mabul* represents a reversal of *Ma'aseh Bereishis*. The world failed, and so Hashem, as it were, returns creation to *tohu va'vohu*, the state before formation.

How is creation reversed? On Day Two, Hashem separated the upper waters from the lower waters. On Day Three, He gathered the waters so dry land could emerge.

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The *Mabul* reverses that process. Water descends from above – *v'arubos hashamayim niftachu* – and erupts from below – *nivke'u ma'ayanos tehom*. The boundaries collapse. The world returns to a submerged, unformed state.

Within that framework, perhaps only certain layers of creation are undone. Beings that were created on Day Six – human beings and land animals – are erased. But marine life, which was created on Day Five, remains. This does not fully resolve the question of the birds, who were also created on Day Five, but it suggests that *dagim* function as a thread of continuity, a living remnant of the original world that persists even as everything else is washed away.

This opens a speculative question. Does this detail shed light on the world we observe? Marine biology is markedly different from terrestrial biology. The variety of marine species is vast.

Is it possible that marine life appears so varied because it did not undergo the rupture of the *Mabul*? Perhaps the ocean preserves a greater continuity with pre-*Mabul* nature than the world on land.

If land animals were rebuilt from a narrow base, from the pairs entering the *teivah*, their descendants would reflect that limitation. Marine life did not pass through that same bottleneck. It did not enter the *teivah*; it remained outside the cycle of destruction and reconstruction. Oceanic life may therefore preserve a broader echo of earlier creation, one that is more continuous and more diverse.

This small Rashi opens multiple dimensions. It teaches a moral lesson about precise divine justice, a theological model of creation being reversed, and a lens through

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which to think about the natural world: how traces of an earlier order may still exist beneath the surface of the seas.

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וַיֵּשָׁר אַךְ נֹחַ וְאִשְׁרֵי אֶתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה: (ז"כ:ג)

Only Noach was left, and those with him in the ark....

רש"י: "אַךְ נֹחַ" - לְבַד נֹחַ, זֶהוּ פְּשׁוּטוֹ; וּמִדֶּרֶשׁ אַגְדָּה: גּוֹנֵחַ וְכוּהָה דָם מִטֶּרֶח הַבְּהֵמוֹת וְהַחַיִּית. וַיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים שְׂאֵחַר מְזוֹנוֹת לְאַרְיֵי הַכִּישׁוֹ, וְעַלִּיו נֶאֱמַר הֵן צָדִיק בְּאַרְץ שְׁלֵם (משלי יא:לא).

"Only Noach." – Noach alone. This is its literal meaning. But the Midrashic explanation is (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 9) that he was coughing and spitting blood because of the trouble he had with the cattle and beasts; others say that he was once late in bringing food to a lion, so it struck him. Regarding him may the words be applied (Mishlei 11:31), "Behold, even the righteous is paid (for his evil deeds) in this world."

As the *Mabul* is coming to an end, the Torah writes: "*Vayisha'er ach Noach*" – "Only Noach survived." The word *ach* is strange. We already know that Noach was the lone survivor, so what is the Torah adding? Rashi explains that *ach* means "even." He was the sole survivor, yet he himself

had barely survived.

Why did Noah just barely survive?

Rashi offers several explanations. We won't go through all of them, but the most familiar is that Noah was injured by the lion of the *teivah*. He failed to feed the lion on time, and the lion attacked him. At first glance, this seems like a straightforward lesson about sensitivity to animals and to all of Hashem's creatures. Noah is entrusted with the entire natural world, and even a temporary lapse in care matters.

Once Noah leaves the *teivah*, a hierarchy is established. Human beings stand at the top of creation. We are meant to harness and guide nature responsibly. Judaism is not opposed to using animals to improve human welfare, even via experimentation, so long as it is done with care and restraint. Cruelty, brutality, and indifference are forbidden.

But there is something far more unsettling here.

Why should Noah be punished for insensitivity to a single lion? His entire year was devoted to preserving the natural world. Day and night, month after month, he fed and sustained countless creatures. Why should he be punished for one lapse, one moment of delay?

The answer is that sensitivity is not cumulative. You do not earn credits that allow you to be insensitive later. You cannot justify a local failure by pointing to a broader devotion. Even if Noah was saving the world, that lion still needed to be fed. In that moment, Noah fell short. Sensitivity operates in real time.

People make this mistake constantly. They are deeply committed in general, generous in broad strokes, and devoted to many people, but then are insensitive

to one person in one moment. When it is pointed out, the response is immediate. Don't you see how much I do? Don't you see how dedicated I am? All of that may be true, but it does not excuse the lapse.

Sometimes this happens even within a single relationship. Anyone who is married recognizes this dynamic. A person can work hard all day, support the household, prepare for Shabbos, and still be insensitive in a particular moment. The response is the same. How can you say I'm insensitive? Look at everything I do!

Relationships depend upon general commitment as well as moment-by-moment attentiveness. When you err in that moment, you do not justify it. You apologize, and you try again. Noah does not receive a free pass because of his heroic year. In that instant, he still owed care to the lion. For that lapse, he was injured.

Since October 7, 2023, responsibility has weighed heavily on many people. Lives have been rearranged, homes opened, routines broken, energy spent without pause. It is hard not to feel that this should earn some allowance. The Torah does not speak that way. Especially when a world is being rebuilt, responsibility sharpens. Noah rebuilt the world, and he still received no free pass.

THE CRY FROM THE TEIVAH

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת נֹחַ וְאֶת כָּל הַחַיָּה וְאֶת כָּל
הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּיבָה וַיַּעֲבֵר אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ עַל
הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשָּׁכּוּ הַמַּיִם: (ח:א)

*God remembered Noah and all the
beasts and all the cattle that were with
him in the ark, and God caused a wind
to pass over the earth, and the waters
subsided.*

רש"י: "וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים" - זֶה הַשֵּׁם מֵדַת הַדִּין
הוא, וְנִהְפְּכָה לְמֵדַת רַחֲמִים עַל יְדֵי תַפְלִת
הַצַּדִּיקִים; וְרָשָׁעַתָּן שֶׁל רָשָׁעִים הוֹפְכֶת מֵדַת
רַחֲמִים לְמֵדַת הַדִּין.

"God remembered" – This name signifies middas hadin, but it was transformed into middas harachamim through the prayers of the righteous, while the wicked can reverse mercy into judgment.

Rashi pauses on a single word. The name *Elokim* generally reflects *middas hadin*. It appears in contexts of judgment and punishment. And yet here, at the moment of relief, the Torah still uses the name *Elokim*.

Rashi explains that something has shifted. *Middas hadin* has been transformed into *middas harachamim* through *tefillah*. Judgment itself has been redirected.

This idea is far-reaching. *Tefillah* can alter outcomes. Hashem created a world in which human prayer can reshape how events unfold.

But that raises a question. Who is davening here?

The only person in the *teivah* capable of *tefillah* is Noah. Yet the Torah never records a *tefillah*. There is no explicit moment of prayer – no dialogue, no words. Still, Rashi reads *tefillah* into the *pasuk*. If God as *Elokim* has become *Rachem*, someone must have cried out to Him.

This suggests that Noah did daven, even if the Torah does not record it. The silence of the text does not mean the silence of the person.

This carries two implications.

First, *tefillah* predates Avraham and the emergence of the Jewish people. It belongs to humanity. Noah precedes the Jewish

nation. "*Ki beisi beis tefillah yikarei lechol ha'amim*" – "For My House shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Yeshayahu 56:7). There is something deeply human about reaching beyond oneself and calling out to God.

Second, *tefillah* does not require a perfect person. Noah is not Avraham. His spiritual life is not expansive, not outward-facing. Soon after leaving the *teivah*, he will falter. Yet his *tefillah* is effective.

