



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT NOACH 5783 • 2022










### ISRAEL Parsha Picture

אֶת קִשְׁתִּי נָתַתִּי בְּעָנָן וְהִיְתָה  
לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ:









בראשית ט:יג

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Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrachi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrachi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

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# The Philistines and The Palestinians

## The 70 Nations and The Spiritual Struggle for Israel



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

One of the most transformative things that I've ever learned was written over 200 years ago by the great Vilna Gaon.

It gave me a profound insight into one of the pertinent issues facing the Jewish people today – the mutation of the classic anti-Semitism of yesteryear into anti-Zionism of today. It elucidated for me the biblical roots and meaning of today's Palestinian denialism of a Jewish State and critical insights into the grand systematic delegitimization campaign against Israel. It shifted my world view.

The Goan writes that the three Biblical nations that bordered the land of Israel – the Moabites, the Edomites and the Philistines – are none other than three distinct categories and archetypes of anti-Semitism and opposition to what the Jewish people stand for.<sup>1</sup> The Moabite type of anti-Semitism attacks **Judaism**, it focuses on our spiritual beliefs and religious and moral value system – in the form of anti-religious decrees, forced acculturation or conversion. From the ancient Moabites through the Hellenistic decrees of Chanukah, the Crusades and the Inquisitions - the aim is to attack the values of the Torah and the Jewish way of life. Edomite anti-Semitism aims to destroy the **Jewish People**. From Amalek through Haman to the Nazis this is an attack on the very physical existence of the Jewish people as a distinct people, independent of any beliefs or religious practices.

The great *chidush* – novelty – of the Gaon, that is ingeniously identified and defined, relates to the third kind of anti-Semitism which lay dormant in Exile: Opposition to **Jewish statehood and sovereignty**, as the Gaon states:

‘הצרו לישראל במאד ולא הניחו להם שום ממלה ושלטון (בארץ ישראל)'

“The Philistines caused great trouble for the Jewish people and did not allow them any sovereign presence and form of governance in the land...”

No to a Jewish state, no to a Jewish government – a Jewish monarch, and certainly no to the presence of any Jewish army to defend it.<sup>2</sup>

The reason this insight was so transformative for me, is that indeed the modern incarnation of anti-Semitism in the late 20th and early 21st century is of the Philistine genre – anti-Zionism and the systematic delegitimization of Israel's right to self determination and sovereignty anywhere in its ancient land of Israel.

Throughout Jewish Exile of the last 2,000 years, Jews were often denied the ability to practice Judaism or to live as a distinct People. Today, they are denied a Jewish State in their ancient homeland. As Abba Eban so sharply said in response to the UN's “Zionism is Racism” declaration in 1975: “There is no difference whatsoever between anti-Semitism and the denial of Israel's statehood. Classical anti-Semitism

denies the equal right of Jews as citizens within society. Anti-Zionism denies the equal rights of the Jewish people its lawful sovereignty within the community of nations. The common principle in the two cases is discrimination.”<sup>3</sup>

### A Thousand Years of Philistine Opposition

Indeed, over the one thousand years of Biblical history from the dawn of Jewish National consciousness till its zenith in the times of Solomon, the Philistines main spiritual role was to oppose the Jewish peoples claim to any right to sovereignty in the land.

The first two kings of Israel who galvanized the disparate tribes into one sovereign nation – Saul and David, constantly fought the Philistines time and time again, more than any other people. The Philistines are mentioned 286 times in Tanach, with well over half of these times appearing in the book of Shmuel.

Saul and David fought 20 separate major battles with the Philistines as part of a decades-long war for their independence as a nation in Israel. The war claimed the lives of Saul and three of his sons, with David’s famous confrontation with the Philistine giant, Goliath and his subsequent narrow escape from death at the hands of the Philistines.

Philistine anti-Semitism though, goes back to the very dawn of Jewish history. The moment the first Jews, Abraham and his son Isaac attempt to settle in the land, having been commanded by Hashem to do so, the Philistines oppose it. As Abraham and Isaac began to found agricultural settlements close to water sources, it was the Philistine shepherds and their king Avimelech who engaged in a series of disagreements and clashes over wells. During Isaac’s time, the Philistine shepherds sabotaged the wells that Abraham had built and derailed any attempts to settle the land. Amazingly, when the Jewish people would later leave Egyptian exile, on their way to the land, the Torah states clearly that “Hashem did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines (enroute to Israel) for it was near, as Hashem said

‘Lest the people reconsider when they see war and return to Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:17). The ancient coastal road, known at the time of the Romans as Via Maris – The Way of the Sea - was known in Tanach as “The Way of the Philistines,” as they had settled in that area, south of the Gaza strip of today, bordering the Sinai Peninsula. This coastal area is what connects the Nile Delta to the south-western tip of Eretz Yisrael. In a journey of less than two weeks, Bnei Yisrael could have made it from Egypt to Israel. What stood in their way though was a potential confrontation with the Philistines who would have done anything in their power to prevent them from coming to Eretz Yisrael.<sup>4</sup> After eventually conquering and settling the land in the time of Joshua and once the disparate tribes of Israel begin to unite and fight for their independence in the land beginning with Samson and culminating with the establishment of sovereign political entities – Saul and David’s monarchies – the Philistines arise to counteract and to destroy any such attempt.

A phenomenal trend emerges: Directly proportional to the Jewish people’s collective presence in the land is the collective opposition of the Philistines. From the time of the Founding Fathers and the pioneering settlements of Abraham and Isaac through to the Israelite and Jewish statehood of Saul and David.

### The Ghost of the Ancient Philistines

Incredibly, this is exactly the form that the modern day Palestinian denialism has taken. It even bears the all too similar name, Palestinians, based on the ancient Philistines.<sup>5</sup>

Although there is no ancestral or genetic connection whatsoever between the biblical Philistines and the Palestinians of today, they indeed do represent the exact same **spiritual legacy**. They bear the torch of denialism of the Jewish people’s right to exist as a sovereign state, anywhere in the land of Israel.

One of the people who understood this clearly was a person not known as a fan of Zionism – Ernest Bevin, the foreign secretary of Britain at the time of the

culmination of the British Mandate in Palestine. In a speech that he delivered at the time, he articulated what the reason was as to why Britain was relinquishing its mandate on Palestine and handing it over to the United Nations. He stated that at the core of the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews over the land were two national movements with different missions. The one – the Jewish people – was seeking first and foremost its own freedom and independence, while the other – the Arab – was seeking to **deny** the sovereign independence of the other.

In a speech to parliament in February 1947, he explained the rationale as follows: “His Majesty’s Government has thus been faced with an irreconcilable conflict or principles...for the Jews the essential point of principle is the creation of a sovereign Jewish state. For the Arabs, the essential point of principle is to resist to the last the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in **any part** of Palestine.”<sup>6</sup>

### The 5 Rejections

Consistently since the very dawn of modern Palestinian Nationalism around 100 years ago in response to the Zionist movement, there is a blatant rejection of the right of the Jews to **any** form of sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael.

There have been five offers for Palestinian statehood in the land over 80 years and the Arab world and Palestinians have refused on **every** occasion to share **any** part of the land with the Jews. Briefly here are the five:

1. During the Arab Revolt against the British and against their Jewish neighbors beginning in 1936, the British formed a task force, the Peel Commission, to study the cause of the rebellion. The Commission concluded that the reason for the violence was that two peoples, Jews and Arabs, wanted to govern the same land. Since the narratives were so conflicting and seemed irreconcilable, the Peel Commission suggested the creation of two independent states, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. The first international offer of sharing the land – a two state solution. The Jews

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PIRKEI AVOT

# Our Social Circles



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi  
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה וְנִתַּי הָאֲרֵבֵלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם:  
הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר: עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְקַנְיָה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָיוּ דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַר זְכוּת: (אבות א:ו)  
נִתַּי הָאֲרֵבֵלִי אוֹמֵר: הִרְחַק מִשְׂכּוֹן רָע, וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לְרָשָׁע, וְאַל תִּתְיַאֵשׁ מִן הַפְּרָעָנוּת: (אבות א:ז)

## Our Relationships

The second of the first perek's *zugot* (the pairs who transmitted the mesorah) are Yehoshua ben Perachya and Nitai Ha'Arbeli. Both address the same topic – a person's social circles. Yehoshua ben Perachya speaks about the friends one should seek to develop relationships with, while Nitai Ha'arbeli teaches us who to avoid.<sup>1</sup>

## The Good and The Better

The very beginning of the Torah emphasizes the importance of our interpersonal relationships. After Bereishit's first perek tells us (multiple times) that Hashem saw His creations as good, perek *bet* introduces (for the first time) something not good. "*Lo tov heyot adam levado* — it is not good for man to be alone."<sup>2</sup> Living alone is both morally wrong as well as unnatural and abnormal.

The world's first generations teach us how destructive living only for oneself can be. The pre-*mabul* generations lived selfishly, with no care for one another. They raped, murdered, and trampled each other. Their destruction of society impacted the whole world and "forced" Hashem to restart creation. Our society and our world can only survive when we transcend our natural selfishness and care for one another.

Friendship is not just a responsibility we have towards others; it is important for our own healthy personal development as well. Sefer Kohelet gives two reasons why (in its words) "two are better than one."<sup>3</sup> The first is utilitarian: "When one falls, the other can help him up."<sup>4</sup> Having a friend means having someone to turn to in our time of need. Two people can help each other accomplish more than either could have on their own.

Friends help us spiritually as well. They help us grow in *avodat Hashem*<sup>5</sup> by offering

constructive criticism, feedback on our ideas, and guidance about our conduct.<sup>6</sup>

Kohelet's second reason relates to the importance of the relationship itself. "Even if both friends fall and are unable to help each other up, at least they can warm (console) one another."<sup>7</sup> People need to share with others,<sup>8</sup> to the point that many prefer death over loneliness.<sup>9</sup> We are created this way because we are meant to connect to others in a way that helps both others and ourselves.

Appreciating the great significance of friends and friendship, Yehoshua ben Perachya encourages us to create a relationship with a Rav and acquire a friend. The Rav helps us determine our life's direction, and our friends offer a context in which we can share and grow.

## Choosing Friends Well

Though Yehoshua ben Perachya mentions "acquiring a friend" without specifying the type, we should, of course, be careful to choose our friends judiciously. The Rambam elaborates on the different types of friends in both his commentary on the Mishnah and in his Mishneh Torah.

In his Mishneh Torah,<sup>10</sup> Rambam introduces his codification of our Mishnah by emphasizing that "man is innately drawn towards and impacted by the ways of his friends and surroundings." It is critical to surround ourselves with people who share our core values because our values will inevitably come to reflect those of our friends.

Our choice of friends is even more critical in the world of social media, where we interact with thousands of virtual "friends." Our choice of friends determines the content and perspective to which we are exposed. Though we are not commanded to live in an echo chamber, we should ensure that our inner circle consists of those who reinforce our values.

## Four Levels of Friends

In his commentary to the Mishnah, the Rambam delineates four levels of friendship.<sup>11</sup>

The first – a utilitarian friendship – is a situation where friends share a common need or challenge they address together.

The second type is friends who share common tastes and get enjoyment from seeking and enjoying pleasures together.

A deeper level is a friend we can trust to share sensitive information with. Such a friend is a "real" friend the Torah describes as "*rei'ihu*."<sup>12</sup>

The Rambam calls the highest level of friendship an "*ohav ma'alah*" – a friend with whom one shares the same sense of mission. This shared purpose allows people to work together to realize common goals.

Ideally, all Jews should share this kind of relationship with one another. Our common understanding that Hashem placed us in this world to serve Him should allow us to transcend our narrow needs and interests, and work together to sanctify Hashem's name.

This explains why we start the wedding *sheva brachot* with the *berachah* of "*shehakol bara lichvodo* – that all was created for His honor. At first glance, the *berachah* seems unrelated to the wedding. In light of the Rambam's explanation of the highest level of friendship, we can explain that this *berachah* serves as the foundation for a Jewish married couple. Only if both parties recognize that they were each created for the glory of God can they have a true relationship and marriage – one in which they transcend themselves and work towards shared goals.

