

# אור הצפון

Weekly

Parshas Noach | 10/8-10/9 |



ג' חשוון | תשפ"ב | Issue 14

Candle Lighting 6:07 PM	Mincha/Maariv 6:10 PM	Shacharis 7:45 & 8:45 AM	Zman Shema 9:51 AM	Daf Yomi 5:10 PM	Maariv 6:59 PM	Havdalah 7:05 PM
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## The Rabbi's Drasha

Rabbi Lebowitz

This Parsha covers three generations, and really three stories – the story of Noach and the Mabul, the story of the Migdal Bavel and the story of Avraham beginning his travels. It happens over about a thousand years, but Noach lived to see it all. What is the logical progression from one to the other? What is the link?

The justification God used for destroying the world with the Mabul and the justification to never make another Mabul are strikingly similar to each other. At the end of Parshas Bereishis the Torah tells us Vayera Hashem ki rabah reas adam bearetz v'chol yetzer machshavos libp rak ra kol hayom and that is why Vayinachem Hashem ki asah es adam and ultimately Vayomer Hashem amcha es ha'adam asher barasi me'al p'nei ha'adama. Yet, after the Mabul, when Hashem promised not to bring another Mabul, the logic is almost identical to the logic for bringing the Mabul: "Vayomer Hashem al libo lo asaf od es ha'adama ba'avur ha'adam ki yetzer lev ha'adam ra minarav v'lo asaf od lehachos es kol chai Ka'asher asisi". How can the idea that man is evil serve as both the reason to bring a Mabul and a reason to never bring another Mabul?

In Parshas Lech Lecha, Hashem promises Avraham Avinu that Ve'ata tavo el avisecha beshalom – that he will join his father in death. How is this a good thing? His father was an Oved avodah zarah! In fact, according to the Medrash quoted in Rashi at the end of this week's Parsha, Terach was the one who gave Avraham over to Nimrod and had him thrown in a Kivshan ha'aish for destroying all the idols!

I always say that the Avi avos of Midos Megunos is Gaivah. It can express itself in different ways, but it is extremely corrosive. Both generations that suffered for their sins in Parshas Noach had committed Averos that were rooted in Gaivah. The generation of the Mabul was hedonistic and pleasure-seeking; the clear goal of their lives was to enjoy as much as possible. It was all about indulging while entirely ignoring the effect on other people. The generation of the Migdal Bavel was almost the opposite. There was no regard for the individual. They were disciplined and organized, and all about the common goal of working together, but ironically their motivation was in an even more stunning Gaivah than the Dor HaMabul. They were power addicted and interested in ruling over heaven and earth. It is no surprise the hedonistic society evolved into a tyrannical

### Youth Corner

The first 4 children from each group who tell Rabbi Klein the answer to the question will receive an extra 3 raffle tickets each!

### QUESTION:

What was the sin that sealed the fate and caused Hashem to destroy the generation of the flood?  
(Rashi 6:13)

society. People get bored of indulgence and want to satisfy a desire for something bigger, so they start a project that they can convince themselves is a noble one. However, this too is based on arrogance. The response is Avraham Avinu – somebody who had no interest in self-indulgence nor any interest in power. The man who gave up a place in a prominent family and community, to be considered an outcast in chasing the idea of monotheism. The man who declares Anochi afar v'efer is the response to the two terrible generations. The man who has no political aspirations is the one who changes the world and has Kol malachei mizrach umaariv bowing to him. Avraham, and his emphasis on other people, chanchangeanity.