This also broadens how we understand *tefillah*. Prayer can possess real power even when the person davening is spiritually incomplete. When a person feels a need and turns to Hashem, that movement itself has power.

Part of Noah's limitation was revealed earlier. He did not daven for others. He did not pray for his generation. Now, inside the *teivah*, he turns to Hashem for himself. Even that is enough to shift *middas hadin* into *middas harachamim*.

We often try to deepen our *tefillah*, to make it more thoughtful, more structured, and more meaningful. That effort matters. This Rashi reminds us of something more basic. When a human being truly needs Hashem and calls out, that call is heard. And sometimes that is enough to change everything. ■



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The Days or the Waters of Noah?

PARSHAT NOACH | YESHAYAHU 54:1–55:5

כִּי־מִי נָח זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבֵּר מִיַּנְח עוֹד
עַל־הָאָרֶץ כֹּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקֶּצֶץ עָלֶיךָ וּמִגֶּעֱרָכָךְ

*For this to Me is like the waters of Noah:
As I swore that the waters of Noah never-
more would flood the earth, so I swear that
I will not be angry with you or rebuke you.*

Does this week's haftorah speak of the waters of Noah or the days of Noah? Both the Radak and the Abarbanel note a difference between texts. Some have two words, *ki mei Noach*, referring to the waters. Others have one word, *kimei Noach*, referring to the days.

The Radak explains that either reading brings us to the same promise. Just as Hashem made a covenant that the flood would never return to destroy the earth, He promises that after the final redemption, the Jewish people will not again experience exile.

The Abarbanel draws an additional idea from the reading “the days of Noah.” He asks us to consider what became of the few who survived. Noah and his family emerged from the *teivah* into a devastated world. From that one family, the world was populated anew. So, too, the remnant of the Jewish people would return, grow, and fill the land.

These explanations help us understand the call that opens our haftorah: “Enlarge the place of your tent ... do not hold back.” Yerushalayim is asked to prepare for the return of her children even while she feels their absence. Hashem's covenant assures her that there is a future, and the story of Noah reminds her how much can grow from a small beginning.

When we look at the streets of Yerushalayim today, at the children walking to school and the families making their homes there, these words take on new meaning before our eyes. As we continue to daven for the complete Geulah, we can pause to appreciate the life filling streets that once stood empty — and look forward to the children who have yet to come home. ■



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Birchot HaShachar: Part II

In the last article, we explored the first four brachot of Birchot HaShachar, which focus on thanking Hashem for the particular position He has given us in life: being Jewish, having freedom, and our identity as men or women. We now turn to the brachot that thank Hashem for the basic needs and abilities that allow us to function each day.

ברוך אתה ה' מלך העולם פוקח עורים

In this bracha, we thank Hashem for the gift of sight. **Rabbi Shimon Schwab** suggests closing our eyes while reciting this bracha and trying to imagine what life would be like without the ability to see. This simple exercise can help us appreciate just how precious the gift of vision really is.

Here is a short story that illustrates this point. A 25-year-old man was riding on a train with his father when he suddenly exclaimed, "Dad, look! There are trees and flowers!" His father smiled. A couple sitting nearby watched the young man's childlike excitement with pity. A few moments later, the young man called out again, "Dad, look! The clouds are moving with us!" The couple turned to the older man and asked, "Why don't you take your son to a doctor?" The father smiled and replied, "We just came from the hospital. My son was blind from birth, and today he got his sight back."

How often do we take our ability to see for granted? This bracha gives us an

opportunity to pause and appreciate a gift that we may barely notice in our everyday lives. The **Olat Tamid** adds another dimension to this bracha. In addition to thanking Hashem for the gift of sight itself, someone who wears glasses should also appreciate the human ingenuity that has made glasses possible. This idea is especially meaningful to me because I have extremely poor eyesight and am legally blind without glasses. I often think about how different my life would be if glasses and contact lenses had never been invented. Something that I use every single day, and rarely stop to think about, is itself an incredible gift!

ברוך אתה ה' מלך העולם מלביש ערומים

In the next bracha, we thank Hashem for providing us with clothing to protect us from the elements. The **Olat Tamid** suggests that as we recite this bracha, we should think about the different types of clothing we have: warm clothes for the winter, Shabbos clothes that help us honor Shabbos, and so much more. Taking a moment to consider all that we have can help us recognize just how fortunate we are to live in a world where clothing is so readily available, compared to the days in which each person had only one outfit and would wash it once a week.

But there is a deeper dimension to this bracha as well. I recently came across a website devoted entirely to clothing for dogs, featuring hundreds of outfits, from

dresses and suits to pajamas, pants, and skirts. Looking at this website made me laugh out loud. Because there is just something so absurd about an animal dressing in clothes!

Why is this? **Rabbi Shimon Schwab** explains that clothing has a deeper significance for human beings. After Adam and Chava sinned by eating from the Etz HaDaat, Hashem clothed them. Unlike animals, human beings were given free choice and the ability to rise above their natural instincts. Our clothing can serve as a reminder that we are not meant to live simply by following our animalistic urges. We have the ability and responsibility to make thoughtful choices and to strive for something higher. Seen in this light, מלביש ערומים is about much more than the clothing itself. As we thank Hashem for providing us with clothes, we can also reflect on the unique gift of free choice and our responsibility to use it well.

ברוך אתה ה' מלך העולם מתיר אסורים

In this bracha, we thank Hashem for releasing those who are imprisoned or bound. Even if we have never been imprisoned ourselves, we can use this bracha to appreciate the freedom of movement that we enjoy each day. The **Olat Tamid** explains that there is also a deeper way to understand the idea of being bound. Each of us has certain assumptions about ourselves and the world around us. We may believe that we are only capable of accomplishing a certain amount, or that certain opportunities are simply beyond our reach. Sometimes, these beliefs become like invisible chains, preventing us from recognizing our

potential.

With Hashem's help, we can break through these limitations, discover our abilities, and accomplish what we are meant to accomplish in this world. Similarly, someone who has struggled with an addiction and managed to break free can use this bracha to express gratitude for that freedom. What a powerful reminder that Hashem can help us break free not only from physical chains, but also from the things that hold us back internally.

ברוך אתה ה' מלך העולם זוקף כפופים

In this bracha, we thank Hashem for enabling us to rise from our beds and stand upright. The simple act of getting out of bed each morning is not something to take for

Birchot HaShachar Part II

Some points to focus on as we make
the Brachot:

פוקח עיוורים – For giving us the gift of sight.
Imagine the joy and wonder of a blind person
seeing for the first time – the colors, the faces,
the beauty of the world.

מלביש ערומים – For clothing us with what we need.
We have an abundance and ease in obtaining clothing,
and we were made on a higher level than the animals,
with the gift of free choice.

מתיר אסורים – For giving us the ability to move.
We can move freely, overcome addictions,
and break self-imposed barriers.

זוקף כפופים – For giving us the ability to stand tall.
We can stand up straight, without physical ailments,
without stress, and without guilt.

✂ Cut and paste into your siddur

granted. Neither is our ability to stand up straight and move about freely. But just as we saw with the previous bracha, there is more to this idea than its physical meaning.

Sometimes, a person can feel as though they are bent over beneath the weight of life's burdens. The pressures of earning a living, raising children, and maintaining shalom bayis can feel overwhelming. At other times, a person may be weighed down by shame, guilt, or regret over something that has happened. When Hashem gives us the strength to lift our heads, regain our confidence, and move forward, He is helping us stand upright in a much deeper sense. As we recite כפופים זוקק, we can thank Hashem for the physical strength that allows us to stand, while also asking Him to help us rise above the emotional and spiritual burdens that weigh us

down. What a gift it is to be able to stand tall, both physically and emotionally!