## How To Acquire

How does one develop meaningful friendships? What does Yehoshua ben Perachya mean by "acquire"? The Rambam<sup>13</sup> explains

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# Where Did Noach Go Wrong?



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

I heard a beautiful dvar Torah on this week's parsha from Rabbi Yitzchak Twersky, based on his sefer *Amitah shel Torah* on Chumash. Rabbi Twersky lives in Neve Daniel, Israel and teaches in a number of institutions, including MMY, YU Israel and Lamdeinu. I wanted to share it with you:

"This Parshah raises the troubling question of how to understand the character of Noach. How do we understand the relationship between his obvious greatness and his shortcomings?"

Chazal hint at a framework for dealing with this issue, suggesting that the first of the keys to unlocking the mystery of Noach is to be found by examining the different stages of his life.

The second key may be found in an extremely famous *Midrashic* statement. The Tanchumah (ed. Buber) Noach (§6) implies a fascinating perspective: It is in the very same place that one may find his praise and criticism. We will see, b"n, that this is a crucial insight into the story of Noach. The Ran provides us with a fascinating insight into this concept. In his commentary on Bereshit (6:9-12), he writes:

... And that which it says here, *Noach walked with G-d (et haElokim hithalech Noach)*, as opposed to before G-d (*lifnei HaElokim*) as it says [about Avraham] *walk before me*, is due to the fact that were it to say that it would connote that he served G-d. But the intent here is to convey the way that he was able to be righteous and pure amongst corrupt and evil people. This the Torah explains as being a function of his walking with G-d- and not with them...

It is often suggested that Noach's greatness is mitigated by his lack of involvement

with his generation. The Ran turns this perspective on its ear and understands his detachment from his generation to be the very bedrock of his righteousness. This is the beginning of a deeper understanding of our issue.

The well-known discussion of *b'dorotav* in Chazal that we mentioned above appears in different forms in the various sources. The Tanchumah (ed. Warsaw) Noach (§5) presents the matter in essentially the form that has been popularized by Rashi, namely:

This is, of course, puzzling because of the fact that he did, in fact, live during the time of Avraham. As noted by the Ibn Ezra, Avraham was 58 when Noach died! This is absolutely clear from the chronology given in the *Torah*. How can we say *were he to have lived in the generation of Avraham*, when he actually did?!

Although Noach lives for nearly three and a half centuries after the deluge, he is not involved and active for nearly that entire period. Therefore, although he is yet alive during the beginning of Avraham's life, that was not "his generations". There is, however, an even deeper meaning here, as we will explain.

The key to understanding all of this lies in understanding two related texts:

בראשית (פרק ו)	בראשית (פרק ז)
(ט) אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו את האלהים התהלך נח:	(א) ויאמר ה' לנח בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התבה כי אתך ראיתי צדיק לפני בדורי הזה:

We generally understand the first text to be saying that Noach was a *tzadik tamim* - that is, a perfect *tzadik*. There is, however, another way to understand the phraseology of this text. Noach is described here

as an *ish tzadik*, and we are told that *tamim hayah b'dorotav*. That is to say, *b'dorotav* qualifies *tamim* alone. He is described as being *tzadik* at that point, but *tamim* throughout all of his generations.

There are two tensions between the texts in Chapter 6 and the text in Chapter 7. The first is the one between *tzadik tamim* and *tzadik* that is pointed out by the Gemarah. The second, and more significant one, is the question of at which point *Noach* is considered a *tzadik*. In chapter 6, according to the standard reading, he was a *tzadik* throughout all of his generations. According to the text in chapter 7, he was only a *tzadik* in the generation of the flood!

According to the reading that we are suggesting, the two texts are perfectly parallel. The point is that G-d only viewed him as being a *tzadik* in the generation of the flood, but as *tamim* throughout his life. This distinction brings together all of the points we mentioned above and is central to understanding our entire *Parshah*.

The point is that Noach is consistent throughout his lifetime, *bedorotav*. He was, from beginning to end, *tamim* - without blemish. Never was he corrupt or evil. He always walked alone with G-d, as described by the Ran. Noach never changed throughout all of his many years.

While *Noach* does not change in absolute terms, his insistence upon maintaining his insularity, irrespective of his surroundings, is problematic. The fact that *Noach* was successful in remaining *tamim* at a time when the world had been perverted and corrupted is reflective of great personal integrity and is a truly commendable achievement. The fact that *Noach* maintained his isolationist stance in the postdiluvian generation, is precisely the problem. When faced with

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# Halachic Q&A



## Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council  
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

**Question: I see that many people are not careful about their tefillin straps touching the floor. Is this problematic? Are they considered kadosh?**

Answer: The Gemara (Brachot 23b) says that one cannot daven shmoneh esre with tefillin in his hand because he will not concentrate on making sure his tefillin do not fall. Similarly, the Gemara (Sukkah 26a) forbids one to sleep with tefillin in his hand as they may fall. We see from these sugyot that one must be very careful with tefillin to ensure they are not disgraced by falling on the floor.

One should also be careful regarding the tefillin straps. However, the straps do not have inherent kedusha on their own, and only constitute “tashmishei kedusha” (items were serve items of kedusha). This category must also be treated with respect, and therefore, lechatchila one should ensure these do not fall or drag on the floor when donning or wrapping tefillin (Aruch Hashulchan).

**Question: A couple is getting married six days after Shemini Atzeret. Can they spend Shemini Atzeret together and only stop seeing each other six days before the wedding instead of seven?**

Answer: The minhag to not see each other for seven days before the wedding does not really have a source. Nevertheless, it is a good minhag to keep. In a situation like this, however, they can spend Shemini Atzeret together.

**Question: Should one say Hashem's name when reading Shnayim Mikrah with Onkelos?**

Answer: Yes, reading Onkelos is like reading the Torah and therefore you do say Shem Hashem.

**Question: Can I walk in front of somebody davening if there is a bench/shtender in front of them?**

Answer: The Shulchan Aruch (OC 102:4) paskens based on the Gemara in Brachot (27) that one may not pass in front of somebody who is davening shmoneh esre. The main issue exists within four amot (about 2 meters). The Mishnah Berurah (102:15) brings two reasons for the issur: 1) It is distracting for the one davening and 2) It creates a separation between the one praying and the shechina (Chaye Adam). Seemingly, this question is dependent on these two reasons. A shtender/bench likely would not be enough to solve the issue of the distraction. Nevertheless, it may be enough to constitute a mechitza so that one walking in front is not interrupting between the one praying and the shechina.

The Mishna Berurah (102:18) writes that if something is 10 tefachim tall by 4 tefachim wide, we can rely on it as a mechitza to allow others to sit in front of one davening, but not to pass by (as this may be a distraction). If the separation is higher than the head of the one davening, then one can pass in front (and some say even if it is not 4 tefachim wide).

**Question: A set of beautiful crockery was not used for about 30 years and was owned by family members who did not keep kosher. Can I do haga'alah and use them?**

Answer: If 12 months have passed and it is an expensive set, we can be meikel and do haga'alah three times (using the opinion of the Ba'al Ha'itur), and this will only be a safek derabanan.

**Question: In shul this morning, the chazzan started saying kaddish by mistake. If so, is there a point where it is too late and the chazzan should continue?**

Answer: If the chazzan started by mistake and got to “v'imru Amen,” he should continue. Before then, he should be stopped (Sha'arei Efrayim). Igrot Moshe writes similarly but says that once the chazzan says “ba'agolo u'viz'man koriv,” he should not be stopped.

**Question: There is a Jewish museum being built and there was a thought of engraving the passuk of “Shema Yisrael” on the floor. Would this be an issue?**

Answer: While this may not fall into the category of “Lo Ta'asun Ken LaHashem Elokech” (Devarim 12:4) which relates to erasing G-d's name (and removing stones from the mikdash, see Rashi there), there certainly is a problem here of disgracing a passuk and Hashem's name and is not in the spirit of the Torah.

The Rema in YD 276:13 writes that one should not write Hashem's name outside of a Torah scroll because it may come to be disgraced. There are discussions in the achronim about certain exceptions. For example, Shu"t Chatan Sofer writes that Shem Hashem can be written on a tombstone. Nevertheless, this is not comparable to our case because here there will be a disgrace to the passuk by people stepping over it.

Therefore, the passuk of "Shema Yisrael" should not be engraved on the floor and a different sentence which is not a passuk should be chosen.

● Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

# תקציר פרשת נח

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



סיפור מגדל בבל מלמד אותנו כיצד כוחות, מעשים ורעיונות חיוביים עלולים לגלוש למצבי קיצון בעיתיים. האחדות בין בני האדם בראשית האנושות היתה מצב חיובי. גם התפתחות האנושות מבחינה טכנולוגית ותרבותית היתה חיובית. אולם, בני האדם הקצינו את השימוש בכוחות אלה וניצלו אותם להשתלטות ולמרידה בה, כך שאותם כוחות חיוביים הובילו למצבים בעיתיים ביותר, והיה צורך לעצורם, למנוע את ההתפתחות השלילית, ואפילו במחיר הפרת כח האחדות החיובי.

במקום את רצון ה'. להחליף את שלטונו של ה' בעולם בשלטונם ובהנהגתם שלהם.

גם אחדות האנושות הייתה חיובית ואפילו אידיאלית. אחדות זו הייתה אמורה להיות אחדות של שפה ושל דרך חיים לשם עבודת ה'. אולם בני האדם הסתנוורו מהכוח הרב הטמון באחדות, ניצלו את כח האחדות לרעה, ובמקום שהיא תוביל אותם לעבודת ה', היא הובילה אותם למרידה משותפת בה'. את המצב הזה ה' מעוניין למנוע, מכיוון שאין קיום לעולם כאשר הוא מורד בה'.

בעקבות כך, ה' נאלץ לוותר על אידיאל האחדות והתקשורת בין בני האדם: **"הִבֵּה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שִׁפְתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שִׁפְת רֵעֵהוּ"** (יא, ז). בלבול השפות לא בא כעונש על מעשי העבר של אנשי מגדל בבל, אלא כדאגה לעתיד, על מנת שהאנושות לא תתפתח לכיוונים שליליים. הפירוד בין העמים איננו מצב אידיאלי, אך הוא מאפשר קיום אנושי בריא יותר, בו כוחות שונים מאזנים זה את זה ואף אחד איננו יכול להגיע לשלטון מלא על העולם ולדמות לעצמו שהוא האלוקות.

סיפור בניית מגדל בבל, המופיע בסוף פרשת נח, מתאר את מעשיהם של אנשי אותו דור, המאוחדים בלשונם ובמעשיהם, ונוודדים ממקום למקום עד למציאת מקום קבע בו הם בונים עיר ובה מגדל העשוי לבנים. תיאור מעשיהם נראה תמים, ואפילו חיובי, אולם תגובתו של ה' מלמדת אותנו שמעשיהם לא היו תמימים כל כך.

בניית מגדל ועיר כדי לגור בהם, יכולה להיות התפתחות חיובית של העולם, אולם התורה מבהירה שהמטרה לא היתה כל כך תמימה: **"וַנַּעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ שָׁם פֶּן נְפוּץ עַל פְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ"** – המטרה העיקרית של בוני המגדל היתה לעשות לעצמם שם, לפאר ולרומם את עצמם, במקום להגדיל את שמו של הקב"ה.

המטרה השנייה היתה למנוע את התפזרותם הגאוגרפית על פני כל הארץ, בניגוד לרצון ה' שצווה את בני האדם: **"פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ"** (בראשית א', כח).

הצד המשותף לשתי המטרות הוא תחושת הכח והגאוה של בני האדם ושאיפתם לעשות את רצונם

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that one acquires friends by acting towards others in a way that others appreciate. Naturally, people see the world through their own lenses. Forging relationships with others hinges on our ability to put ourselves in their shoes.

This explains the connection between Yehoshua ben Perechaya's third statement, *"Hevay dan et kol ha'adam l'kaf zechut – judge others favorably,"* and the first part of the Mishnah. Judging others favorably is important in its own right, but it also helps us develop friendships. Endeavoring to see the good in another's actions is part of seeing things from their perspective. Doing so brings us closer together and makes friendship possible.

