

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	→	6:02 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"Z-	ג"א 10:06 <	9:30
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		6:00 PM
Maariv -		7:10 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv	6:05 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
Shacharis	
Monday, Thursday ב'ה	6:35 AM
Tues., Wed., Friday	6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Mincha/Maariv	6:05 PM
Daf Yomi (Take II)	9:00 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

This Week ב'ה

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Rabbi Teichman

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Gabaim:

Naftali Miller (Rishon) & Yossi Frydman (Sheni)- Gabbai@

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ד' חשוון

אהל משה



Rabbi Zvi Teichman

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Issue#255

Of Nimrods and A-Rods

This week we are introduced to Avraham Avinu's nemesis, Nimrod.

Nimrod sought unsuccessfully to rid the world of this remarkable voice of reason and morality.

Yet before Avraham was born, Nimrod's sorcerers foretold of Avraham's impending birth and advised to kill him. After being foiled in his attempt to destroy Avraham by throwing him into the fiery furnace, Nimrod later orchestrated the Battle of the Kings with the intention of finally doing away with Avraham. (פרד"א כו זכ)

Despite this tyrant's evilness, one reading the Torah would never know how terrible he indeed was.

The first presentation of Nimrod describes him "glowingly" as a גִּבּוֹר צַיִד לִפְנֵי ד' (בראשית י ט), *He was a mighty hunter before G-d.*

In fact the Ibn Ezra claims that he valiantly hunted mighty prey, offering them as magnificent "trophy" sacrifices to G-d on specially designed altars.

Ramban takes the Ibn Ezra to task wondering how he can glorify such a ignoble being.

Rashi goes, uncharacteristically, beyond the literal interpretation of the verse, explaining the verse to refer to his cunning words of deception in his *capturing* the heart's and minds of mankind, deceiving them into rebellion *against G-d.*

Why did the Torah leave it so vague and exposed to such diametrically opposed interpretations?

We know several other factors about Nimrod:

(שם שם ז) בארץ שנגר... והיה ראשית ממלכתו... *The beginning of his kingdom... was in the land of Shinar.* He was the first human to wage wars and conquer others in asserting his sovereignty. He was an empire builder. (רמב"ן)

He was the first to take advantage of the post deluge "Hetter"; permission, given to Noah to consume animal meat, after it had initially been prohibited to Adam.

(תורה שלימה בשם מדרש אגדה נה)

What does all this add to understanding the composite of the despot Nimrod?

Before the Flood, man was provided all the tools he needed to develop himself spiritually without having to contend with the forces of nature, strife, war and poverty. The climate was evenly beautiful throughout the world, food was abundant, man dominated the animal kingdom, and man was bestowed health and longevity to accomplish his goal of connecting with his Creator. This idyllic existence proved too comfortable, allowing for wanton indulgence and an inevitable descent to depravity and its the quest for new and easy pleasures and indulgences.

G-d reformulated the "game plan" to a life, where man would now struggle to exist, traveling vast distances and facing daunting physical challenges in securing his daily sustenance and security. The elements of age, weather, wear and tear on a now weakened physical state and the dangers of encountering an animal kingdom that was no longer naturally subservient to man's needs, all made life an arduous journey for survival.

Man would now define his character by the manner in which he would deal emotionally and spiritually with these trials. He would now be forced to forge an ongoing relationship with his Creator in the course of these daily encounters, reaching out for His assistance, for without it he couldn't subsist. No longer would man be susceptible to the easy slide towards indulgence that comes with readily available comforts. Man would not take for granted anymore his need for G-d.

The healthy "competition" of life would serve a positive purpose in keeping man aware of his frailty.

There was however a downside to this competitive existence. Man was still exposed to the danger of defining success in life by the need to "win". When competition becomes the stadium for the prized "victory" of success, for successes

sake itself, man is once again at risk of losing his consciousness of G-d, and the purpose of all existence.

What compels one to hunt? What significance can there be to being labeled a "mighty hunter"?

Nimrod corrupted the New World by defining life in terms of "survival of the fittest". Competition would compel man to acquire as many "wins" that he could in order to assert his absolute control over life.

The hunter competes with the animal in an ultimate game of control, where the victor proudly displays no other accomplishment other than mastery over, and greater skill than, his competitor. It defines not his character nor advances his true right to exist.

In this delusion one eventually sees himself independent not only from man but from G-d as well.

In extreme sports that seek merely to stretch man's ability in overcoming the competitive forces of nature lies the seeds of heresy and idolatry.

On the other hand, when one exerts great effort in overcoming these physical and emotional obstacles, with the goal of achieving a higher objective, therein lies true greatness.

All of Avraham Avinu's difficult challenges weren't merely tests of his endurance. The tests were instruments for him to bring himself ever closer to the ideals he lived by. In his willingness to sacrifice everything in order to uphold his beliefs, he tightened his bond with, and embrace of, G-d.

Nimrod's "gold medal" sacrifices were meaningless as they represented his distorted sense of purpose and accomplishment, bereft of any furtherance of spirit and soul. That perverted notion lead to his need to exert more control over men, establishing new empires crushing all who stood in the way of his empty "goal". It all began with his conquest of the animal kingdom, continuing with his thirst for control over competing nations, eventually nurturing within himself a poisonous notion of invincibility even from G-d.

One can lead a very spiritual existence, devoting oneself to prayer, study of Torah and acts of kindness and yet be a Nimrod.

Do we "compete" so that we may grow or simply to win and claim superiority?

Is one Yeshiva, Shul, student or Rebbe the best?

Do these terms even occupy our thoughts? The largest, the most, the smartest, the frummet?

Do we live to be inspired or do we live to compete and "win"?

The debate of the day seems to vie between the pre and post deluge worlds and its challenges.

There are those who fear losing their comforts and security, who feel entitled to "their" way of life.

And there are those who claim that only those who compete and work the hardest are the ones eligible for the greatest rewards.

We however strive to live in the image of Avraham Avinu. We, as Avraham did, each stand alone and face our unique script for life. No two are alike. We endeavor not to win, but rather to grow. We realize that we must forge ahead against all obstacles not in order to be a champion, but to attain closeness to G-d.

One need not fly up to the stratosphere to meet the greatest tests of endurance.

By grounding ourselves on earth in facing the opportunities of growth that G-d provides us daily, no matter how difficult they may seem, we can reach way beyond the stratosphere and thrill to touch the very כסא הכבוד, the Heavenly Throne, itself!

בהארה,
צבי טייכמן

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Info provided by YOU through our new member database

- Daf Yomi -

With flights departing twice daily, almost...

Monday - Friday at 5:45AM

Monday - Thursday at 9PM

Shabbos & Sunday - 7:30AM

By Rabbi Teichman

A very special thank you to all of the devoted volunteers who spent so much time organizing the Hachnosos Sefer Torah! Especially Motty & Shoshana Rabinowitz, Naftali Miller, Ethan Berner, Yaakov Berkowitz & Yanki Frager.