FROM GRATITUDE TO TEFILLA

It is interesting to note that these four brachot are written in the plural: עורים, כפופים, ערומים, and אסורים. We are thanking Hashem not only for what He has granted us personally, but also for the gifts He has given mankind as a whole. This is why even someone who personally lacks one of these abilities or blessings still recites these brachot.

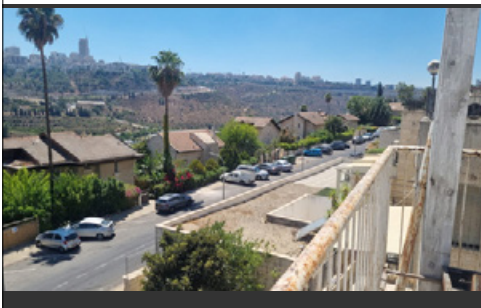
Before concluding our discussion, I would like to suggest one additional way to approach these brachot. Although they are formally brachot of שבח (praise) and הודאה (gratitude), I believe they can also serve as a springboard for בקשה (personal requests). As we thank Hashem for our sight, we can ask Him to help us see more clearly, both physically and in the way we understand the world. As we thank Him for our clothing, we can ask for help in making the right choices and living up to our potential. As we thank Him for freeing those who are bound, we can ask Him to help us break through the limitations that hold us back. And as we thank Him for enabling us to stand upright, we can ask Him for the strength to face life's challenges with confidence.

These brachot remind us that Hashem is the Source of the very abilities we rely on every day. When we truly internalize that recognition, we can begin to understand that we have Someone to turn to for all our needs. And that is one of the most powerful lessons of Tefilla - the more we recognize Hashem's role in our lives, the more naturally we can turn to Him, not only to thank Him for what we have, but also to ask for what we need. ■

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Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot (1:2): The Foundation of Kindness

**The world stands on three things...
upon acts of loving-kindness
(Avot 1:2)**

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHAFETZ CHAIM

In his younger years, Rav Kook developed a close relationship with the famed Chafetz Chaim. They first met when the Chafetz Chaim, while traveling, would stay at Rav Kook's parents' home. Later, when Rav Kook was in his twenties, the Chafetz Chaim invited him to join an exclusive kollel dedicated to studying the laws of the Kohanim and the Temple service.

Undoubtedly, Rav Kook was deeply influenced by the Chafetz Chaim's extraordinary saintliness. The following story illustrates the Chafetz Chaim's

exquisite sensitivity and concern for others.

The Ponevezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, was one of the great Torah leaders of his generation. He founded the Ponevezh Yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, named after the Lithuanian yeshivah that had

been destroyed during World War II. He was a student of the Chafetz Chaim, although he initially studied at the yeshivah in Novaradok.

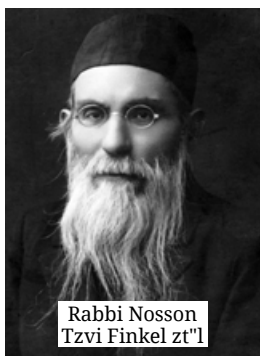
One day, while returning to Novaradok, Rav Kahaneman decided to take a detour and visit the Chafetz Chaim. When he arrived at the Chafetz Chaim's home, the Rebbetzin told him to

wait because the rabbi was occupied.

Suddenly, Rav Kahaneman heard frightening cries. "Don't be alarmed," the Chafetz Chaim's wife explained. "My husband is praying for someone."

Rav Kahaneman assumed that the Chafetz Chaim was praying for someone who was critically ill, perhaps a close family member. "No, it isn't that," the Rebbetzin explained. "He is praying for a local woman who is experiencing a difficult labor."

When Rav Kahaneman witnessed how deeply the Chafetz Chaim felt the suffering



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of a fellow Jew to whom he had no personal connection, he resolved to become his student. (*Beit HaLevi on Ahavat Yisrael*, Sutton, p. 211)

THE GENIUS OF CHESED

Rav Kook, in *Orot HaKodesh* (vol. 3, p. 313), speaks of “the genius of *chesed* of a great giver.” For such a person, “chesed and doing good are his soul’s mission and the crown of his life.” One who possesses an inner vision can discern in this genius “the shine of chesed itself, precious and lofty, higher and more elevated than all acts of chesed that actually come into practical existence.”

“We are all fortunate if the light of chesed shines in our midst. The world is fortunate, mankind is fortunate. And the nation is fortunate if the vision of a genius of philanthropy becomes revealed in one of its sons. The *ruach hakodesh* of philanthropy is a treasure of life.”

This unique genius expresses itself through chesed, bringing a spirit of life to the entire nation. Rav Kook notes that this genius “sometimes reveals itself through the nation’s poor.” A person may possess a genius for chesed even without financial means, excelling instead in practical acts of kindness. And when such a person discovers an opportunity to translate his inner impulse for chesed into action, “his spirit is exceedingly amazed.”

“Those with a sharp inner eye, those who grasp the real value of life, will be able to recognize the splendor of chesed even when cloaked with many coverings of inability to actually reveal itself.”

For Rav Kook, chesed is not merely a collection of good deeds. It can become a defining spiritual quality - a way of seeing

the world and responding to the needs of others.

A SERVANT TO HIS PEOPLE

When Rav Kook first came to Jerusalem, word quickly spread that he was always willing to help a fellow Jew in need. As a result, people came to him at all hours of the day, burdening him with every kind of request.

When his friends and relatives saw what was happening, they decided to intervene. They prepared a sign listing specific reception hours and hung it on Rav Kook’s front door.

The next day, however, the sign was gone.

His well-wishers prepared another sign and hung it in its place. That sign, too, disappeared after a day. Finally, they decided to investigate and discovered that Rav Kook himself was responsible for removing the signs.

When asked why he opposed an arrangement designed to lighten his workload, he explained:

“A rabbi is not his own master. He is a servant of the people, and a servant must be available to serve his master at all times.”

This was not merely a statement about rabbinic responsibility. It reflected Rav Kook’s fundamental understanding of leadership: the spiritual leader exists to serve others.

WATCHING EVERY ACTION

Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, the famed “Alter of Slabodka,” moved his yeshivah to Chevron in 1924. Among its distinguished students was the young Rav Yitzchak Hutner, who would later become one of the great Torah leaders of the twentieth century. Rav

Hutner frequently visited Rav Kook in Jerusalem and was deeply drawn to his saintly and poetic personality.

Rabbi Yaakov Freitman, a close student of Rav Hutner, related a fascinating vignette about one of Rav Hutner's visits to Rav Kook, the Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Hutner arrived in Chevron in the summer of 5685 (1925) as a nineteen-year-old yeshivah student. The Alter of Slabodka had recently established a branch of the famed Slabodka Yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, and Rav Hutner was among his first students.

Later that year, in the month of Iyar, Rav Hutner visited Rav Kook for the first time.

The older rabbi and the young genius from Warsaw took long walks together and spent many nights learning Torah, covering the entire range of Torah study. These encounters established a unique bond between the two rabbinic giants.

Years later, when Rav Hutner left Eretz Yisrael in 1929 to visit his parents in Warsaw, he eventually returned in 1933. When Rav Kook saw him again, he recited the blessing of *Shehechiyanu* with *shem uMalchut*.

The following story, however, concerns Rav Hutner's return to Chevron after one of his early visits to Rav Kook:

The Alter asked Rav Hutner what he had seen at Rav Kook's home. Rav Hutner replied that it had been an ordinary visit: they had "spoken in learning," but nothing particularly noteworthy had occurred.

The Alter was dissatisfied with this response and pressed his young student for more details.

One detail Rav Hutner remembered was particularly striking.