We live in a world in which we can interact with more people more quickly than in the past but from a virtual distance. We should appreciate the value and importance of true, meaningful friendships and invest the extra

effort required to develop them. Additionally, we should appreciate the importance of maintaining our relationship with our Rabbonim who can continue guiding us throughout our lives.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis.

1. The Maharal (Derech Chaim 1:7) teaches that relationships with those outside of one's home are the focus of this mishnah, following the previous mishnah's teachings about who should be included inside one's home — *talmidei chachamim* and the needy. The inclusion of a teacher, *rav*, here, is different than in Mishnah 16. There, the point of the *rav* is to facilitate the next phrase, *histalek min hasafek* — avoid doubt by asking for *psak*. Here, the focus is on the relationship itself.
2. Bereishit 2:18.
3. Kohelet 4:9.
4. Kohelet 4:10. See also pasuk 12.
5. See Rabbeinu Yonah to Masechet Avot 1:6.
6. See Me'iri to Masechet Avot 1:6.

7. Kohelet 4:11.
8. The Kuntres Ha'sfeikos (in his introduction to his brother's sefer — *Ketzot Hachoshen*) posits that even a person who had the great *zechut* of going up to *Shamayim* and seeing everything that was there would not be satisfied until he was able to come down and share the experience with his friends.
9. Ta'anit 23a. This was said in the context of the story about Choni Ha'Maagel, who slept for seventy years. When he woke up, entered the *beis medrish*, and discovered that all of his friends and contemporaries had long since passed away, he asked to die, as well. Similarly, many explain that the reason a *metzora* is considered like a *meit* is because he is forced to live alone (outside the camp).
10. Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot 6:1.
11. Rambam to Avot 1:6 (quoting Aristotle).
12. Bereishit 28:12, 20. This may also explain the usage of the term in Sheva Berachot.
13. Ibid.

# What's your Noah's ark?



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

**Y**es, of course, we have all known the story of Noah's Ark since kindergarten, but we return to it each year, eager to find new meaning. Many commentators call upon us to find our own personal Noah's ark. Indeed, each one of us must occasionally escape and find refuge from the "flood" around us. Rav Shalom Noah Berzovsky, in his book "Netivot Shalom," explains this necessity as follows:

"Even in situations where a flood rages around us and everything looks bad, there is always a Noah's ark to save us. When a person feels sad and low, the best advice is 'make yourself into an ark'. Everyone has a divine spark within, that holds supreme sources of strength, providing the power to rise above it all. Everyone has a personal Noah's ark that saves them from the flood. Everyone has something inside that is purely good, a unique capacity or quality, closely guarded in the worst possible situations, that will never be surrendered. It is this special something that saves us during the most difficult times. In our generation, there are three collective Noah's arks: the Torah, Shabbat, and Jewish unity. These are strong forces for good that enable us to prevail over the bad that surrounds us. But this parasha does not belong to any single generation. It is for every generation to study, until the end of time, for no matter how bleak the situation may appear to be, we can always escape to and hang on to what is uniquely good inside of us."

So what's your Noah's ark?



It's not working. This week's Torah portion continues with the description of humanity's failure. People sin, steal, and betray, and God starts over. Only Noah

and his family enter the ark because of the flood, in order to save themselves. Our sages throughout the generations express disappointment. Why didn't Noah act to save everyone? How could he have worried only about himself and not prayed and pleaded to God, and not called upon all people to immediately mend their ways? Afterwards, the story of the Tower of Babel appears. All of humanity unites in order to erect a presumptuous tower that reaches heaven. People want to rule, to dominate, to make themselves into God. They worship technology, human innovation and power, and leave no room for the Creator.

What is the solution? The answer appears in next week's Torah portion - Avraham Avinu. He makes amends for the sin of Noah and demonstrates an enormous capacity to care. When God wants to destroy Sodom, Avraham does not remain silent, but argues and protests because that's how a true believer behaves. When the people of his generation sin, he does not ignore them and worry only about himself, but rather educates them with love, patience, and tolerance.

And instead of erecting a Tower of Babel, he erects a humble tent, open on all sides to everyone, a home that is nothing but kindness and hospitality. The Tower of Babel collapsed, but the tent of Avraham exists until today, the inheritance of his children's children. The builders of a tower tried to make a name for themselves and their name was erased. Yet the name of Avraham is eternal precisely because Avraham did not glorify himself but lived by his faith and his love for others.



אלה הן כנראה הפרשות המרתקות ביותר: בראשית, נח, לך לך. בהתחלה התורה מתארת את הגרסה האוניברסלית, בלי עמים ומדינות, אבל זה לא מצליח. השיר "אימג'ן" של ג'ון לנון כאילו מלווה את הפסוקים שמתארים את גן עדן, את קין והבל, את תיבת נח, את מגדל בבל, אך האנושות בגרסה הגלובלית הזו נכשלת. זה לא עובד, מהחטא הראשון בגן עדן דרך הרצח הראשון בין האחים ועד לחברה האלימה והמושחתת שנח חי בה. גם הניסיון להקים את מגדל בבל, שראשו מגיע השמימה - קורס. מה הפתרון? למה העולם כולו לא יכול פשוט לחיות ביחד? למה זה כל כך מסובך? הפתרון הוא אברהם. מתוך הריסות מגדל בבל יוצא אברהם אל ארץ ישראל, למשימת חייו, שהיא עדיין משימת חיינו. פתאום צומחות בעולם לאומיות, זהות ומורשת. פתאום יש עם ויש מקום, יש שפה ויש ארץ, יש תורה ויש אומה. זוהי הדרך הארוכה לתיקון. רק כך, מתוך עם ישראל, אברהם אמור להביא לבסוף ברכה לעולם כולו.



היום, להגיד מה שבא לך נחשב "אמיץ". נראה שאנשים פחות מעריכים עדינות, היסוס, מחשבה שנייה. פוסטים עם מילים חריפות מושכים יותר תשומת לב. טקסט קיצוני גורר יותר תגובות.

**בפרשת נח** מסופר שהעולם כולו מושחת ואלים, המבול כבר בדרך, ואז אלוהים אומר לנח להביא אל התיבה "מכל הבהמה הטהורה" וגם "מין הבהמה אשר לא טהורה היא". למה לא כתוב בתורה באופן קצר ופשוט יותר "הבהמה הטהורה" ואז "הבהמה הטהורה"? למה צריך להאריך ולכתוב "הבהמה אשר לא טהורה היא"? הסיבה, לפי חכמינו: כדי לא להוציא מילה מגונה מהפה. כלומר, עדיף לטרוח להתאמץ ולומר "לא טהורה" מאשר לומר במפורש "טמאה". זה שיעור עצום על כוחו של הדיבור, על ניסיון לא לפגוע, על הרצון לא להיות בוטה ותקיף כשלא צריך. מעניין שהתורה נוקטת ב"מעקף" הלשוני הזה בעיתוי כל כך עגום. הרי המציאות באותו זמן היא איומה ונוראה, העולם כולו עומד להיחרב, ובכל זאת - זה משנה. לא חשוב איך כולם מסביב מתנהגים. מתברר שכל מילה קטנה שאנחנו אומרים או כותבים (ושכל מילה שאנחנו מחליטים לא לומר ולא לכתוב) - היא משמעותית.



# For the Shabbat Table



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**  
Deputy CEO, World Mizrahi  
Rabbi at Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**M**ake for yourself an ark of gopher wood, you shall make the ark with compartments and you shall cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: 300 cubits the length of the ark, 50 cubits its width and 30 cubits its height” (Bereishit 6:14).

At the beginning of this week’s Parsha, Hashem commands Noach to build an ark in order to save himself, his family and every species of animals from the upcoming flood. Although this building project was a major undertaking for Noach and took him 120 years to complete, how could he possibly fit at least two of every species of animal onto the ark? With so many species in the world and with so many large animals such as elephants and giraffes, how could an ark of 300 by 50 cubits possibly contain so many creatures and still float on water?

With these difficulties in mind, Ramban (Bereishit 6:19) concludes that it could only have been through miraculous means that the ark held so many animals.

Based on Ramban’s explanation, however, a different question arises: If at the end of the day it took a miracle for the ark to contain so much more than its volume, why put Noach through 120 years of trouble to build an ark? Why not command Noach to build a smaller ark and rely on the very same miracle?

Ramban provides two answers, each with an important message:

“Hashem, may He be blessed, saw it fitting to make it (the ark) big so that the members of his (Noach’s) generation would see it and be surprised by it and tell each other about it and speak about the matter of the flood and the gathering of the domesticated animals, wild animals and fowl into it – maybe they will do Teshuva.

And furthermore, they made it big in order to minimize the miracle, for this is the way of all the miracles in the Torah and the Prophets – to do what is within man’s capability to do, and the rest will be in the hands of Heaven” (Ramban, Bereishit 6:19).

According to Ramban’s first answer, Hashem wanted Noach to spend many years building a large ark in order to give his contemporaries every opportunity to repent. Such a long-term and large-scale project could not go by unnoticed and would hopefully alert the world of the upcoming dangers.

According to Ramban’s second answer, Hashem wanted Noach to build the largest ark he could, for it is forbidden for us to rely on miracles. Even if we are ultimately dependant on Hashem, we must do everything within our capabilities first.

“For I do not desire the death of the one who should die’, says The L-rd, G-d, ‘Repent and Live!’” (Yechezkel 18:32).

On the one hand, Hashem does not want to punish us and encourages us to return to Him instead. At the same time, when turning to Hashem for salvation, we must not expect or rely on miracles.

By returning to Hashem and making an effort to protect ourselves, may we merit His ultimate protection.

Shabbat Shalom!

*Continued from page 5*

a different challenge, a new context and a fresh mandate, *Noach* does not change at all. An examination of the text reveals that G-d, subsequent to the flood, relates quite differently to the same essential issues of mankind.

Despite this change in how G-d relates to man, there appears to be no change in Noach. It should be noted that Hashem stresses his new perspective on the world, and its implications for how Noach and his descendants should operate, after they emerge from the ark. Chapter 9

emphasizes the concept of man’s potential (the *tzelem Elokim*) and the mandate to rebuild the world.

*Noach’s* response is not in line with this expectation: Noach escapes life into drunkenness. He ceases to be involved in the rebuilding of the world and we do not hear from him after this narrative, as we noted above. We find him thoroughly isolated (as before the flood), inside the walls of his tent, senses numbed to the outside world in his stupor, as removed from society as possible.

We can now understand very well how this man who throughout his life was *tamim* and walked before G-d, was only found to be a *tzadik* before G-d in the *dor hamabul*. In his other generations he was only called *tamim*. He retained the same characteristics all the time – while the context for, and meaning of, those characteristics changed dramatically. For this reason, we must view him through the perspective of varied phases – and realize that his praise and criticism reside in the exact same location.”

Continued from page 3

voted to accept this offer, but the Arabs rejected it and resumed their violent rebellion.

2. Ten years later in 1947, the British asked the United Nations to find a new solution to the continuing tensions. Like the Peel Commission, the UN decided that the best way to resolve the conflict was to divide the land. In November 1947, the UN voted to create two states. Again, the Jews accepted the offer and again the Arabs rejected it. Based on this, the Jews declared independence and immediately thereafter Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria launched an all out war to destroy the nascent state.
3. Twenty years later in 1967, the neighboring Arab states, led this time by Egypt and joined by Syria and Jordan, once again sought to destroy the Jewish State. The 1967 conflict ended in a stunning victory for Israel with East Jerusalem and Gaza and Judea and Samaria – the West Bank – falling into Israeli hands. The government was split over what to do with this new territory. Half wanted to return the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt, in exchange for peace. The other half wanted to give it to the region's Arabs who had begun referring to themselves as the Palestinians in the hope that they would ultimately build their own state there. Neither initiative got very far. A few months later the Arab League met in Sudan and issued its infamous "3 Nos" in Khartoum – No to peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel. Again a two state solution was dismissed by the Arab nations. (Of course as soon as Egypt recognized Israel as a Jewish state and was prepared to live in peace – a peace deal was struck and the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt. This peace has held for 43 years now and subsequently Jordan followed suit and there has been peace for 28 years.)
4. In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak met at Camp David with PLO

chairman Yasser Arafat to conclude a new two state plan. Barak offered Arafat a Palestinian State in all of Gaza and 94% of the West Bank with East Jerusalem as it's capital. But the Palestinian leader rejected the offer. In the words of US president Bill Clinton, "Arafat was here 14 days and said no to everything". Instead the Palestinians launched a bloody wave of suicide bombings that killed over 1,000 Israelis and maimed thousands more, on busses, cafes and in pizza parlors.

