

SCHEDULE

שבת קודש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	5:59 PM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
Sof Zman K'S- מ"א 9:32 < גר"א 10:08	
Pirkei Avot Shiur ~Will resume after Pesach	
Mincha-Followed by Shalosh Seudos	5:55 PM
Maariv	7:06 PM

Sunday

Shacharis	8:30 AM
Followed by Shiur	
-New Topics from יורה דעה, חולין, יורה דעה	
Mincha / Maariv	6:00 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Shacharis	
Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM & 8:10 AM
Tues, Wed, Fri.	6:45 AM & 8:10 AM
Dirshu Halacha Program (Mon-Fri)	7:30 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Mincha / Maariv (Sunday-Th)	6:00 PM
Shiur Sefer Da Es Atzmecha (M-Th)	9:30 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

Thursday Night Shiur by Rabbi Teichman after Maariv

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CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE

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ו' חשוון

אהל משה



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Issue #111

True Identity

The Torah extols of the greatness of נח, describing him in glowing terms never used in reference to any other personage in all of תנ"ך, נח, איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו, *Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations!* ונה מצא חן בעיני ה', *and Noach found grace in the eyes of Hashem*, is a quality shared by both נח and משה exclusively.

Yet, despite the פשוט של מקרא, the basic understanding of the verse, the חז"ל in both מדרש and תלמוד, take a severe detour and downplay his distinction. One opinion declares that only in his generation was he worthy, were he to have lived in another era, לא נחשב, he wouldn't have been considered **anything!** Elsewhere the גמרא states that נח was decreed extinction along with the דור המבול, but was saved solely by the מציאת חן, the favor he found in the eyes of Hashem! רש"י quotes the מדרש that describes נח as מקטני אמנה, of less than perfect faith. Rarely is such a drastic departure from the literal meaning emphasized. What is going on here?

נח possessed great character, he was a צדיק תמים. רש"י in רש"י interprets צדיק as free from חמס, corruption, and תמים as תמים, perfection, is the attribute of humility. This echoes the greatness of משה who was labeled the עניו מכל אדם, the most humble of all men. Why didn't this quality protect him?

In the first moments after exiting the תיבה, things begin to unravel as the תורה reports of נח's folly in the planting of a vineyard. ויחל נח, *and נח began to be a man of soil and planted a vineyard*. He produced wine, promptly got drunk and uncovered himself in his tent. His son חם sees him in his disgrace, mocks and abuses him and is subsequently cursed by נח that his son כנען will forever be enslaved to the influences of the noble son שם and his brother יפת. How did נח fall apart so quickly? Why is כנען the object of the curse and חם apparently left alone?

The מדרש starkly contrasts משה with נח. נח began as a צדיק, a righteous man and ended up an איש האדמה, whereas משה started out as a איש מצרי, an Egyptian man and ultimately became an איש האלקים, a man of G-d. Is this merely an observation or is there a deeper message in this portrayal?

The חז"ל in diminishing the stature of נח explain that his righteousness was, as the verse reports ב"דרתיו, only relative to the people in his generation. Perhaps the point being expressed is that נח was reactive to the negative influences around him by attaining qualities of righteousness, but he never developed an inner essence of who he truly was, only who he was not. In the absence of the former challenges he felt an emptiness, ויחל נח, as רש"י quotes, עשה עצמו "חולקין", *he made himself degraded*, he lacked definition. He was formerly only a איש האדמה ב"דרתיו, a איש צדיק תמים, and never found "himself", he therefore identified himself now as merely a איש האדמה, defining himself by his role not by his essence. This vacuum was filled with the artificial "filler" of alcohol. Lacking an "identity" of true and lasting inner dignity he was exposed as a naked, clothesless and identityless drunkard and thus became an object of derision in his children's eyes.

Without an image of a "genuine" father, חם was incapable of being inspired to finding his true self and carrying on the role of father to his son כנען. The תורה refers to חם in this episode as, בנו ה"קטן", רש"י explains; because he was abashed and thus "diminished" and unable to maintain a healthy sense of self worth. כנען's only hope of being uplifted would be to remain a servant to his dignified brothers.

משה might have been at first just a איש מצרי, but it was nevertheless a identity not defined by a role but by a true inner self and he was able to parlay that self awareness into becoming an איש אלקים, a man who wherever and whatever would be inspired from within.

משה too, expresses a similar phrase, ויחל משה (שמות לב יא), and משה pleaded. When faced with the prospect of the decimation of בני ישראל as a result of the חטא העגל, חטא זוהר says on the word ויחל; ויחל משה, "חלחלה", of self expression not dejection!

The עונה, the genuine humility of נח, that began with the potential for utter greatness, was revealed to be flawed and instead evolved into a meekness that had terrible repercussions for the children who saw their father exposed and bereft of a proper sense of self.

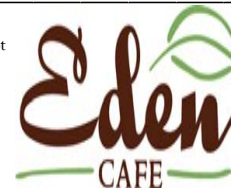
Too often we depict ourselves by the things we do not by who we truly are. Our distinctiveness has to be generated by inner commitment that operates independent of the accolades and responsibilities external to us. Our children will only be inspired by who we truly are!

באהבה,
צבי טייכמן

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