"It was eleven o'clock in the morning," he recalled, "and a glass of milk that the Rebbetzin had brought the Rav was still untouched. In the waiting room sat a high-ranking British official who had an appointment with the Rav. At the same time, Rav Kook was sitting with an elderly *talmid chacham* who was hard of hearing and had several questions.

"Rav Kook patiently answered the elderly man. Because he had difficulty hearing, Rav Kook had to repeat each answer slowly, loudly, and carefully. From time to time, Rav Kook's shamash would enter the room and whisper something into the Rav's ear. Each time, Rav Kook would respond, 'Yes, yes—but *kavod haTorah, kavod haTorah*.'"

Upon hearing this, the Alter of Slabodka delivered an unforgettable lesson in mussar:

"If you did not see this, then what is considered 'seeing'?"

The Alter, one of the great masters of the Mussar movement, recognized in Rav Kook's conduct a profound lesson in midot. Rav Kook was completely attentive to the needs of an elderly man who could barely hear, even while a high-ranking British official waited to see him. His actions demonstrated that honoring another human being - and especially *kavod haTorah* - could not be sacrificed to convenience or status. (*The Jewish Star*, August 5, 2015; see also *Sichat Avot**, pp. 51–52.)*

The Alter of Slabodka was teaching his students to look carefully - to notice the seemingly small actions that reveal a person's true character. Rav Kook's greatness was visible not only in his Torah scholarship and writings, but in the extraordinary sensitivity with which he treated every

person who entered his presence.

PRAYING WITH WINDOWS

For millennia, Jews have faced Jerusalem when praying. The Talmud in *Berakhot* 34b derives this practice from the way Daniel prayed in Babylonia:

“One should pray only in a house that has windows,” as it says: “Daniel would enter his house, where there were open windows in his upper chamber facing Jerusalem; three times a day he would kneel and pray” (Daniel 6:11).

Why are windows necessary for prayer? Is prayer not fundamentally a private exercise of the soul, requiring inward concentration? And why did Daniel specifically face Jerusalem?

ENGAGED PRAYER

Prayer is an intensely introspective activity, but it should never lead us to lose sight of the world around us. If meditation and private prayer cause us to withdraw from the world, we have misunderstood prayer’s ultimate purpose.

The full meaning of prayer cannot be realized by someone who is secluded from the needs and struggles of society. Prayer should inspire us to act for justice, compassion, and the betterment of the world.

For this reason, the Sages taught that one should pray in a room with windows. The windows symbolize our connection to the world outside and remind us that our spiritual lives carry moral obligations toward others.

At the same time, we turn toward Jerusalem. Our aspirations to perfect the world must be directed toward the goal of universal peace. This is the significance of facing Jerusalem, whose name is associated with peace. Jerusalem is the focal point from



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which God’s prophetic message radiates outward: “For Torah shall come forth from Zion, and the word of God from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3).

Prayer, then, is both inward and outward. We turn inward to encounter God, but we look outward toward a world that needs to be repaired.

(Based on Silver from the Land of Israel, Morrison, adapted from *Ein Ayah*, vol. I, on *Berakhot* 34b [5:124].)

CHESED LE'AVRAHAM

Rav Kook teaches that the uniqueness of Abraham’s *chesed* was its universal scope. Abraham did not restrict his kindness to his family or community; his *chesed* extended to all humanity.

Rav Kook beautifully describes this overflowing quality of kindness and calls upon us to follow in the ways of our nation’s



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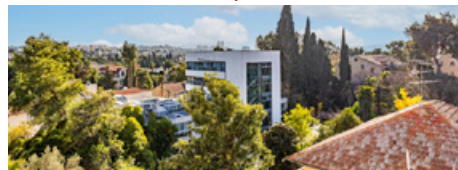


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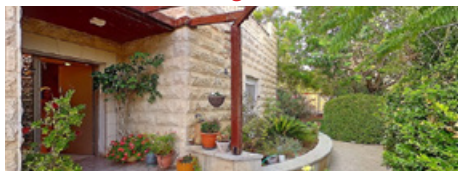
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founding father:

“These are the ways of the tzaddikim who are the foundation of the world: they judge the world by giving each person the benefit of the doubt; they love finding the righteousness in everyone and hate finding fault in others. These are the true students of Avraham our forefather and of those who walk in his ways.” (*Orot HaKodesh* 3, pp. 332–333)

This is the foundation of *Pirkei Avot* 1:2: “The world stands on three things: Torah, avodah, and acts of kindness.”

For Rav Kook, chesed is not simply one virtue among many. It is a way of being. It is the ability to see the dignity and goodness in another person, to feel another’s suffering as one’s own, and to translate that sensitivity into action.

The examples of the Chafetz Chaim and Rav Kook reveal this ideal in practice. The Chafetz Chaim wept for a woman he did not know. Rav Kook gave an elderly Torah scholar his full attention while an important official waited. He refused to limit the hours in which people could seek his help because he understood himself as a servant of the public.

True chesed begins with seeing. It continues with feeling. And it reaches its full expression when that feeling becomes action. ■



Rabbi Goldscheider’s most recent OU Press Publication, “**Torah United**” on the weekly Parsha, can be ordered directly from Rabbi Goldscheider at aarong@ouisrael.org at a special price for Torah Tidbits readers.

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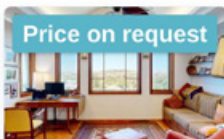


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לעילוי נשמת יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Who Deserves the Change?

Question: I was on a bus, and someone did not have enough money on their Rav-Kav (transit card) to pay. He asked if I could pay for him and pay me back in cash. The bus fare was 14.50 NIS, and neither of us had enough small change to work out exact payment, so he handed me a 20 NIS bill and send "It's fine," and he indeed did not seem to care much. I am a 12-year-old, and my parents put the money on my Rav-Kav. Can I keep the extra money he gave me, as I was the one who made the deal, or do I have to give it to my parents?

Answer: Since you ask a precocious question, I can give you a serious answer with the basic halachic analysis and sources – a full treatise would be too long.

The *gemara* (Ketubot 98b) discusses a case where Reuven gave Shimon money to buy something for him and the seller purposefully gave Shimon more of it than the normal

price indicates. The *gemara* says that if the price of the commodity is fluid, all that was given goes to Reuven. If the price is set, the extra received is split between Reuven and Shimon. Rashi (ad loc.) explains that if the price is fluid, we view the ostensible extra as an integral part of the sale, and the sale of course was done on Reuven's behalf. However, if the price is set, the extra is viewed not as part of the sale but as a present. The reason the clear extra is divided between Reuven and Shimon is that we do not know who the intended recipient is.

The Rif (ad loc.) explains differently. He views Shimon as the natural recipient when the price is set, but since he was only able to make the deal due to Reuven's money, Reuven deserves half of the extra produce. The Rama (Choshen Mishpat 183:6) prefers Rashi's approach (which surprised the Shach, CM 183:12) and therefore says that if the seller said he intended the extra for Shimon, Shimon receives it all.

The simple application of this rule is to say that validating a fare has a set price, which is why your acquaintance looked for 14.50 NIS. This would make the extra 5.50 NIS a present, either to you as a helpful young man or to your parents, who trained you to use their money to help someone; you would thus split the 5.50 NIS.

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However, it is also possible your acquaintance did not intend for a present but to save the time/embarrassment of trying to get change. Under the circumstances, this would be a natural way of buying the fare or reimbursing the money (one could argue either formulation), so the whole 20 NIS would go to your parents. So, the halachic picture is murky.

According to the strict Halacha, parents who support their child are entitled to claim the objects their child finds (see Bava Metzia 12b). This *halacha* is true for a gift a supported, minor child receives as well (Rama, CM 270:2). Therefore, even if you deserve some of the extra money, as a present, your parents are able to take it from you. It is true that it is very common nowadays for parents to waive this right. However, you should not necessarily assume that regarding the money in question, for which there are strong indications that your parents have a claim irrespective of your relationship, your parents would waive their halachic right.