5. In 2008, Israel tried yet again. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert went even further than Ehud Barak had, expanding the peace offer to include additional land to sweeten the deal. Like his predecessor, the new Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas turned the deal down.

Each time Israel has agreed to a Palestinian State, the Palestinians have rejected the offer, often followed by violence and certainly ongoing denialism of the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state anywhere in the land.<sup>7</sup> Only this week did an Arab Israeli MK of the Hadash-Ta'al party, Aida Touma-Suleiman perversely refer to the members of the Lions' Den terrorist group – who have perpetrated a number of murders of civilians and soldiers alike – who were killed during an IDF raid in Nablus on Tuesday as "martyrs" in a Facebook post later in the day.

### Aren't Settlements and 'The Occupation' the Issue?

In their landmark 2014 book *War of Return*, two Israeli progressive intellectuals, Dr.'s Adi Schwartz and Einat Wilf, express a rare change of heart in their assessment of the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Wilf was a member of parliament on behalf of the Labor party and worked closely with the architects of the Oslo Accords, Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin. Schwartz worked as a journalist for many decades for the well known progressive daily Haaretz and strongly identified with the Israeli left. Both have been very strong

proponents for the two-state solution and have supported all major efforts to reach peace based on this formula.

They write the following in the foreword to their book about their change of heart which began to take place after the failed Camp David talks in the summer of 2000: "But like many on the Israeli political left, we became increasingly baffled as repeated efforts at reaching an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians kept failing, even though the proposals presented to the Palestinians were in line with what they said they were seeking. The fact that the Palestinians walked away from two concrete and recent opportunities – in 2000 and in 2008 to establish their own state, **free of settlements**, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with a capital in East Jerusalem, started to plant serious seeds of doubt in both of our minds. We assumed that a people who seek independence and a state of their own would seize the opportunity when it presents itself."

They continue about how they couldn't believe how almost immediately after Arafat walked out on the greatest offer for Palestinian independence ever offered, he unleashed in the summer of 2000 what became known as the Second Intifada – a series of sustained and brutal massacres of civilians committed by suicide bombers all over Israel.

Thus begun for them an intellectually honest reassessment of their views and analysis and they discovered to their amazement that the core issue of the conflict, undeniable proof of Palestinian rejectionism to any form of Jewish statehood in Israel, was the oft overlooked critical issue of the Palestinian insistence on 'a right of return':

"Our research revealed that the Palestinian refugee issues is not just one more issue in the conflict; it is probably the issue. The Palestinian conception of themselves as refugees from 'Palestine' and their demand to exercise a so-called right of return reflect the Palestinians', most profound beliefs about their relationship

with the land and their willingness or lack thereof to share any part of it with the Jews. And the UN structural support and Western financial support for these Palestinian beliefs has led to the creation of a permanent and ever growing population of Palestinian refugees and what is now a nearly insurmountable obstacle to peace.

The Palestinian demand to ‘return’ to what became the sovereign state of Israel in 1948 stands as a testament to the Palestinian rejection of the legitimacy of a state for the Jews in any part of their ancestral homeland.”

The unusual picture that emerges is this: Modern Palestinian nationalism has been less about self determination and more about **denying** the right of others to **any** self-determination. Less about their collective right to this land and more about **rejecting any** collective Jewish right. It has been about refusing any compromise to share **any** sovereign control of the land. It is about a perplexing type of oppositional nationalism – not positively promoting ourselves but negatively denying others. The Vilna Gaon sees the spiritual antecedent of this counterintuitive type of nationalism in the form of the ancient Biblical Philistines.

### Back to the Beginning

The first place that the Philistines are mentioned in Tanach is in this week’s Parasha – Noach, and already here we find the root of their oppositionalism.

There is only one nation from antiquity who does not form part of the original seventy core nations of the world in the time of Noach – the Philistines.

Famously our Sages have articulated that the 70 names which appear in Chapter 10 of the book of Bereishit in this week’s Parasha, all of whom are the descendants of the three sons of Noach – Shem, Cham and Yafet – are indeed the founders of seventy distinct nations. The very same list appears almost identically in the beginning of the book of Chronicles 1. It was these very nations who then all came together with one language and unity of

purpose to build the Tower of Babel and these very same people that were then dispersed both geographically and linguistically, to build the seventy distinct nations which would form the foundation of human national existence.

### The Missing One

Amazingly, When one analyzes the list of the 70 nations listed in both places, we find not 70 names but 71! Why the extra one nation and why do our Sages single out the Philistines as the nation not counted as part of the list of 70?<sup>8</sup>

This is because of a peculiar expression mentioned in the verses about the emanation of this nation:

וְאֶת־פְּתוּרִים וְאֶת־כַּפְתָּרִים וְאֶת־צַוּוֹת וְאֶת־מַשְׁם פְּלִשְׁתִּים

“And the Pathrusim and the Casluhim, **from whom the Philistines emerged**, and the Caphtorim.”

This strange expression, “וְאֶת־צַוּוֹת וְאֶת־מַשְׁם פְּלִשְׁתִּים”, “from whom they emerged”, does not appear anywhere else in the list of nations. It is an anomaly, an outlier. What does it mean?

Rashi offers a penetrating insight from the Midrash Rabbah: “They (the Philistines) emerged from them both, as the Pathrusim and the Casluhim would swap wives one with the other and out of them both the Philistines came.”

### Oppositional Nationalism

What emerges is the following fascinating fact. The Philistines were not part of the original makeup of the 70 nations of the world. They were not intended to exist at all. They were not natural descents of the children of Noach. Rather they are an **unintended hybrid** nation that was born unexpectedly from a deviant act between the Parthrusim and the Casluhim. The point is clear, the Philistines had no raison d’être in terms of the original scheme of the 70 core nations of the world. They are not one of the foundational people whose role it was to fill the earth and **build** civilizations after the flood and the Tower of Babel.

They were not one of those originally intended to form human societies to resettle the world. This is another strong basis for the Gaon’s thesis that the Philistines’ spiritual role was less about creating their own unique form of positive national construction and more about the rejection of any right of the tribes of Israel to sovereignty and statehood in the land.

What emerges so clearly is that the struggle over the land is not only a historic, geopolitical or even religious one, although all are true – it is first and foremost a metaphysical and spiritual one. It is related to the spiritual history of the world and the role that the Jewish people have been called upon to play in it. It is inherently connected to the place of the land of Israel in Jewish destiny. That odyssey began at the end of this week’s Parasha and particularly at the beginning of next week’s – Lecha Lecha, which we will begin to explore next week.

1. Aderet Eliyahu, Chavakuk 3:14.
2. See Shmuel 1, 13:19 – the verse that the Gaon uses to prove his point.
3. New York Times, 1975.
4. Two of our great medieval commentators, Ramban and Chizkuni in their commentary to this verse as well as our sages in the Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 20:11) highlight this interpretation – that it was the Philistines themselves who would have come out to fight against the tribes of Israel.
5. The Roman Emperor Hadrian famously changed the name of the land of Israel from Judea to Palaestina in Latin which in English is Palestine. This is the translation of the Hebrew word פְּלִשְׁתִּים – the land of the Philistines. When wanting to deter any further rebellions of the Jews in the wake of the Bar Kochva rebellion, and to undermine their desire to reinstate sovereignty, Hadrian chose the Philistines as the vehicle to sever the connection between the Jewish people and the land of Judea.
6. “Palestine Conference (Government Policy),” House of Commons debate, volume 433 (February 18, 1947), CC 985-994.
7. David Brog, executive director of the Maccabee Task Force has articulated this well in a video for PragerU – <https://youtu.be/76NytvOAlS0>
8. Some lists include the Philistines and exclude Nimrod but the vast majority exclude the Philistines.

# The Courage to Live with Uncertainty



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

For each of us there are milestones on our spiritual journey that change the direction of our life and set us on a new path. For me one such moment came when I was a rabbinical student at Jews' College and thus had the privilege of studying with one of the great rabbinic scholars of our time, Rabbi Dr. Nachum Rabinovitch, zt"l.

He was a giant: one the most profound Maimonidean scholars of the modern age, equally at home with virtually every secular discipline as with the entire rabbinic literature, and one of the boldest and most independent of *poskim*, as his several published volumes of *Responsa* show. He also showed what it was to have spiritual and intellectual courage, and that in our time has proved, sadly, all too rare.

The occasion was not special. He was merely giving us one of his regular *divrei Torah*. The week was parshat Noach. But the Midrash he quoted to us was extraordinary. In fact, it is quite hard to find. It appears in the book known as *Buber's Tanchuma*, published in 1885 by Martin Buber's grandfather Shlomo from ancient manuscripts. It is a very early text – some say as early as the fifth century – and it has some overlap with an ancient Midrash of which we no longer have the full text known as *Midrash Yelamdenu*.

The text is in two parts, and it is a commentary on G-d's words to Noah: *'Then G-d said to Noah, "Come out of the Ark"'* (Gen. 8:16). On this the Midrash says:

Noah said to himself, "Since I only entered the Ark with permission (from

G-d), shall I leave without permission?" The Holy One blessed be He said to him: "Are you looking for permission? In that case I give you permission." Then G-d said to Noah, "Come out of the Ark."

The Midrash then adds: 'Said Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, "If I had been there, I would have smashed down [the doors of] the Ark and taken myself out of it."<sup>1</sup>

The moral Rabbi Rabinovitch drew – indeed the only one possible – was that when it comes to rebuilding a shattered world, you do not wait for permission. G-d gives us permission. He expects us to go on ahead.

This was, of course, part of an ancient tradition, mentioned by Rashi in his commentary (to Gen. 6:9), and central to the Sages' understanding of why G-d began the Jewish people not with Noah but with Abraham. Noah, says the Torah, "walked with G-d" (6:9). But G-d said to Abraham, "Walk on ahead of Me" (Gen. 17:1). So the point was not new, but the drama and power of the Midrash were stunning.

Suddenly I understood that this is a significant part of what faith is in Judaism: to have the courage to pioneer, to do something new, to take the road less travelled, to venture out into the unknown. That is what Abraham and Sarah had done when they left their land, their home and their father's house. It is what the Israelites did in the days of Moses when they journeyed forth into the wilderness, guided only by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

Faith is precisely the courage to take a risk, knowing that "Though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me" (Ps. 23:4). It took faith to challenge the religions of the ancient world, especially when they were embodied in the greatest empires of their time. It took faith to stay Jewish in the Hellenistic age, when Jews and Judaism must have seemed small and parochial when set against the cosmopolitan culture of Ancient Greece and the Alexandrian Empire.

It took the faith of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla to build, as early as the first century, the world's first ever system of universal, compulsory education (Baba Batra 21a), and the faith of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai to realise that Judaism could survive the loss of independence, land and Temple, on the basis of an academy of scholars and a culture of scholarship.

In the modern age, even though many of Jewry's most distinguished minds either lost or abandoned their faith, nonetheless that ancient reflex survived. How else are we to understand the phenomenon that a tiny minority in Europe and the United States was able to produce so many shapers of the modern mind, each of them a pioneer in his or her own way: Einstein in physics, Durkheim in sociology, Levi-Strauss in anthropology, Mahler and Schoenberg in music, and a whole string of innovative economists from David Ricardo (the law of comparative advantage) to John von Neumann (Game Theory) to Milton Friedman (monetary theory), to Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (behavioural economics).

They dominated the fields of psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis, from Freud and his circle to Viktor Frankl (Logotherapy), Aaron T. Beck (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and Martin Seligman (Positive Psychology). The pioneers of Hollywood and film were almost all Jewish. Even in popular music the achievement is stunning, from Irving Berlin and George Gershwin, masters of the American musical, to Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, the two supreme poets of popular music in the twentieth century.