But where did Avraham come from? His father was an Oved avodah zarah and he was raised to be one as well. The Rambam writes that in his youth Avraham also went to worship at the altars of idolatry with his father. There is a second critical lesson that emerges – that if a person is willing to look at himself humbly and honestly, and avoid the belief that he is perfect as is, he can always fan the embers of Kedusha and become something great. We should never give up on anyone. When there is humility and honesty, holiness and greatness will ultimately emerge. According to the Even ezra, Terach only left to charan *after Avraham was told to leave Ur kasdim – meaning that Terach left because of Avraham's command to leave. Terach left his position in the royal council because he had Hirhurei teshuva and realized that his son had discovered the truth. When God brought the Mabul , He declared that man is Rak ra – there is no spark – there is nothing to work with. After the Mabul Hashem declares that there will never be another Mabul because man, for whatever reason, is no longer Rak ra, but merely ra. A bad man has hope – if he has enough honesty, goodness and humility to one day look at himself in the mirror, he can turn it all around. Humanity will ultimately rise to the top. The ability of Terach to change his own life on a dime when he had so much to lose reflects not just willpower, but humility. He was willing to consider the possibility that he was wrong, not just about a minor issue, but about the very purpose of life. Such a father, no matter how badly he had sinned, has a son like Avraham Avinu. This is much easier said than done. We happen to be terrible at self-assessment. We all think that we are smarter and better looking than we actually are.*

I was talking to Rav Hoberman, the Rosh yeshiva of the yeshiva in Long Beach, this week. He told me that his father, who had authored more than 30 sefarim and was a tremendous Talmid chacham and Yarei shamayim grew up in Baltimore in the 1930's. Rav Hoberman remembers walking with his grandfather to shul very early on Shabbos morning so that the grandfather could make it back in time to open up his store. How did such a man have a significant Talmid chacham as a son and a Rosh yeshiva as a grandson? Well, he sent his son to public school, and one day his son asked why they don't celebrate the Christian holidays. He was so taken aback by this that he immediately reassessed his entire plan on how to raise his children. The message of the Mabul and humanity's ultimate success in showing that we have learned the lessons, is in developing a sense of humility – in the way we interact with God, the way we interact with other people and the way we relate to ourselves.

## Story for the Ages

### The Atheist and the Cat

Told over by Rabbi Ashar Klien

The Vilna Gaon was once approached by a proud atheist who challenged the great Rav to prove that Hashem truly exists. The Vilna Gaon explained to the man that proving Hashem's

existence to the man would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, but he invited him to come back in three days. The man left feeling as though he had conquered the great Rabbi and realizing that even the great Vilna Gaon would be unable to prove him wrong. When he returned in three days, the Vilna Gaon greeted him with much excitement. He hurriedly showed him a parchment that was on his desk that contained a magnificent poem that was seemingly written with calligraphy, elaborate borders, and an exquisite command of the language. The man read the beautiful poem and remarked at how impressed he was with the Vilna Gaon's poetic and artistic abilities! The Vilna Gaon laughed and answered the man that this poem was not his, but rather occurred when a cat jumped onto his desk and spilled ink all over the parchment! The impressive poem with the gorgeous artistic bordering was the handiwork of the cat! The man laughed at the story and exclaimed that the Vilna Gaon must think that he is a fool if he were to believe that a masterpiece such as that poem could be the result of chance. After all, what are the odds that such a beautiful "mistake" could ever occur?! The Vilna Gaon simply smiled at the man and answered him, "do you still need to be convinced that this beautiful masterpiece of a world that we live in was created with a creator?"

## Torah From The BKNW Family

### Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk Isn't Enough

By: Rabbi Aaron Fleksher

At the end of Parshas Bereishis, as a prelude to the episode of the Flood, we are told that Noach was "Matzah Chein B'Einei Hashem," that Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem. The Sforno makes the following fascinating observation about Noach- in truth, the fact that the Torah tells us that Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem is not the compliment to Noach that it appears to be on the surface. It is telling us something negative about Noach! How can finding favor in the eyes of Hashem be negative?