Let me give you advice about handling questions of permission needed from someone who has asymmetrical authority (e.g., parents, employers), who, due to legal, halachic, and/or practical reasons, have the right to decide. People often ask whether they may assume implicit permission for this or that. My frequent advice is – it is more respectful and you are more likely to receive the permission if you ask them. In this case, (parents, see Fifth



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Commandment) I suggest that instead of asking, “Can I keep the money?” announce “Here is the 20 *shekels* I got for use of the Rav Kav.” If your parents take it, they deserve it for all they do, and that might be the best *chinuch*. If they return the difference, you will have a nice feeling. If you discussed it, and your parents suggested seeking out the Halacha, that is wonderful.

Best wishes for continued personal growth, and mazal tov on your upcoming bar mitzva. ■

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Time to Shine: The Secret Purpose of Noah's Window

We've all experienced that moment when Yom Tov comes to an end and we return to the daily grind of life, what Israelis like to call "*Acharei Hachagim*." After two months of intense spiritual growth spanning Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos, we suddenly find ourselves back in our daily routine. The next major landmark isn't until Chanukah.

So, what is our day-to-day goal right now? What are we supposed to do with all the spiritual energy we built up?

The answer lies tucked away in a mysterious command in Parshat Noach.

THREE QUESTIONS ON A SINGLE COMMANDMENT

As Hashem gives Noah the blueprint for the *Teivah* (Ark), He instructs: "*Tzohar ta'aseh la'teivah*". Rashi's primary explanation defines a *tzohar* as a window. But looking closely, three glaring questions emerge:

1. **Why only one window?** The Ark had three decks filled with individual rooms (*kinim*). A single window wouldn't illuminate the rest of the ship.
2. **Why the unique name?** Biblical Hebrew uses the word *chalon* for a window, a word the Torah uses just a few chapters later when Noah opens the window to send out the raven! Why call it a *tzohar* here?
3. **What was its purpose?** During the Flood, day and night ceased (*yom v'lailah lo yishbotu*), and the world outside was pitch black. What good is a window if there is no natural light outside to let in?

TWO TYPES OF WINDOWS

To understand this, we must recognize that there are two distinct types of windows:

- **Type A (Standard Windows):** Built to bring the outside world inside, letting in natural sunlight, views, and fresh air.
- **Type B (Display Windows):** Built to project what is on the inside out to the public, like a storefront display.

When Shlomo HaMelech constructed the Beis HaMikdash, he built its windows *shekufim atumim*, narrow on the inside and wide on the outside. Standard architecture does the reverse to trap sunlight in the house. However, the Beis HaMikdash did

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not need outside light; its entire purpose was to project its spiritual light outward to a dark world!

THE TEIVAH AS A MINI-BEIS HAMIKDASH

Remarkably, Noach's *Teivah* shared several striking features with the *Beis HaMikdash*:

- **Teshuvah:** Like the Mikdash, its construction was a monument urging humanity to repent.
- **The Spatial Miracle:** The Ramban notes that fitting all the animals into the Ark was a supernatural feat (*m'at machzik et hamatrubah*), just as the Aron miraculously fit inside the Kodesh HaKodashim.
- **The Hidden Hint:** Parshat Noach contains pesukim, the exact Gematria of **Betzalel**, the builder of the Mishkan!

THE ANSWER: YOUR TIME TO SHINE

Now all three questions fall into place!

The *tzohar* was never meant to bring outside light into the *teivah*. It was a unique window, narrow on the inside and widening outward, designed to project spiritual light from within the *teivah* out into the world. This is why it is called a *tzohar*: it was narrow on the inside, *tzar*, and wide on the outside. It also explains why only one window was necessary.

Just as the *teivah* resembles the Mikdash,

so too does the soul of every Jew. The Torah commands, "*V'asyu li Mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham*", make Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell **within them**. The Torah does not say that Hashem will dwell "within it," but "within them. Every single Jew is a walking Beis HaMikdash.

Over Elul and the Chagim, we worked tirelessly to perfect our inner Sanctuary. But the goal of "*Acharei Hachagim*" is not to keep our growth locked inside. Now is the time to build a *tzohar*, to wear our emunah proudly on our sleeves, illuminate our surroundings, and project warmth and faith into the world around us. Don't hide your light, it's your time to shine! ■

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The Measure of Righteousness

Parshas Noach begins ten generations after Creation, when we learn of a corrupt world. The Torah tells us about one man and his family - Noach, Naama, Shem, Cham, Yafes and their wives - who remained untainted. Hashem tells Noach that He will bring a great deluge to destroy the world and humanity, and after the flood, we meet a broken and shattered Noach, trying to rebuild after destruction.

The *parsha* begins by introducing us to its hero:

אַלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֶחֱ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו
אֵת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ
- These are the offspring of Noah: Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generation; Noah walked with G-d (Bereishis 6:9).

At face value, the pasuk seems to be praising Noach highly, and yet, the Sages understand something deeper.

בְּדֹרֹתָיו - "in his generation." Why does the Torah qualify Noach's righteousness by tying it to his generation? Was he absolutely righteous - or only by comparison?

Rashi records a famous dispute among Chazal. Some understand this word as praise: if Noach remained a *tzaddik* in a generation as corrupt as his own, then in a generation of righteous people he would have been even more righteous. Others read the very same word as a limitation: it was only relative to his wicked generation that Noach was considered righteous. Had he lived in the generation of Avraham Avinu, he would have been considered as "k'lum, nothing".

The same one word: בְּדֹרֹתָיו - "in his generation," with two opposing opinions. What is the Torah teaching us?

Perhaps the Torah is telling us something profound about righteousness: how we measure the people around us and how we measure ourselves.

If righteousness is only relative - "I'm doing fine compared to everyone else" - then we risk our behavior and actions collapsing into complacency. We look around at a compromised world and may conclude that our own compromises are perfectly acceptable, perhaps even better than acceptable! "Compared to everyone else around me, I'm doing great," we may lead ourselves to believe. The yetzer hara needs no better

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argument than this.

However, there is a danger in the absolute standard as well. If we measure ourselves only against the greatest *tzaddikim*, against an ideal of perfection untouched by personal life circumstances, we then risk despair. We forget that Hashem judges each person within the reality of *his own life* - his challenges, his background, his generation, his own unique strengths and weaknesses. As Chazal teach: *לפום צערא אגרא* - *according to the effort is the reward* (Pirkei Avos 5:23). The effort matters. The context matters. The individual matters.

The Torah, in its wisdom, holds both truths at once. Noach is called *איש צדיק תמים* - genuinely righteous and pure. And yet the Torah will not let us forget *בְּדֹרֶתוֹ* - that his righteousness was born in the very times in which he lived, against the current of those around him in his generation.

There is another nuance in the *pasuk* worth studying. The Torah does not say that Noach walked before G-d, but rather that he walked *with* G-d: *אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ*.

Rashi explains: Avraham, of whom it is said "*walk before Me*" (Bereishis 17:1), drew strength from within his spiritual reserves and walked on his own. Noach walked *with* G-d - he needed Hashem's support to hold him up.

From here we learn that even the *tzaddik* of his generation did not stand alone. He leaned on the very Hand of G-d that measured him. Perhaps that is why the Torah calls him *תמים*, *pure* - because he was pure and wholehearted and knew to Whom to turn when he was in need.

These lessons, from the personality of Noach, have powerful implications for

how we see others. In the realm of *chinuch*, when we evaluate a child or a student, do we measure him against his siblings, classmates, or some abstract ideal? Or do we ask a deeper question: given *his* generation, *his* struggles, *his* starting point - is he walking, *as best he can*, with G-d? A child who works hard for every accomplishment may find greater success - for him, in his exact situation - than the one for whom everything comes easily.