In many cases – such is the fate of innovators – the people concerned had to face a barrage of criticism, disdain, opposition, or disregard. You have to be prepared to be lonely, at best misunderstood, at worst vilified and defamed. As Einstein said, “If my theory of relativity is proven successful, Germany will claim me as a German and France will declare me a citizen of the world. Should my theory prove untrue, France will say that I am a German, and Germany will declare that I am a Jew.” To be a pioneer – as Jews know from our history - you have to be prepared to spend a long time in the wilderness.

That was the faith of the early Zionists. They knew early on, some from the 1860s,



### Faith is not certainty, but the courage to live with uncertainty.

others after the pogroms of the 1880s, Herzl after the Dreyfus trial, that European Enlightenment and Emancipation had failed, that despite its immense scientific and political achievements, mainland Europe still had no place for the Jew. Some Zionists were religious, others were secular, but most importantly they all knew what the *Midrash Tanchuma* made so clear: when it comes to rebuilding a shattered world or a broken dream, you don't wait for permission from Heaven. Heaven is telling you to go ahead.

That is not *carte blanche* to do whatever we like. Not all innovation is constructive. Some can be very destructive indeed. But this principle of “Walk on ahead”, the idea that the Creator wants us, His greatest creation, to be creative, is what makes Judaism unique in the high value it places on the human person and the human condition.

Faith is the courage to take a risk for the sake of G-d or the Jewish people; to begin a journey to a distant destination knowing that there will be hazards along the way, but knowing also that G-d is with us, giving us strength if we align our will with His. Faith is not certainty, but the courage to live with uncertainty.

#### AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Why do you think Noach waited to be invited to leave the Ark?
- Can you suggest some of the great Jewish achievements in history that came from having faith despite uncertainty?
- Which do you think takes stronger faith, holding on to all the answers, or having uncertainty but still believing?

1. The Midrash seems to be based on the fact that this is the first verse in the Torah where the verb *d-b-r* (to speak) is used. The root *a-m-r* (to say) has a similar meaning but there is a slight difference between them. *D-b-r* usually implies speaking harshly, judgmentally. See also Ibn Ezra ad loc., who senses from the text that Noah was reluctant to leave the Ark.

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# The Chosen Land



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

**W**e usually think of the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael as taking hold after the fourteen years of Yehoshua's conquest and division of the land. However, in fact, Eretz Yisrael played a central role as the Chosen Land starting from a much earlier time. The Gemara in Yoma (54b) tells us that the even shesiyah (foundation stone) inside the Kodesh HaKodashim is so named because "from [this stone] the world was founded." This was the first land that Hashem created, and the rest of the earth is an extension of that original piece of land.

The way in which the mabul occurred was certainly miraculous, and one of the extraordinary aspects of the mabul was that Eretz Yisrael was somehow unaffected (Zevachim 113a). The Seforno (Bereishis 11:31) comments that since Eretz Yisrael was singled out in this way, its climate was never adversely affected by the mabul's rains. It was recognized as a healthier place to live, with cleaner air; as the Gemara in Bava Basra (158b) teaches, "the air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise." This may be the reason that Terach set out to move to Cana'an. It is also possible that the fact that Eretz Yisrael was spared from the devastation of the mabul led to its recognition as a land predisposed to bringing about intellectual elevation, and Terach therefore journeyed to the land because of its potential for spiritual excellence.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (69a) tells us that Eretz Yisrael is "higher" than the other lands and that the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim is the "highest" area within Eretz Yisrael. This is why we refer to traveling to Eretz Yisrael as aliyah (ascent) and leaving Eretz Yisrael as yeridah (descent) (Rashi, Bereishis 45:9). Clearly, the Gemara cannot be referring to the height above sea level, as the Swiss Alps are topographically higher than Eretz Yisrael. In fact, the

Gemara in Yoma (31a) explicitly mentions that the area of Ein Ittim has a greater elevation than did the Beis HaMikdash.

Rather, the Gemara is referring to "height" in the following sense. Recognizing that the earth is a sphere, what point on the globe occupied the uppermost position at the first moment of Creation? The placement of the North Pole in the uppermost position, the center of the upper (northern) hemisphere's surface, is merely an arbitrary designation. The Gemara teaches us that Eretz Yisrael, and specifically the area of Yerushalayim, occupied the "highest" point of the upper hemisphere at the time of Creation. This assertion has practical halachic implications, as it may form the basis of the placement of the Date Line according to Halachah.

We recognize that the sun rises and sets in easterly locations earlier than in westerly ones. We understand, therefore, that as we move eastward from a particular starting point, the local time at any particular location becomes later and later. If we take any point on the globe at a specific time – the start of Shabbos at 6:00 PM on Friday, for example – as we move eastward from that starting point, the local times at the new locations become 7:00 PM, 8:00 PM, etc., and Shabbos will have already started at those locations. If we continue moving completely around the globe (360 degrees) back to our starting point, we encounter a difficulty, the circumnavigator's paradox: instead of the local time being 6:00 PM on Friday as it was when we started, it is 6:00 PM on Shabbos, even though we have returned back to the exact same location! We must therefore recognize the existence of a Date Line, so that as we move eastward and cross over to the area east of that line, the day of the week will jump backward to be one day earlier than it is in areas west of that line. This way, if we continue completely around the globe and

reach our starting point in the example above, although the hours have gotten progressively later, since the day has jumped backward, the local time will remain 6:00 PM on Friday.

The location of the modern day International Date Line is arbitrary, passing through the middle of the Pacific Ocean, but deviating to pass around some territories and island groups. The poskim presented different possibilities for the Date Line.

The Chazon Ish basing himself on the interpretation of the Ba'al HaMa'or (Rosh Hashanah 20b) and several other Rishonim, concludes that the halachic Date Line corresponds to a location that is six hours to the east of Yerushalayim (the meridian 90 degrees east of Yerushalayim). This is because the Eurasian landmass is considered to lie within the main hemisphere of the world and, with Yerushalayim at its center, it extends approximately 90 degrees east and 90 degrees west. The Ba'al HaMa'or refers to "the beginning of inhabitation" as the point 90 degrees east of Yerushalayim. This understanding is consistent with the passuk in Yechezkel (38:12) referring to Bnei Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael as "dwelling upon the navel of the earth." Thus, Yerushalayim is considered the midpoint and "highest" point of the upper hemisphere. Since the entire hemisphere consists of twelve time zones, the halachic Date Line runs six hours to the east of its centerpoint, Yerushalayim.

The resultant Date Line cuts through Siberia and Australia, leading to further discussion among the poskim as to the proper classification of these particular land masses. The Chazon Ish maintained that continuous landmasses should belong entirely to one side of the dateline, and that Siberia and Australia should be included in the area west of the Date Line, as that area represents Earth's principle hemisphere.

● *Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha.*

# The story of Haran in the Kivshan Ha'aish



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

**A**t the end of the parsha we learn that Terach had three children, Avram, Haran and Nachor. Avram and Nachor left Ur Kasdim, while Haran died in Ur Kasdim. As Rashi relates in 11:28, Haran was present when Avram Avinu was thrown into a fire because he believed in the Ribono Shel Olam. Haran said to himself, "If Avram wins this, I am on his side. If Nimrod wins this, I am on his team." When Avram was saved, Haran declared his belief in the Borei Olam and was thrown into the fire where he died. But what Haran praiseworthy or mistaken?

## Yeish Dorshin Lishvach

Yes, it is true that Haran was not on the level of Avram. But so what? Not everyone is on Avram Avinu's level. Avram was Makir Es Borei, he recognized the Creator. Haran did not. Haran needed a miracle for Avram to be saved and then he recognized his creator. So why was Haran killed?

The Kli Chemdah says that Haran died Al Kiddush Hashem, just as Rabbi Akiva died Al Kiddush Hashem. He is the first recorded person to die Al Kiddush Hashem. This is not derogatory towards Haran. It is saying that Haran was someone who died Al Kiddush Hashem. Why was he not saved? Throughout the generations, people have died Al Kiddush Hashem and have only been miraculously saved in a few cases. Avram was saved.

The Kli Chemdah brings a Medrash that Avram was saved because Bnei Yisrael had to come out of him. Yaakov Ashe Pa'deh Es Avraham. Avram had to be saved because he had to have a Yitzchok from whom Klal

Yisrael would come forth. But this is not to say that Haran did anything wrong, on the contrary.

And you see, we are descended from Haran. Haran left two daughters, Sarai and Milka. Sarai became Sarah and she married Avraham Avinu, so Klal Yisrael descended from Haran and Milka who had a descendant named Lot, and ultimately Rus and Moshiach descended from Milka who married Nachor. And so, according to the investigation of the Kli Chemdah, the death of Haran Yeish Dorshin Lishvach is something praiseworthy.

## Yeish Dorshin Lig'nai

There is also the more familiar approach, which is negative and says that Haran was in the wrong. When Avram was thrown into the Kivshan Ha'aish, dozens, probably hundreds of people were present. Haran stepped forward and said if Avram wins, I am with him, I believe in the Creator. There were many hundreds who saw the miracle of Avram being saved and it did not shake them in the least and they stayed with their Avodah Zora. Why is Haran worse?

I once saw in the Kuntras Chachmei Leiv a beautiful explanation in the name of the Kotzker. The Kotzker said that Avraham Avinu wanted a shidduch from Mai'artzi Umo'laditi, from Aram, where I am from, and not from Canaan.

The question is why. When Avram was in Ur Kasdim, they threw him into the fire. When Avram was in Canaan, they joined him and Avram was Megayeir Anashim and Sarai was Megayeir Es Ho'anashim. Why is Canaan worse for Klal Yisrael than Aram than Ur Kasdim?

According to the Kotzker, Avram Avinu wanted a people that would remain faithful to its commitments. A people that would believe in something through thick and thin. Not a people that bends in the wind. In Canaan he saw, he came, he offered them food and they are Megayeir. That is not a deep commitment. He fed them and they thanked him and he said, "Do not thank me, thank G-d. Oh, who is G-d?" And poof, they gave up their Avodah Zorah and believed in G-d. It was not a deep commitment and it did not last. In Ur Kasdim, they believed in Avodah Zorah. Avram was thrown into the fire and they still believed in Avodah Zorah.

To convince them that there is a Creator, Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad, you have to do a lot, but their personality is to be Am K'shei Oref, people who stick to their beliefs even when they are questioned. That is Klal Yisrael. Klal Yisrael does not want to be a people like Haran, who believe in Avodah Zorah and then watch a show where Avram is saved and now you believe in G-d. No! Dorshu L'gnai, that is not good.

When the Kotzker left his rebbi in Tamashov and went in search of a town where he could begin chassidus, he visited a number of towns where they were interested in him, but he did not go there. When he came to Kotzk, the Jews of Kotzk were Misnagdim and they came out and threw mud, dirt and stones at him and told him to go away. The Kotzker said, Ah! Dus Iz a Shtut, this is a city. Let us go here. This is where they feel strong in their faith. This is Klal Yisrael. Klal Yisrael believes strongly in its beliefs.

# Do You Want to Build an Ark?



**Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein**  
Chief Rabbi of South Africa

**K**ing Solomon famously said: “There is a season for everything, and there is a time for everything under the heaven.” (Kohelet 3:1). Sometimes we need time to introspect, reflect and draw inner strength. And sometimes we need to go out and engage and make an impact on the world...

The big question is: Why did G-d command Noah to build an Ark? Of course, the Ark saved Noah and his family, and all the species of animal life, from the great flood. But, G-d had all means at His disposal to achieve this; why did He specifically want Noah to construct an elaborate ship that took 120 years to build? Furthermore, as the Ramban points out, despite its size, the fact that representatives of the entire animal kingdom could fit in the Ark was a major miracle. Since G-d was performing miracles anyway, why did He want Noah to go to all of this trouble?

