

Good Shabbos, everyone.

Mazel Tov to Dr. Joel and Sharlene Pleeter on Binyamin's *aufruf* this Shabbos, and his upcoming marriage to Ilana Ram, daughter of Ben and Shira Ram. Mazel Tov also to his grandparents, Bennett and Bernice Pleeter, Dr. Julian and Barbara Goldberg, Jeff and Diane Ram, and Rabbi Levi and Malka Finkelstein. May Binyamin and Ilana be *zoche* to build a *bayis ne-eman b'Yisrael!*

Mazel Tov to Noam Wiener on his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. Mazel Tov to his parents, Jordan and Chana Leah Wiener, and to his grandparents, Jacob and Ruth Wiener, and the entire family.

Mazel Tov to Michael Tzvi Rosenfeld on his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. Mazel Tov to his parents, Moshe and Gitty Rosenfeld, and to his grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Moshe Preiser, and the entire family.

Thank you to the *drasha* sponsors:

- Barry and Barbara Bass, in memory of Barry's mother, Dorothy Bass, a'h, whose 71st *yahrtzeit* is the 6th of Cheshvan. May her *neshama* have an *aliya*.
- Amalia and Gary Honick, in memory of Gary's mother, Bernice Honick, a'h, whose *yahrtzeit* was on the 1st of Cheshvan. May her *neshama* have an *aliya*.
- Chaim and Eleanor Leventhal, in honor of the upcoming wedding of their daughter, Captain Dr. Devora Bracha Leventhal, to Moshe Stauber. Mazel Tov! May they be *zoche* to build a *bayis ne-eman b'Yisrael!*
 - They are also sponsoring as a *zechus* for a *refuah shlaima* for Chaim Gavriel ben Esther Chaya. May he have a *refuah shleima*.

May all the sponsors be rewarded for their support of the shul with *bracha*, *hatzlacha*, and good health.

The **Mishna in Sanhedrin 37a** teaches that Adam was created alone to teach us the power and influence, and the responsibility of the individual.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף לו עמוד א: לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא.

From the example of Adam HaRishon, we learn that each one of us, every individual, can have a profound effect on the world. The decisions that we make affect not only ourselves, but also the world around us, as well as future generations. Adam sinned, and humanity would pay the price forever...forever banished from Gan Eden and destined to have a finite lifespan and eventually die.

At the end of last week's Parsha, we saw that mankind, as a whole, was sinning. Hashem decided to wipe them out and to start over. Yet, one man emerged from this group of sinners. One man deserved to be saved and to be given the responsibility of being the father of a new mankind, a new Adam as it were.

בראשית פרק ו: (ז) ויאמר ה' אמצה את האדם אשר בראתי מעל פני האדמה מאדם עד בהמה עד רמש ועד עוף השמים כי נחמתי כי עשיתם: (ח) ונח מצא חן בעיני ה':

Our Parsha begins by introducing Noah as that righteous man and describes his virtues in detail.

בראשית פרק ו פסוק ט: אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתו את האלהים התהלך נח:

The plain understanding of the *pasuk* is that Noah **was indeed** a *tzadik*, a righteous man; he was *tamim*, whole; and he walked with God. This informs us why he was chosen to be saved.

The **Radak** confirms this apparent explanation.

רד"ק בראשית פרק ו פסוק ט: צדיק – שהיו מעשיו בצדק הפך אנשי דורו שהיו אנשי חס:

Noach withstood incredible peer pressure and stayed true to his values. He is a hero—we are all here because of him...we are all descended from him.

Yet for some reason, Chazal are quick to criticize Noach. On the same *pasuk* that the Radak understands as purely praising Noach, **Rashi** offers an opposite interpretation from Chazal:

רש"י בראשית פרק ו פסוק ט: בדורותיו – יש מרבתינו דורשים אותו לשבח, כל שכן שאלו היה בדור צדיקים היה צדיק יותר, ויש שדורשים אותו לגנאי, לפי דורו היה צדיק, ואלו היה בדורו של אברהם לא היה נחשב לכלום:

In his generation, Noach was a *tzadik*, but in Avraham's generation, he would have been **insignificant**.