The same is true in our interpersonal relationships. In *shalom bayis*, in friendship, in community - we are, all too often, quick to judge others against an absolute standard while judging ourselves generously against our circumstances.

The Torah subtly asks us to reverse that: to extend to others the understanding of context we grant ourselves, while holding ourselves to the higher standard we demand of others.

And in our own *avodas Hashem*, the message of Noach is both a *chizuk* and a demand. *Chizuk*, because Hashem certainly sees the generation we live in - its distractions, pressures, confusion, and challenges - and He measures our strivings accordingly. Yet, demanding, because "everyone else is struggling too" can never be an excuse for standing still or our own complacency with self.

Noach built his *teivah* while everyone around him mocked him. He walked *with* G-d while the generation walked *away* from G-d. He did not wait for better company or easier times. He was righteous - *in his generation*, and therefore, *for all generations*.

May we merit to walk with Hashem and reach our individual potential, for the

generation and times in which we live.

May we be honest about where we stand, generous in how we see others, and unwilling to let the darkness around us hold us back from reaching our own potential as individuals, as Jews, and as *ovdei Hashem*.

■ בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום.

Michal Horowitz is a Torah educator who lectures nationally throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Thousands of her shiur recordings are available online. She is a regular presenter for the OU Women's Initiative and the author of *Abled: Living With a Disability*, a Torah View (Mosaica Press). Michal lives in Woodmere, NY, with her family.

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The Chain of Generations

A story of Don Isaac Abarbanel · Spain, 1492



Spain, 1492. Don Isaac Abarbanel was a royal adviser and a great Torah scholar. His family traced its line to King David.



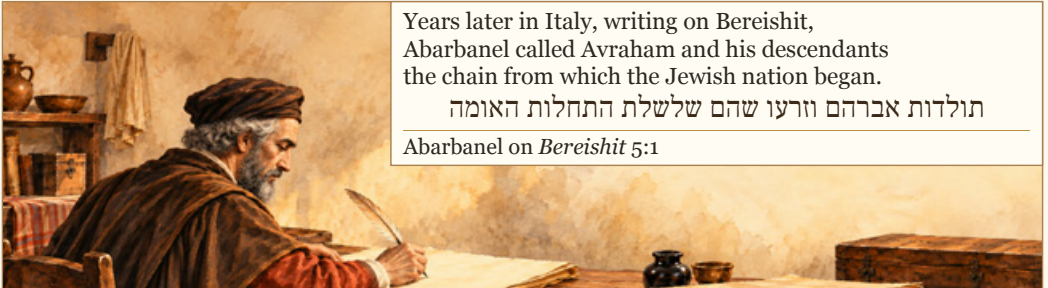
Then came the decree: every Jew in Spain must convert or leave. Abarbanel begged the king to withdraw it.



He later wrote: "I cried out until my throat was dry."
Abarbanel, *Introduction to Melachim*



The decree stood. Abarbanel refused to convert and left with his people.



Years later in Italy, writing on Bereishit, Abarbanel called Avraham and his descendants the chain from which the Jewish nation began.

תולדות אברהם וזרעו שהם שלשלת התחלות האומה

Abarbanel on *Bereishit* 5:1

He gave up his place in the esteemed court of Spain, but not his place in the enduring chain of the Jewish people. His Torah commentary is still studied today.



Historical source: Haim Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*.

Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437–1508) · Yahrzeit: 29 Tishrei · Shabbat Bereishit, 10 October 2026



לעילוי נשמת מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

Should She Know About His PTSD Before the First Date?

Malka asks:

Hi Aleeza

I read your articles in Torah Tidbits and feel you do a great job.

I am looking into making a match and the young man is on meds for a few years for PTSD, however he is and has been stable for years. I used to think one waits to tell that until after they have at least met

once, but the young man tells me that in our society, potentials are checked out before meeting so he figures it is better to say upfront.

The question is should I share this before they meet or not?

Aleeza answers:

There isn't only one right time to share something like PTSD. There are actually two very reasonable ways to handle it, and a lot depends on the person whose story it is.

Generally, I'm comfortable with a single sharing something like this themselves once they've started dating. It doesn't necessarily need to be a first-date conversation. A first date is usually about meeting the person, not meeting their entire medical and emotional history.

By the second, third or fourth date, when there is some connection and both people are interested in continuing, there may be an appropriate opportunity to say, "There's something important about my history that I want you to know."

That gives the person the chance to explain their own experience instead of having a matchmaker explain it for them. They can share what happened, where they are today, why they take medication, how they're doing and anything else that would



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be important for someone considering a future with them to understand.

But your situation is different for one important reason: he is asking you to share it beforehand.

And in this case, I would.

He isn't embarrassed by his history. He isn't asking you to hide it or worried that someone will find out. He's actually saying, "I would rather know that the woman saying yes to me knows this information and is still comfortable meeting me."

I think that's very reasonable.

Especially in a community where people do significant checking before agreeing to a date, sharing this information upfront also means she isn't going to hear something through someone else, wonder why it wasn't mentioned or feel caught off guard later.

At a baseline, if she knows he previously suffered from PTSD, is currently taking medication, and still says yes, you're already one step ahead. She has enough information to decide whether she is comfortable exploring the match.

But, and this is important, the matchmaker should give the headline, not the whole story.

You can share the basic information honestly and calmly, without diagnosing, explaining, defending or giving details that really belong to him.

Then, if they date and a connection develops, I would strongly encourage him to have the deeper conversation himself. At that point, she can understand not only what was, but what is: his emotional health today, how the PTSD affects him now, what role medication plays, and anything else that could meaningfully impact a marriage.

The goal isn't simply disclosure. The goal is disclosure with the right person,

at the right time, with the right amount of information.

And in this case, because he is comfortable having the information shared upfront, I would follow his lead and have you disclose the information and also vouch for how long you've known him and you can describe his stability from your own personal experience of him.

May Hashem give you the wisdom to share what needs to be shared with sensitivity, and dignity.

And keep me posted about this match!

Blessings, Aleeza ■

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Lessons from Mesillas Yesharim's Glaring Omission

Adapted by Tzvi Goldstein

The *sefer Mesillas Yesharim* can rightly be called one of the most essential *sifrei mussar* for a *ben Torah*. The structure of the *sefer* is based on a statement made by Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair in *Maseches Avodah Zarah*:

אָמַר רַבִּי פִּנְחָס בֶּן יָאִיר: תּוֹרָה מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי זְהִירוֹת, זְהִירוֹת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי זְהִירוֹת, זְהִירוֹת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי נְקִיּוֹת, נְקִיּוֹת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי פְּרִישׁוֹת, פְּרִישׁוֹת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי טְהוֹרָה, טְהוֹרָה מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי חֲסִידוּת, חֲסִידוּת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי עֲנוּה, עֲנוּה מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי יְרֵאת חֹטָא, יְרֵאת חֹטָא מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי קְדוּשָׁה, קְדוּשָׁה מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי רוּחַ הַקּוֹדֶשׁ, רוּחַ הַקּוֹדֶשׁ מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי תְּחִיית הַמֵּתִים.

Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said:

The Torah leads to caution, caution leads to alacrity, alacrity leads to cleanliness, cleanliness leads to separation (from impurities), separation leads to purity, purity leads to piety, piety leads to humility, humility leads to fear of sin, fear of sin leads to sanctity, sanctity leads to *ruach hakodesh*, and *ruach hakodesh* leads to the resurrection of the dead.¹

The *Ramchal* built *Mesillas Yesharim* as a step-by-step exploration of each of these *middos*, culminating with the *middah* of *kedushah*. However, there seems to be one

step missing: Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair opens by stating that Torah brings one to *zehirus*, caution regarding sin, but the first *middah* addressed by the *Ramchal* is *zehirus*; why doesn't the *Ramchal* address what seems to be the "first rung" of the ladder, Torah?