Rashi cites the Midrash Tanchuma, which explains that G-d chose this method to preserve humanity because He wanted to give everybody else a chance to repent and reverse the destruction. Of course, the 120 years it took to build the Ark gave people ample time to turn things around, but apart from this, the building of the Ark was a giant, eye-catching spectacle – and therefore an immediate conversation starter. And so the Ark was an elaborate communications platform from which Noah could engage with the world around him, encouraging people to return to their best selves and to mend a society that had become shockingly violent and corrupt. In the end, society remained as it was, and people did not grasp the opportunity the Ark provided.

The Dubna Maggid amplifies our question by addressing another one. If the purpose of the Ark was solely to save Noah and his family and the animals, why did G-d give specific instructions about when to enter and exit the Ark? Once the waters had subsided, and it was clear the flood was over and it was safe to venture out, why did G-d have to tell them to leave? Surely, by that point, the Ark had served its purpose and no further instruction was necessary? Says the Dubna Maggid, this indicates that the Ark had a higher purpose beyond the mere practical function of preserving the lives of its inhabitants.

What was that higher purpose? Rav Mordechai Gifter has a possible answer. He says the Ark's higher purpose was to create an environment pervaded with chessed, loving-kindness. Noah and his family spent virtually the entire duration of their time on the Ark looking after the animals, and so the entire focus of the Ark was chessed. The sheer scale of feeding and cleaning and caring is difficult to imagine. And there weren't many people to share the load. Rav Gifter explains that contained within the Ark was the kernel of the new human society which was to be established after the flood. Indeed, he says this value of loving-kindness is the foundation of any flourishing human society, and that G-d wanted to begin the new civilisation based on the kindness they had learned in the Ark.

According to Rashi, the Ark was essentially a platform to reach out to and engage with the world. For Rav Gifter, the Ark was an opportunity to look inwards, to build strength of character from within.

These two dimensions, the outer and inner, are in fact reflected in the different Torah mitzvot we perform. We have

mitzvot that are reflective and self-replenishing – prayer, for example, in which we turn inward, reconnecting with G-d and with our own spiritual essence. Learning Torah is another example in which we use our minds to understand the world from G-d's perspective, and realign the way we think about and relate to our world. These are all acts of withdrawal and renewal – of intellectual, emotional and spiritual replenishment. Through performing these mitzvot, we are essentially creating an Ark for ourselves.

But, we also have mitzvot that are outward-looking, which require us to engage with the people and the world around us. Most of the mitzvot “between man and his fellow” fall into this category. We are tasked with reaching out to others, with alleviating human pain – with, as the Talmud explains, comforting mourners, visiting the sick, burying the dead, clothing the naked. There is the mitzvah of tzedakah, which is about reaching out to the poor and providing them with the support they need to face life's challenges. There is the mitzvah of teaching Torah, of sharing G-d's wisdom with as many people as possible. And so we have this dual dynamic – in-reach and outreach, inner replenishment and external influence.

The Midrash on our parsha quotes the verse from Kohelet with which we began: “There is a season for everything, and there is a time for everything under the heaven.” The Midrash says there was a time to enter the Ark and there was a time to exit the Ark. In the context of what we have discussed, it means that there was a time to replenish, to nourish, to realign with G-d's values, and there was a time to go out and rebuild human civilisation.

*Continued on page 18*





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# Overcoming Challenging Times



Rabbi Shalom Rosner  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלְּךְ־נֹחַ: (בראשית ו:ט)  
These are the generations of Noach, Noach **was** a righteous man he was perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d. (Bereshit 6:9).

There are many *derashot* on the first *pasuk* of *parshat Noach*. Most relate to the term *tzaddik* (righteous) and *dorotav* (his generation) to determine whether Noach was a true righteous person or he was righteous only in comparison to his society. Let's focus on a different word in this *pasuk* – the word “היה” – was.

There is a Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 30:8) that states that the word היה (*was*) is used to depict five individuals in *Tanach*. Noach – Noach **was** a righteous man (Bereshit 6:9); Yosef – Yosef **was** seventeen years old (Bereshit 37:2); Moshe – Moshe **was** pasturing the flocks of Yitro (Shemot 3:1); Iyov – There **was** a man in the land of Uz whose name was Iyov (Iyov 1:1); and Mordechai – There was a Judean man in Shushan the capital, whose name **was** Mordechai (Esther 2:5).

The Midrash explains that each individual saw a “**new world**”. Noach witnessed the world being destroyed by a flood and then saw it being rebuilt. Yosef was enslaved and rose to serve as second to the King of Egypt. Moshe had to flee from Pharaoh and later witnessed the entire Egyptian army drown at Yam Suf. Iyov suffered terrible losses and eventually was blessed with being able to rebuild it. Finally, Mordechai was nearly hanged by Haman

and ultimately witnessed Haman being hanged on the very tree that was prepared for Mordechai.

Obviously, the Midrash is not just sharing some coincidental wordplay. There must be some deeper meaning for the use of the word “*hayah*” in connection with each of these individuals and the way they were able to perceive a “new world”. In his book “*Power of a Vort*”, Rabbi Yissachar Frand offers the following insight.

We witness two diverging approaches among those who suffer a tragedy. Some people are able to overcome a seemingly hopeless situation, while others become obsessed with their troubles, romanticize over how wonderful the past was and it becomes impossible for them to move on. Perhaps the lesson this Midrash is suggesting – lies in the word “*hayah*” – was. The key to being able to experience a “new world” is to let the past fade rather than harp on it. For example, it must have been very difficult for Noach to adapt to the new reality following his exit from the ark. There was not a soul to be found. Complete destruction - as what would transpire following a nuclear war. Noach did not sit and contemplate his glorious past, rather he let it go. He began to build his future - at the age of 601!

We witnessed this in our generation with people who survived the Holocaust. The Klausenberg Rebbe for example, lost his wife and eleven children, yet he was able to pick up the pieces, rebuild and establish a Hassidic dynasty with tens of thousands of followers. This was possible because he had the attitude of “*hayah*” – what happened in the past was terrible, but he was able to put it behind him and move forward. Again, this is not an easy task and we cannot judge anyone's reaction to experiencing a tragic event. Yet, in order to be able to rebuild, one has to put the past behind them and focus on building a brighter future.

The message of this Midrash should echo within each of us. No matter the difficulties and challenges we may encounter, we cannot allow ourselves to dwell on the past, rather we have to focus on what can be done to rebuild. Rav Soloveitchik suggests that when one experiences hardships he should not dwell on: “why did this happen to me” but rather – “what I am to do now”. May we be able to emulate these five individuals who rose from despair and were each successful at building a bright future.

Continued from page 14

Every day of our lives, we enter the Ark and we exit the Ark. We enter the Ark when we enter the shul and the Beit Midrash and even our homes, and when we take in Shabbat and enter a haven

of stillness and rest. Inside the Ark, we replenish and realign, and then – drawing on this renewed energy, on this renewed clarity and realignment – we emerge to impact, to influence, to engage with the

world around us, making it into a better place.

Finding that balance – being attuned to our two modes of existence – is the key to living a meaningful life.

# Noach: Rays of Light and Hope



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Noach*, we meet fascinating, passive-to-a-fault, righteous-in-his-times, simple-with-G-d, stunningly-quiet, industrious Noach. Noach was a simple man, yet compared to the people of his times, the *Dor Ha'Mabul* (generation of the Deluge) – who were steeped in idolatry, immorality, and robbery, he was a saint.

Though the whole world was to be washed away, Noach, Na'ama, their three sons and three daughters-in-law would be saved as they spent a year floating in a custom built Ark, sailing on high waters, taking care of scores of animals and beasts.

When the flood waters finally subsided, and it was safe for Noach to leave the Ark – and once again, Noach did as G-d commanded him to do, and dutifully left the Ark according to the Divine command – Noach comes face to face with a world destroyed. Neighbors, towns, villages, huts, homes, farms, fields, man, beast, animals... It has all been washed away.

It is up to Noach and Na'ama, Shem, Cham, Yafes and their wives, to rebuild a destroyed world.

As a promise that He would never again destroy the entire world with flood waters, Hashem shows Noach a sign:

אֶת-קִשְׁתִּי, נֹתַתִּי בְעָנָן; וְהִיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית, בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ –

*I have set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth;*

וְהָיָה, בְּעָנָן יִבֶּן עָלַי הָאָרֶץ, וְנִרְאָתָה הַקִּשְׁת, בְּעָנָן –  
*And it shall be that when I cloud the earth with a cloud, I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living being among all flesh, and the water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh* (Bereishis 9:13-15).

What is the significance of the rainbow-post-flood as a sign of G-d's covenant?

Rav Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, "Although the Torah describes Noach as righteous, G-d did not establish a covenant with him and his descendants as he later did with Avraham. Noach's shortcoming was that he did not pray for his contemporaries destined to die in the flood, since he could not perceive the potential for good within them. *Noach did not see the potential within man*. Noach's behavior contrasts with Avraham's, who interceded on behalf of Sodom. After the flood, Noach was shown the rainbow within the cloud to demonstrate that even though it may appear that certain corrupt souls may have no potential for good, this is untrue. G-d revealed the rainbow to Noach as an object lesson; *within every dark cloud there is a possibility of seeing a rainbow full of color.*"

Noach was a good man, but he was unable to see the potential in every human being. Even a sinner can repent and return; even a dark situation can be made light; even tragedy can lead to redemption and rebuilding. Noach did not understand this and so, though he was righteous in his times, he was not the one to establish the *Umah Yisraelis* (Jewish nation).

We must be a people who strive to always see the good, the light, the hope, the beauty of the proverbial rainbow – in ourselves, in those around us, in the world at large (though, admittedly, at times this is difficult), and ultimately, in the hand of G-d and the blessings He bestows upon us.

King David asks: מִי-הָאִישׁ, הַהֹפֵךְ חַיִּים; אֹהֵב – *Who is the man who desires life, who loves days?* And he answers with life-changing advice: לְרֹאֵת טוֹב – *It is he who strives to always see the good.*

When we are able to find the symbolic rainbow in every dark cloud, we will always be able to grow from there.

One Shabbos morning, when R' Avraham Yitzchak Ha'Kohen Kook zt'l, was chief rabbi of Jaffa, a man stepped up to the *bimah*, interrupted the Torah reading, and declared, "At this very moment, Shmuel the cobbler is working in his shop, desecrating Shabbos!"

R' Kook immediately approached the *bimah*, silenced the angry crowd, and said, "At the conclusion of prayers, we will all go to Shmuel's shop, but only on condition that everyone follows my orders and acts as I do."

At the end of davening, the entire congregation followed R' Kook down the road into the main part of the city. When they reached the cobbler's shop, R' Kook approached Shmuel and said, "Good Shabbos, Reb Shmuel," and continued on his way. Then, one by one, all the members of the Shul did the same.

After the procession, Shmuel locked his store and went directly to Rav Kook's home. "I have eight children at home," he explained, "and I simply do not earn enough money to support them. Therefore, I am forced to work on Shabbos."

R' Kook, in conjunction with the communal board, helped improve the cobbler's financial situation; as a result, Shmuel never worked on Shabbos again.

When you see the rainbow, says Hashem, you shall know that in every single darkness, there is some light! Seek and you shall find. For who is the man who desires life and loves days? He who has the wisdom, sensitivity, faith and love to find the bow of light in the darkness.

May we all be so worthy to find the קִשְׁת in every עָנָן that comes our way.

# Sifrei Toladot - The Backbone of Sefer Breishit



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**  
Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

**T**he **Mabul** and **Migdal Bavel** are undoubtedly the two primary stories in this week's Parsha. However, each of these two stories is preceded by a seemingly irrelevant genealogical record. Why does Sefer Breishit devote so much attention to "sifrei toladot" (list of genealogies)?

Our basic assumption in our study of Chumash is that each "sefer" features a unique theme etc.

In fact, surprising as it may sound, even the story of Gan Eden is first introduced by "toladot": "These are the **toladot** of the heavens & earth..."

Although this is rarely noticed, the **sifrei toldot** actually create the **framework** of Sefer Breishit! This pattern continues until the very end of Sefer Breishit,

"Toladot" is derived from the Hebrew word "vlad," child. Therefore, "aylehtoldot" should be translated as, "these are the children of..."