The Sforno explains that really, Noach should have been wiped out in the flood along with the rest of the people. He did not deserve to be saved because Noach did not teach the people of his generation and put them back on the proper derech. Because of that, the only reason Noach was saved was because HaKadosh Baruch Hu had some sort of favor towards him, but he wasn't truly deserving of being saved. Based on this idea, the Zohar points out that the Navi Yeshayahu refers to the mabul as "Mei Noach," the flood-waters of Noach, as if to say the flood was the responsibility of Noach. It was his fault because he should have davened for the generation and tried to save them. Noach was guilty of failing to help the people and inspire them to do teshuva. Perhaps if he had put in enough effort, the people would have abandoned their evil ways and the mabul would never have happened.

Rashi tells us that Hashem commanded Noach to build the ark for 120 years, so that people will see him and ask what is going on, and Noach would tell them that Hashem is planning on destroying the world because people are acting out of pure evil and immorality. We do not find anywhere in Chazal that indicates the notion that Noach failed this mission! As far as we are concerned, there is no reason to believe that Noach didn't fulfill this mission. If this is the case, where is the Sforno getting this idea from that Noach was guilty of not teaching the generation?

My Rebbe, Rav Koenigsberg, Shlita, wanted to suggest that perhaps we can answer this

question based on another Rashi later on in the Parsha. At the point where the flood begins, the Torah tells us that Noach and his family went into the ark **“m’pnei mei hamabul,” “because of the waters of the flood.”** (7:7) Rashi interprets this to mean that Noach “believed and didn’t believe” that the flood would come. His level of Emunah was at a minimum. What does it mean Noach believed and didn’t believe?

The Steipler, Zt”l, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, in his sefer *Birchos Peretz*, explains the statement to mean that intellectually, Noach had Emunah that the Mabul was going to come. However, he didn’t have Emunah “chushis,” an emotional Emunah. He did not have a heartfelt belief, in every fiber and cell of his being. There was no deep level of conviction. Because Noach lacked this genuine heartfelt belief, a belief that would have been ingrained as part of his essence and persona, the people of his generation were not convinced by his mussar shmooze. They did not sense the enthusiasm and belief behind his words. The mussar seemed to have no solid backing. This is the criticism of Noach. The Mabul is called “the flood of Noach” because he was at fault, for had he had a stronger sense of conviction, the message would have come across crystal clear to the people, and the words would have resounded within them. Because he lacked true feeling and passion in his message, the people did not change.

## Staff

Mara De’Asrah

Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz

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Ezra Yarmush

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Printing Head

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## The Parsha Corner

Rabbi Balsam

- The term that the Torah uses to describe the sin for which the earth was destroyed is: a) gezel, b) arayos, c) chamas, d) rishah.
- Noach was told to take \_\_\_ kosher animals and \_\_\_ non-kosher animals: a) 14...4, b) 7...2, c) 7...4, d) 14...2.
- The term “b'etzem hayom hazeh” is used to describe: a) when Noach went into the tevah, b) when the rain began, c) when the animals finally showed up, d) when the Mabul subsided.
- The waters were upon the earth for: a) 40 days, b) 150 days, c) 354 days, d) 365 days.
- Noach sent a raven \_\_\_\_ and a dove \_\_\_\_: a) once...once, b) twice...once, c) twice...twice, d) once...twice.
- Noach left the tevah when: a) the yonah no longer returned, b) Hashem told him to leave, c) he saw the dry land through the window, d) he could not remain inside any longer.
- The first thing Noach did upon leaving the tevah was: a) plant a vineyard, b) build a Mizbeach, c) build a city, d) see a rainbow.
- Upon waking and realizing what Cham had done to him, the first thing Noach did was: a) curse Cham, b) bless Shem and Yafes, c) curse Kenaan, d) bless the descendants of Shem.
- Nimrod is described by the Torah as: a) a mighty hunter before hashem, b) a rebellious individual, c) a rebel against hashem, d) a great builder of cities and towers.
- Ever was Shem’s: a) son, b) nephew. c) great-great grandson, d) grandson.

Answers: 1) c, 2) d, 3) a, 4) b, 5) d, 6) b, 7) b, 8) c, 9) a, 10) d.