Fundamental principles from three different *baalei machshavah* can lead us to important lessons that can be derived from the *Mesillas Yesharim*'s striking omission.

1. TORAH IS PART OF THE OTHERS

In a letter, Harav Yitzchak Huter, *zt"l*, observed that there is a distinction between the *middos* described by the *Mesillas Yesharim* and the stage of Torah. Physics states that a person can only be in one place at a time; if they are on one step, they can't simultaneously be on another step. Similarly, if a person is working on the stage of *zehirus*, that means they have not yet reached *zerizus*. Once they advance to *zerizus*, they by definition have incorporated the practice of *zehirus* into their *avodas Hashem* and they are no longer found on that step.

Torah, though, is different. Torah is not distinct from the other steps on the staircase leading up to *ruach hakodesh* and *techiyas ha'meisim*; it is incorporated into every



Rabbi Dovid Miller

1. 20b.

step. For this reason, the Ramchal did not limit Torah to the beginning of the *sefer*. He instead built Torah into every *middah*, showing how learning serves to help an individual develop himself as an *eved Hashem*.²

PRACTICAL TORAH IS COMPLETE TORAH

Rav Hutner's principle is aptly described by the *Ramban* in his letter to his son, where he states that a person should not step away from a *sefer* before figuring out how his learning can impact his *avodas Hashem*. While this is relatively simple when learning a *mussar* or *machshavah sefer*, it can be many orders more difficult when learning *Gemara* or the intricacies of *halachah*. People must avoid falling into the trap of learning a bifurcated Torah — or, even worse, living a bifurcated life — where some *limudim* are about improving oneself as a servant of the Creator and others are about “developing skills” or enjoying the back-and-forth of the *sugyah*. Even if one can't follow the *Ramban's* advice every time he finishes learning, at least once a week a person should spend time reflecting on what he learned over the past week and try to glean some lesson for his *avodas Hashem*. In this way, he will be applying Rav Hutner's understanding of the *Ramchal's* omission: Torah is part of working on all the *middos* in *Mesillas Yesharim*, not a distinct step that one works on and then moves on from.

2. HIGHLIGHTING MITZVOS HA'LEV

Harav Mandelbaum, author of the commentary *B'mesilah Naaleh*, suggests that the *Ramchal* has his own explanation for this curious omission of Torah. The *Ramchal* originally wrote *Mesillas Yesharim* as a debate between a *chacham* and a *chassid*. In this

original version, known as *Sefer Havikuach*, the *chassid* says to the *chacham*, “Consider the *pasuk* of *yiras Shamayim*: ‘*V'atah Yisrael, mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach...* — And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem ask of you...” After listing such crucial mitzvos as *yiras Hashem*, *avodas Hashem*, and *ahavas Hashem*, the Torah continues, “*lishmor es mitzvos Hashem v'es chukosav* — to guard Hashem's mitzvos and *chukkim*.” The implication is that whatever came before this final phrase was not included in the “mitzvos and *chukkim*” that we are called to guard and protect, but how can that be? The *Ramchal* has the *chassid* explain that the Torah is distinguishing between mitzvos of the intellect, like loving and developing awe for Hashem, and mitzvos of the body, the many mitzvos that are accomplished through action. The fact that the mitzvos of the intellect, what he calls “*mitzvos ha'lev*,” are listed first is meant to indicate that they are more *chashuv*, more important and consequential for true *avodas Hashem*.

The *middos* described in *Mesillas Yesharim* are components of those *mitzvos ha'lev*. Learning Torah, though, as important as it is, is considered a *mitzvah she'b'guf*, an active mitzvah. In order to highlight the pre-eminence of the *mitzvos ha'lev*, the *Ramchal* chose to leave out his discussion of Torah as the first step of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair's program of spiritual growth.³

“DISTRACTED” BY LEARNING

I have seen the consequences of focusing too much on learning, without developing one's *middos* and the foundations of *avodas Hashem*. A *maggid shiur* once shared with

3. This answer does beg the question of why Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair did choose to include Torah in his list of how to reach *ruach hakodesh* and *tehiyas ha'meisim*.

2. See *B'mesilah Naaleh*, pg. 85.

me that one his *talmidim* was learning very well in his second year. He set a goal to work through all of a large yeshiva *masechta*, an impressive feat. However, the *mashgiach* called him in for a meeting and encouraged him to focus on a few weak points in his *avodas Hashem* that could use more targeted work. The student chose not to listen to the *mashgiach*.

This student indeed completed the *masechta* that year and went on to spend a year or two in a more “prestigious” yeshiva. After a couple of years, he got married — but shortly after that time, he got divorced. Today, this student is not very religious anymore. This is what the *mashgiach* foresaw: focusing on learning to the exclusion of developing one’s spiritual character is a recipe for disaster.⁴

3. TORAH IS CLARITY

Mori v’rabi Harav Dovid Miller, *shlita*, pointed out that in fact, the *Ramchal* does incorporate Torah into the *Mesillas Yesharim*. There is one chapter before the *Ramchal* begins to delineate the *middos* from Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair. He opens with his well-known line: “The foundation of *chassidus* and the root of service is for a person to have total clarity regarding his obligation in this world...” Torah provides guidance regarding exactly this question — what is a person’s obligation in this world, and how are they to accomplish it? In fact, the word “*torah*” itself indicates this: it means “to teach” or “to guide.”

4. This student adopted the same approach toward *shalom bayis*. I asked him when he was engaged if he had prepared for *shalom bayis* at all by learning the *hashkafic* underpinnings of marriage and the ideal relationship between a husband and wife; he answered that he had not, he had learned the halachos. Those are of course essential, but the “*mitzvos ha’lev*” must be prioritized as well.

The Gemara in *Avodah Zarah* divides human history into three periods.[5]⁵ The first two thousand years are “*tohu va’vohu*,” the next two thousand years are “Torah,” and the final two thousand years are the time of *Mashiach*. Doing the math, it turns out that the two millenia of Torah begin not with *Kabbalas HaTorah*, as one may have expected, but with Avraham being sent to Eretz Canaan: “*Lech lecha mei’artzecha...*” In what way is this Torah? Rav Miller explained by noting that until this point in the Torah, people are described as leaving places, not as being sent towards places. Avraham was the first person who was given a specific charge to go to a certain place. This is the essence of what Torah is: to clarify one’s destination in their mind, along with the steps needed to get to that place. In this way, the *Ramchal* opening *Mesillas Yesharim* by discussing “a person’s obligation in this world” is really a discussion of Torah, as it serves to give a person clarity regarding the destination toward which they should be heading in life.

Chazal have described the power of having clarity regarding one’s goals in life. They promised, “*B’derech she’adam rotzeh leilech, bah molichin oso* — Hashem brings a person down the path that they truly wish to follow.”⁶ This applies not only to the general path of one’s life, but to *she’ifos* as well: if a person wants to become a *talmid chacham* of note, Hashem will make it happen. If a person wants to become a renowned doctor or lawyer, He will bring them down that path.⁷ The only two requirements are that the person must truly want it, and they must genu-

5. a.

6. *Makkos* 10b.

7. Note, though, that there is no guarantee to receive *kavod* or wealth, too.

inely work for it.