But this explanation calls into question the first instance of the word "toldot" - i.e. **toldot shamayim v'aretz**. How do the heavens and earth have 'children'?

The answer to this question is both meaningful and fundamental to our understanding of the nature of man. Recall that the first chapter of Breishit tells of G-d's creation of **shamayim v'aretz** from 'nothing'. The first instance of the word "toldot" appears right in the very next chapter: "eylehtoldot ha'shamayim v'ha'aretz b'hibaram..."

What are the **toladot** of **shamayim** and **aretz** - what are the children of heaven and earth? If we follow the progressive pattern of Sefer Breishit, then "toldot shamayim v'aretz" **must** be referring to **Adam ha'Rishon**. Man is, in essence, the offspring of **shamayim** and **aretz**, formed

and fashioned by the union of heaven and earth. In other words, even though **shamayim** and **aretz** appear to have been divided in the first six days of Creation, it seems as though **man** in Gan Eden reflects the possibility of a connection between them! Man embodies the reunification of **shamayim** and **aretz**, as both elements are contained within him.

The next set of **toladot** are the descendants of **Adam** until Noach, followed by the **toladot** of Noach, etc. This pattern continues through the very end of Sefer Breishit.

## Shem & Shem Hashem

Recall that each general topic is introduced by a set of "toladot." These units also share common endings. Namely, each unit concludes with an event relating in some way to the concept of "shem Hashem."

Let's begin with our first unit, the story of Adam ha'rishon. This section closes with a very peculiar and enigmatic pasuk: "And also Shet gave birth to a son and called him Enosh, then he 'began' to call out in the Name of G-d [az huchal likro b'shem Hashem]..."

No matter how we explain the difficult term "huchal," it is clear that G-d intended for man to 'call out in His Name.' Significantly, as mentioned, this pasuk concludes the section which began in 2:4 with the story of Gan Eden. Even though man was banished from Gan Eden and Kayin was punished for murder, G-d still has expectations of mankind - that they search for G-d, that they 'call out in His Name.'

Despite this high expectation, the next series of "toladot," which leads into the story of the **Mabul**, shows that man's behavior fell far short of G-d's hope. Ultimately, G-d decides to destroy His creation and start all over again with Noach. This unit concludes with a special

set of mitzvot for Bnei Noach, a covenant, and finally with the story of Noach's intoxication.

And in this final story of the unit we find once again a reference to shem Hashem. After cursing Canaan for his disrespect towards his father, Noach blesses his son Shem: "Blessed be G-d, the Lord of **Shem**..."

Noach blesses Shem in the hope that he and his descendants will indeed fulfill this goal. Once again, however, the next generation fails. Chapter 10 introduces the next unit beginning with "toladot," this time the development of the seventy nations from the children of Shem, Cham, and Yefet. As do the two preceding units, this section concludes with a story about shem - the story of Migdal Bavel. Only this time it's the wrong **shem**!

## Migdal Bavel

When reading the first four psukim of the story of "migdal Bavel," it is hard to pinpoint one specific sin: "Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words. And as they traveled from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another: Come, **let us** make bricks and burn them hard... And they said, Come **let us** build **us** a city and a tower with its top in the sky, **and we will make a name for ourselves** - v'naaseh lanu **shem** - lest **we** shall be scattered all over the world. Then G-d came down to see..."

From a cursory reading, it is not clear what was so terrible about this generation. After all, is achieving 'achdut' (unity) not a laudatory goal? Furthermore, the investment of human ingenuity into an industrial revolution, the development of man-made building materials and the manufacturing of bricks from clay seem to reflect the positive advancement of society and culture. What's wrong with

*Continued on next page*

# Noah's Ark and the Yeshiva



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

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**W**e find in Humash two different structures that G-d commanded to build: Noah's ark, and the Mishkan (Tabernacle) in the wilderness. Rav Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980) noted that there is a basic, fundamental difference between these two structures. One was built for protection, and the other for advancement. Noah had to build the Teba to protect himself and his family from the destructive floodwaters which ravaged the Earth and killed its sinful inhabitants. The Mishkan, by contrast, was a place where Beneh Yisrael could go to elevate themselves, rise to a higher level of spirituality and strengthen their connection to Hashem. This structure served a generation that was on the highest spiritual plane. This generation experienced miracles and stood at Mount Sinai when G-d gave the Torah. They learned from Moshe Rabbenu, and they lived a pure existence without any exposure to foreign influences. Unlike Noah entering the Teba, those who entered the Mishkan were not escaping anything. They were going to develop their souls and enhance their relationship to G-d.

Rav Hutner noted that the difference between these two structures is, essentially, the difference between the Yeshivot of yesteryear and the Yeshivot of today. In the Old World, whether it was in Europe, Syria or elsewhere, Jews lived in purity and devotion to G-d. Their communities were devout and protected from negative spiritual influences. The boys who went to Yeshiva were like those who went to the Mishkan, aspiring to reach towering heights. In our generation, however, we live in an immoral society whose values and culture penetrate into our lives at every turn. Our communities, unlike those of earlier generations, are exposed to the spiritually hostile influences of the surrounding society. And thus the Yeshiva in our time serves not only as a Mishkan, but, primarily, as a Teba, a source of protection. It allows our children to spend their formative years in a spiritually safe environment, shielded from the corrosive influences of contemporary society.

Hence, unlike in generations past, Yeshiva education is not an option, but a vital necessity. We cannot imagine Noah trying to survive the flood outside the Teba. By the same token, it is impossible to expect impressionable young souls to survive the

"flood" of immorality and decadence that has overtaken the world in our time if they remain outside the insular, protective framework of the Yeshiva.

This is a vital message for not only parents, but also educators. The Hazon Ish (Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953) cautioned that in our times, the decision to expel a student from Yeshiva requires a 23-member Bet Din. According to Halacha, life-and-death cases cannot be brought before a standard, three-member court; they require the adjudication of 23 expert judges. In our day and age, the Hazon Ish said, expelling a student is a matter of spiritual life and death. This is not a decision that may be made on a whim.

Unfortunately, many schools today are so caught up with preserving their reputations that they forget this vital message. Administrators must understand that in our society, where an expelled student could end up in a street or in public school, expulsion can very well become a spiritual death sentence. Such decisions must be made with the utmost caution and discretion, and with a keen awareness of the vital protective role that today's Yeshivot fill.

*Continued from previous page*

building a city and a tower? Why was G-d so incensed, to the point that He decided to immediately stop this construction project and disperse mankind?

Chazal's criticism of this generation focuses on its antagonistic attitude towards G-d. One key phrase in the Torah's depiction of the tower's purpose reflects the egocentric nature of this generation: "v'naase lanu shem" [we shall make a name for ourselves].

Rather than devoting themselves to the **Name of G-d**, this generation removes Him from the picture altogether. The builders of the tower united for the unholy purpose of glorifying man's dominion and power.

Although this generation's behavior is far better than that of the generation of the Flood, G-d was still disappointed, as what emerged was an anthropocentric society (i.e. man in the center), rather than the

desired and anticipated theocentric one (i.e. G-d in the center). Their primary aim was to 'make a name' for themselves, **not** for G-d. Once again, G-d's hope that man would "korey b'shem Hashem" never materialized. He thus found it necessary to 'scatter' mankind, most probably in the hope that the next time the nations gather it would be for a more ideal purpose.



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# Fur Coats and Fires



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

The first pasuk in this week's parsha says "אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ" "צְדִיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו" "These are the generations of Noach, Noach was a pure Tzadik in his generations." Rashi quotes two opinions to explain why the word "בְּדֹרֹתָיו" is inserted, seemingly unnecessarily, into the pasuk. The second and most difficult explanation is that "In his own generation, he was a Tzadik. But had he lived in the generation of Avraham Avinu, he would have been considered nothing." Generally speaking, it is not a good idea to compare people, especially Tzadikim. Considering the fact that the Torah itself testifies that Noach was a Tzadik, why do Chazal go out of their way to say something negative about him?!

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum, the Yismach Moshe, offers an explanation of the pasuk in parshas Bereishis (1:24), "let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness." Chazal would have been saved from much aggravation throughout history if Hashem had simply said "I shall make man" instead of "let us make man."

The Yismach Moshe gives an amazing answer by first asking why Hashem says "And Hashem saw that it was good" with regard to everything that He created except for man. He answers that everything else was created in a state of שלימות, perfection. The Maharal explains that the word for animal in Hebrew, בהמה, means "בה, מה," "it is what it is." Man, however, was not created to be static. He was not created in a state of שלימות like the rest of creation. Instead, he was created להשתלם, to perfect himself and make himself good. Man's creation, in and of itself, does not constitute his perfection.

The Yismach Moshe uses this idea to explain the meaning of the pasuk "נַעֲשֶׂה"

אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ." Hashem says to each and every one of us: "Let us, you and Me, make man. We will be partners in your creation. I will give you the things you need and you will make your own "בְּיָ-טוֹב," you will make yourself good."

We can also expand on the Yismach Moshe's explanation in the following way: Just as Hashem created mankind generally, He tells man: "Let us be partners in the creation of mankind. You must not only perfect yourself, but also create mankind." But how can man be a partner in the creation of mankind?

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 99b) says "Reish Lakish says: When someone teaches another man's child Torah, the Torah considers it as if he created him." When one helps another person attain שלימות, he is actually a partner with Hashem in the creation of that person. The Tosefta in Horios (2:7) teaches us the same thing in such a beautiful way: "When anyone brings one creature under the wings of the Divine Presence, it is considered as if he created him, formed him, and brought him into the world."

Similarly, the Koznitzer Magid, Rav Yisroel Hauptstein, explains the pasuk in Iyov 5:7 "כִּי אָדָם לַעֲמַל יוֹלֵד" "man was created to work hard," in a novel way. He says that the word "לַעֲמַל" stands for the words "לַלְמֹד עַל מַנַּח לְלַמֵּד," "to learn in order to teach." In other words, on the level of drush, the pasuk means man was created in order to teach others Torah, and thereby to create them as well.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin uses a pasuk to support the idea that when someone helps another person להשתלם, he actually creates him. It quotes the pasuk in Bereishis 12:5 "the souls that [Avraham and Sarai] made in Charan." Because Avraham

and Sarai taught those people Torah and brought them under the wings of the Divine Presence, the Torah says that they "made" them.

Perhaps this is why Chazal went out of their way to compare Avraham to Noach. Noach paskened like the Yismach Moshe. He heard Hashem saying to him: "נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם, you and I will be partners in turning you into what man was meant to become, one who has attained שלימות." And Noach did it. He attained שלימות. But in order to show that the purpose of man is not only to perfect himself, but to help others attain perfection as well, Chazal compared Noach to Avraham to show that there is no comparison between two people if one lives only to improve himself and the other lives to improve the lot of the world. A person cannot achieve personal perfection if he ignores the imperfections of others.

There is a Yiddish term used to describe Noach. It is said that he was a "צדיק אין פעלן," a "tzadik in a fur coat." The world is cold and needs warmth. Noach was a tzadik that responded by wearing a fur coat so that at least he would be warm. But the other type of tzadik sees that people are cold so he starts lighting ovens and fires to warm people up. Avraham Avinu saw that the world was far from the warmth of a connection to the Ribono Shel Olam. He therefore made fires and warmed up the whole world and by doing that, he "made souls."

We should not only strive to be people who live only for ourselves. We must work for the perfection of the people around us as well. It is not enough to sit as a "צדיק אין פעלן."

# The Genesis Of Recovery



Rabbi YY Jacobson  
TheYeshiva.net

One of the loveliest stories told by the Chassidic master Rabbi Nachman of Breslov goes like this:

A king was informed by his chief minister that there had been a blight on the crops that year. They were affected so greatly that anyone eating the grain would become insane. “But,” said the minister, “there is no need for us to worry. I have set aside enough grain from last year’s harvest for the both of us that will last until the harvest of the following year.”

The king shook his head. “No,” he said. “I will not allow myself any privileges other than those shared by my subjects.”

“We shall eat of the same grain,” the king continued, “and we shall both go insane together with the rest of the population. But here is what we shall do. You and I will mark our foreheads with an indelible imprint so that when we go insane, I will look at you and you will look at me and we will know we are insane.”

Some time ago I encountered a woman. She was particularly kind and compassionate, but I noticed that she never smiled; a steady paleness and gloom seemed to settle across her face all the time.

When I asked her about it, she related to me that when she was three, her father became an alcoholic. He would come home every evening drunk and knock her head against the brick wall in the kitchen.

Her mother would stand nearby silently, covering her eyes with her hands. “When dad would conclude with the beating,” the woman related to me, “Mom would tell him, ‘Do you have to do it so hard?’”

Recovery is a miracle. In the face of severe physical or mental abuse, for a person to rehabilitate himself and reclaim his lost innocence and zest for life is nothing short of a miracle.

The ability for us to perform this miracle in our lives was sewn into the fabric of our existence as a result of the flood described in this week’s Torah portion, which occurred, according to the Jewish tradition, in the year 1656 after creation (2105 BCE).

“And G-d said to Noach: The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence; behold, I shall destroy them.” Thereafter, a forty-day-long titanic shower descended from heaven and flooded the earth, putting an end to all of its inhabitants.

Growing up in Yeshiva and learning this story each year, I could never comprehend how G-d could actually wipe out an entire world because of its wrongdoings. Even G-d Himself apparently came to the same conclusion after the flood. The Torah relates how following the flood G-d vowed that “I will never again curse the earth because of man; neither will I again smite everything living, as I have done. All days of the earth, the seasons for seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall never cease.” What changed?

Also, why from all ways to destroy civilization, did G-d choose the flood?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explained the tragic tale of the flood in this fashion:

The world ought to be a spiritual and G-dly place and man ought to be a spiritual, sacred creature. This is their ultimate purpose and destiny. But during the millennium preceding the flood, the

human race defined itself exclusively as a beastly and criminal race. Man corrupted himself and his environment so severely that healing was no longer possible. The world turned into an unredeemable hell. Destruction was inevitable, a natural consequence of ten centuries flooded with abuse and evil.

Is this not the tragic consequence of all addiction? After decades of frying your brain day after day with alcohol, drugs or other destructive substances or behaviors, you finally manage to kill the last vestige of your soul and your rationality. At this point, healing is not possible anymore. Your mind loses its last ounce of control over your life and you just watch yourself wither away and die.

During the time of Noach, man and his world did not yet possess the potential for rehabilitation and self-renewal. Why? Because the spirituality and holiness accessible to the world during the pre-flood era was a gift from above and not intrinsic to the very chemistry of humanity. Like a student who grasps all of the profound teachings of his mentor, but lacks the ability to conceive of an original thought, man was a recipient of the light, but did not own the light. Therefore, as long as man was a loyal pupil of G-d, he remained connected to the source of life. Once man rejected G-d, his existence became valueless and purposeless.

The rains of the flood, described in Kabbalah as “a cosmic Mikvah,” did not only destroy an unsalvageable world; they also cleansed it and purified it, leaving in their wake a new world with a new nature. The mighty waters that were emitted from heaven impregnated the truths of spirituality and G-dliness into the very fabric of the earth. Like a pupil who had been

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# Noach: Sweet Talk



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

One year, following the busy holiday period, Rebbe Yitzchak Luria, zy'a, 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 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, on the following year their prayers rose to an even greater level.

■ ■ ■

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

Hashem praises Noach 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 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. Rabbi Akiva then went before the ark and cried out:

"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

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# Above and Beyond

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

International lecturer and curriculum developer

**F**or forty days the waters of the Great Flood surged over the earth and obliterated every living thing, only Noach survived, “*vayishaer ach Noach*” (Bereisheet 7:23). The word *ach*, only, indicates a limitation. What is the hindrance and how can we make it relevant in the here and now?

Rashi notes that Noach survived the flood in a diminutive state. Chazal teach that one day Noach delayed the lion’s feeding time; as Noach approached with the lion’s food, the hungry lion struck and injured Noach. How are we to understand this? Did Noach deserve such an extreme punishment simply because he was a few minutes late to the extent that he became a *bal mum* and could not serve as a Kohen after the flood?

Chazal teach us that all those who are merciful to others, Hashem has mercy on them; to those who are unmerciful, Hashem does not show mercy. The *dor hamabul* was involved in stealing and corruption. They were thus unworthy of Divine mercy. It was therefore critical for Noach to especially display acts of

kindness and mercy to allow Hashem’s benevolence and grace to save him from the flood. The Siftei Chayim adds that Noach specifically needed to be involved in feeding the animals day and night so that he was a constant conduit of *chesed* to facilitate his salvation. Noach and his family also had to learn the nature of each animal and be attuned to their specific needs. Therefore, notes Lev Eliyahu, one lapse in this pivotal *chesed*, coming late to feed the lion, resulted in the intense *din* to affect Noach is this powerful way. The channels of *chesed* had to be continuous to protect him from the raging judgment found in the world at that time. Rav Lopian exhorts all of us to be involved in unceasing *chesed* as a safeguard against the ailments of the world around us. One great act of *chesed* each of us can perform he suggests, is to daven for others. Think about those who need health, finances, general salvation, and ultimate redemption each time we say the Shemone Esrei.

Rav Druck in *Aish Tamid* explains that the lion was intimating to Noach that if he didn’t care for him properly, all future lions were in danger. As this was the

last surviving lion, Noach had a greater responsibility. The Ohel Moshe adds that in times of crises, one must push above and beyond; the expectations for each of us are higher.

Ba’al Haturim notes that the double limitation found in our *passuk* is coming to add that indeed one other person survived, the giant Og. Targum Yonatan learns that he perched himself on the edge of the Ark and Noach made a hole to feed him daily. Rav Zaidel Epstein in *Sefer He’arot* explains that Og deserved to be saved for a future kindness – telling Avraham Avinu that Lot was taken captive. Since the *middah* of *chesed* saved Noach and his family from the flood, the *middah* of *chesed* saved Og as well. This is alluded to in that his mouth was the only part that was connected to the inside of the ark (as he received food from Noach), the very mouth that would later be a medium of kindness.

“*Olam chesed yibaneh*”, the world was built on kindness and was rebuilt with kindness. Let us work on building our individual worlds with kindness as well.

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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 *סְדִינָה 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 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 after-glow 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!

# Influencers



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

Chazal interpret “Noach was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age”: “Some call for reproof, and there are those who call for praise.” Some of our Rabbis explain it to his credit: he was righteous even in his generation; it follows that had he lived in a generation of righteous people he would have been even more righteous owing to the force of good example. Others, however, explain it to his discredit: in comparison with his own generation, he was accounted righteous, but had he lived in the generation of Abraham he would have been accounted as of no importance.

And only the “lips of Chazal”, with excellent insight, understand that according to both interpretations, Noach must be discredited...

On the one hand, they will say to him: only in your generation you are considered righteous, and on the other hand, they will say to him: you have enormous potential, too bad it could not be realized... Some interpret it as a reproach and some interpret it, well, as a reproach...

So what does the Torah want to tell us! The Torah that does not utter a single word of slander, the Torah that “crosses out eight letters” and does not write “of the unclean beast” but when “of the beast that is not pure,” will this Torah condemn Noah?



**In a polluted world, not only make sure the environment is clean, but most importantly, make sure you stay clean yourself, because if you do not influence your generation, you will be influenced by your generation.**

Obviously, it is important that the Torah teaches in its lessons the most important thing: the generation, the environment in which we live has a decisive influence. It is possible to be an innocent tzaddik, but the influence of the environment has the power of an overwhelming flood.

So what do we do?

First, we must understand that G-d measures us in relation to the generation in which we live. To be modest today is to be righteous in my generation, to preserve family values is to be righteous in my generation, and to say Birkot Hashachar after waking the children and before going to work is to be righteous in my generation. Install this “be righteous in my generation” filter.

And that's not enough.

The Torah requires Noach to do what he is most uncomfortable with, it tells him: if the environment has a decisive influence, you will be an environment. If “social media is our lips,” you will be a social media influencer. In a polluted world, not only make sure the environment is clean, but most importantly, make sure you stay clean yourself, because if you do not influence your generation, you will be influenced by your generation.

And how hard it is for the humble. And how hard it is for people to step out of line and make a difference. And how easy it is to look at the “skylight,” also known as the screen, and wait for the light to come in as through a window. And how difficult it is to decide that I am the window, that I am the good stone, not waiting for the light to pass through it, but being the one who brings new light into the world myself. To be a good stone, a milestone in my generation.

If in the “old world” it was possible not to influence and not to be influenced, from the moment the screen entered our sphere it is impossible to stay in our “comfortable (in Hebrew, *noach*) area”.

Go vote for the world so that the world does not vote for you. It is hard, it does not rest, it seems so unnecessary to do it for the fifth time, but those who do not vote are affected and those who vote influence.

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trained by his mentor to think on his own, humanity in the post-flood era absorbed the goodness and harmony of its creator within its very structure. From now on, even if man would alienate himself entirely from his Divine source, he could

always recreate himself through the light engraved in the depth of his being.

The flood granted our world the gift and the miracle of recovery. Even in the face of the most horrific abuse, we retain within ourselves a sacred space, an untouchable

innocence, from which we can always experience the wonder of rebirth. Though insanity – in all of its forms – may pervade our lives, our souls preserve a memory of a sane world, a world filled with innocence, love, and inner security.

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin  
balashon.com

After the flood, G-d promises Noach that he will never destroy the earth again. As part of this promise, he ensures that the times and seasons will remain as they were:

עד כל־ימי האָרץ זָרע וְקָצִיר וְקוֹר וְחֹם וְקִיץ וְחֹרֶף וַיּוֹם וְלַיְלָה לֹא יִשְׁבְּחוּ:

“So long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” (Bereshit 8:22)

The first three of these pairs refer to agricultural seasons. The Daat Mikra commentary notes that all four pairs relate to times that people work the land that will no longer be cursed.

The first two pairs, “seedtime and harvest” and “cold and heat,” cover many months, perhaps the entire year. However, the last pair, “summer and winter,” applies to specific seasons within the year.

The word for summer, קִיץ, refers to the period in the summer when the ripe figs are harvested. According to some scholars, this is the origin of the word – from the root קָצַץ, “to cut (down).”

The word חֹרֶף, translated here as “winter,” is more complicated. While that is the meaning in modern Hebrew, linguists point out that the original meaning of חֹרֶף was “autumn,” specifically the period of the early winter rains. This is seen in the Arabic word for autumn, *kharif*, and in the use of the root חָרַף as “early” in Iyov 29:4 - בְּיָמַי חָרַפִּי - “in my early days.”

So what of today’s Hebrew word for autumn – סָתָף? It only appears once in the Tanakh:

כִּי־הִנֵּה הַסֶּתֶף עָבַר הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף הַלֵּךְ לוֹ

“For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone.” (Shir HaShirim 2:11)

The surrounding verses are discussing the beauty of the spring, and from its

context it is clear that סָתָף is referring to winter, not autumn. However, in the Aramaic translation to Bereshit 8:22, Onkelos translates חֹרֶף as סָתָף. Perhaps this led to the eventual confusion between the two seasons, with סָתָף eventually coming to precede חֹרֶף.

Having already discussed the other modern names for seasons, what about the Hebrew word for spring, אָבִיב? Like קִיץ, it also refers to a particular plant, this time barley. We see this in the plague of hail:

כִּי הִשְׁעֵרָה אָבִיב

“...the barley was ripe” (Shemot 9:31)

This crop gave its name to the month of Nissan (הַיּוֹם אֲתֶם יֹצְאִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב) - Shemot 13:4), and then eventually to the entire season of spring.

## Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh  
Mizrachi Melbourne

My grandfather’s name has the same letters as mine, but in the reverse order.  
We both appear in the Parsha. Who are we?

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

Noach 10:22-23

שׁוֹם וְעֵשׂוּ וְיִזְבֵּן וְיִזְבֵּן וְיִזְבֵּן

שׁוֹם וְעֵשׂוּ וְיִזְבֵּן וְיִזְבֵּן וְיִזְבֵּן

Shem & MUSH (in the Hebrew of course)



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