RAV VOSNER'S *SHE'IFOS*

Two stories about one individual drive home the impact of knowing what a person wants to become. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to spend significant time discussing communal and halachic issues with Harav Benzion Vosner, *shlita*, the son of famed *posek* Harav Shmuel Vosner, *zt"l*. A grandchild of Rav Shmuel Vosner's was once helping his grandfather organize his *seforim*. Looking at an old *sefer* from when Rav Vosner was in yeshiva Europe, he noticed written on top, "Shmuel Halevi Vosner, rav of Lodz." Confused, the grandchild brought the *sefer* to his grandfather, asking how he could have possibly been old enough to serve as the rav of Lodz when he was in Europe. Rav Vosner smiled and remarked, "You have caught me. When I was a *talmid* in Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, what was considered to be the ultimate achievement in Torah was to become the rav of a city. I set my sights on Lodz, the largest city in Poland behind Warsaw, and as a reminder of my goal, I wrote this in one of my *seforim* at the time." While Rav Vosner never became the rav of Lodz, he did become the rav of Bnei Brak and the *posek* for Chassidim across the world.

THE REBBE'S PROMISE

Another story only came to light a few decades ago from Harav Don Segal, *shlita*; not even Rav Vosner himself was aware of it. Rav Vosner's mother did not grow up in a Chassidishe home. She was born in Austria and was blessed with an uncommonly beautiful voice — so beautiful that a famous opera company offered to hire her to come on tour with them. She desperately desired to accept the offer, but her parents felt that it was inappropriate. Her father brought her

to meet with the rav of the city, Harav Shlomo Baumgarten, who tried to convince her to give up the opportunity, but she was not convinced. He brought her to Harav Yitzchak Meir, *zt"l*, the Kapishnitzer Rebbe, who asked her why she wanted to sing with the opera. She honestly answered that she wanted the fame that came with such a position. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe nodded, understanding her, and declared: "Listen closely, my daughter. The dream of every Jewish woman is to have a child who will illuminate the world with his Torah. I promise you that if you turn down this offer, you will have a child who will light up the world with his *piskei halachah*." Rav Vosner's mother accepted the promise and turned down the opera.

When Rav Vosner first heard this story from Rav Don Segal, who came across the account while researching the histories of different Jewish communities in Europe, he shared that his mother never told him about that encounter. However, she would often encourage him to invest in his learning, saying, "You can't imagine what I sacrificed for you!"

Both stories illustrate the power of developing a clear understanding of one's ultimate goal. While it is true that we don't have the promise of the Kapishnitzer Rebbe for ourselves, we have something even better: Chazal's promise of *B'derech she'adam rotzeh leilech, bah molichin oso*. This clarity of purpose is the true meaning of Torah, which is why the *Ramchal* chose to open *Mesillas Yesharim* with "a person's obligations in the world." ■

Rabbi Chaim Eisenstein is Maggid Shiur at the RIETS Israel Kollel in Jerusalem and Rav of Beis Midrash Mevakshei Emes in Mishkafayim, Beit Shemesh.



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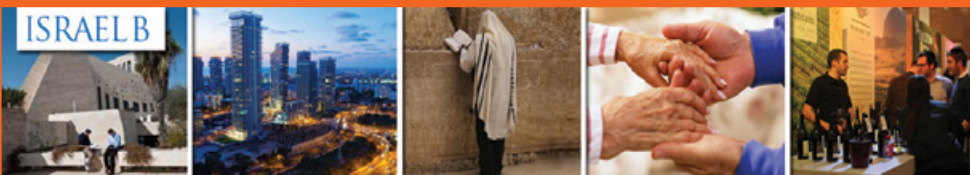
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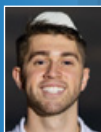
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THE ARK OF PRAYER

What does building a “Teivah” (תיבה) mean?

This week in Parashat Noach, we read about Noach, who is described as “a righteous man, perfect in his generation” (Bereishit 6:9). Hashem commands Noach to “make for yourself a Teivah/Ark” (Bereishit 6:14) because the world around him had become corrupt and was destined to be destroyed.

In Hebrew, the word for Ark, “Teivah” (תיבה), can also mean “word.” The Baal Shem Tov teaches that when Hashem tells Noach to “enter the Teivah,” we can understand this on another level to mean “enter the words”—the words of tefillah and prayer.

Noach’s rescue plan was not simply to enter the physical Teivah and sit and wait for the storm to pass. He was encouraged to enter the “words,” to call out to Him, and to recognise that Hashem is in control. This is a powerful message: when we face challenges, Hashem does not want us to feel alone or hopeless. Rather, difficult moments are an opportunity to turn towards Hashem, ask Him for help, and strengthen our connection with Him.

But this idea applies just as much when things are going well. When we experience happiness, success, and blessing, we should

also turn to Hashem to say thank you. The good and difficult moments in our lives can both be opportunities to connect with Hashem. We may not always understand why things happen, but we can choose how we respond.

Sometimes, our “Teivah” is not a physical place of safety. It is our tefillah and the words that allow us to step away from the chaos around us, reconnect with Hashem, and remember that we are never truly alone.

Shabbat Shalom!



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FROM ARK TO ACTION

The Torah introduces Noach by saying: נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים “הַתְּהִלָּה נֹחַ” —“Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with God.”

Chazal famously contrast Noach with Avraham Avinu. Regarding Noach, the Torah says, “את האלקים התהלך נח” —“Noach walked with Hashem.” When it came to Avraham, however, Hashem says, “התהלך לפני ויהיה תמים” —“Walk before Me and be perfect.”

The Shem MiShmuel explains that these represent two different types of avodah.

Noach’s greatness was one of preservation. He lived in a world that was spiritually collapsing, and his task was to prevent the corruption of the outside world from

penetrating him. This is what the תיבה, the Ark, represents: the creation of a protected spiritual environment in which kedushah can be preserved despite the destruction taking place outside.

This itself was an enormous accomplishment. When everyone and everything surrounding a person has become corrupt, simply remaining an איש צדיק תמים is heroic.

Avraham Avinu, however, represents the next level. He does not merely protect himself from the world; he goes out and changes the world. Noach needs, so to speak, to walk with Hashem in order not to be swept away. Avraham is able to walk 'לפני ה' and move forward, bringing Hashem's presence into places where it had not previously been recognised.

This gives added meaning to Hashem's command to Noach after the Mabul that he should "צא מן התיבה" - "Leave the Ark." The Teivah was essential, but one cannot remain inside the Teivah forever.

There are periods in life when our avodah must be "בא אל התיבה" - "Enter the Teivah." We must protect our homes, our children, our values, and our kedushah from a culture capable of overwhelming them.

But ultimately, Hashem also commands, "צא מן התיבה" - "Leave the Teivah." The kedushah that was protected inside must now be brought outside. Judaism is not only about surviving the world; it is about elevating the world.

Sometimes serving Hashem means "Enter the Teivah," and sometimes it means "Leave the Teivah." The wisdom is knowing when to protect our kedushah and when to bring that kedushah out into the world. ■

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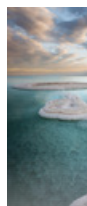
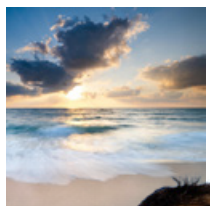
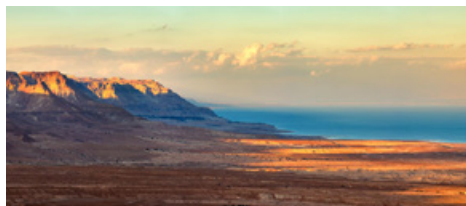
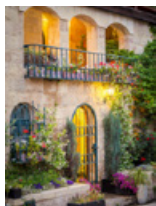
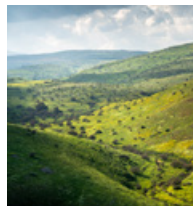
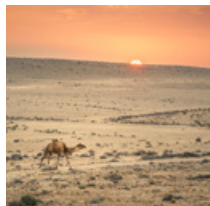


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