רש"י בראשית פרק ו: את האלקים התהלך נח - ובאברהם הוא אומר (יו א) התהלך לפני, (כד מ) אשר התהלכתי לפניו, נח היה צריך סעד לתומכו, אבל אברהם היה מתחזק ומהלך בצדקו מאלי:

Rashi cites the statement that Noach walked with God, but Avraham walked ahead of God. Thus, Noach was not as great as Avraham Avinu

Another **Medrash** compares Noach to Moshe Rabbeinu, stating that Moshe was greater than Noach. בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשת נח פרשה לו: אמר רבי ברכיה חביב משה מנח, נח משנקרא איש צדיק נקרא איש אדמה, אבל משה משנקרא איש מצרי נקרא איש האלקים,

But why compare Noach with Avraham and Moshe? Shouldn't everyone be judged based on his own accomplishments, in his own time and context? The **Mishna in Rosh Hashana** states that יפתח בדורו כשמואל בדורו, each generation is considered independently.

טעם ודעת (הר' משה שטרנבוך) עמ' כ"ט ונח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו (ו, ט)

במדרש "יש מרבתינו דורשים אותו לשבח, כל שכן שאילו היה בדור צדיקים היה צדיק יותר, ויש שדורשים אותו לגנאי, לפי דורו היה צדיק, ואילו היה בדורו של אברהם לא היה נחשב לכלום." וכבר תמהו למה לן לגנות נח שבדור אחר לא היה צדיק, והלוא צדיק היה בדורו וראוי לשבח על כך. ונראה שנח היה צדיק גם בדור של צדיקים, וכל שכן בדור של רשעים, ורק בדורו של אברהם לא היה נחשב לכלום, וכמבואר במדרש בדורו של אברהם ולא כתיב בדור צדיקים כהמדרש הקודם. שאברהם דרש חסד, והיינו להתחסד גם ברוחניות ולפעול אצל אחרים לקרבם לשכינה, וכזה נח לא היה נחשב לגלום בדור אברהם, שלא מסר נפשו להתחסד כאברהם להיטיב לאחרים, ואם כן בצדקתו נח הגיע לשיא המדרגה, אבל גנאי הוא לו שלא נקט במידת החסד. . .

Rav Moshe Shternbach, in his sefer *Taam V'daas*, writes that Chazal did not mean to say that Noach was not considered a *tzadik*. Of course, if he had been in a generation of *tzadikim*, he would still have been important. Chazal specifically compared Noach with Avraham and Moshe...because they excelled in the very specific trait in which Noach failed. As great as he was in other areas, Noach failed to **influence those around him**. The accomplishments of Avraham and Moshe highlight Noach's shortcoming in this regard.

The Talmud (**Yoma 35b**) teaches us that one person's accomplishments can serve to show others what they can accomplish in their own lives.

מסכת יומא לה:ב נמצא, הלל מחייב את העניים, רבי אלעזר בן חרסום מחייב את העשירים, יוסף מחייב את הרשעים.

The lives of Avraham Avinu and Moshe show us what great success can be achieved if a person makes it a priority to reach out and influence others. And by their criticism of Noach, Chazal are teaching us that Noach, too, could have inspired his generation. The tragedy of the flood, and its impact, far beyond what anyone will ever know, highlight a major lesson in Sefer Bereishis. Breishis is not just an account of God's creation of the world. It is also a book that teaches us that man as well creates reality and that man's sphere of influence can extend far beyond himself.

The **Sforno** points out that, unlike Avraham and Moshe, Noach didn't inspire others to change. He writes that even Noach's own family was not inspired to follow his example.

ספורנו בראשית פרק ו: (ח) ונח מצא חן. להציל גם בניו ובנותיו, לא מפני שהיה ראוי לכך, אבל על צד חנינה זכהו האל יתברך לזה, כאמרו "והיו שלשת האנשים האלה בתוכה, נח דניאל ואיוב וגו'. חי אני, נאם ה' אלהים, אם בנים ואם בנות יצילו, המה לבדם ינצלו" וזה כי לא למדו את דורם לדעת את ה', **כאברהם משה** ושמואל וזולתם,

Noach may have been a *tzadik* in his own space, but Chazal are teaching-- that is not enough. The essence of life is to think of others; to affect others and positively influence the world around you.

Avraham Avinu is given credit for *עשו בחרן* for the people who converted because of his influence. When he was told that Sodom was to be destroyed, he davened for them.

Similarly, Moshe stood up for other Jews and at great personal risk. After the *cheit ha'egel*, when Hashem said that He would destroy the Jewish people and start over (again playing out the Noach story), Moshe davened for them. He advocated strongly for them, even saying *מחני נא מספרך*, if you destroy them, destroy me.

Yet, when Noach was told that Hashem was planning to destroy the world, the Torah records no effort on his part to pray for, or assist, those around him.

The **Zohar** explains that the *Navi Yeshayahu* refers to the *mabul* as "*mei Noach*"--Noach's name is connected to the flood because he was--in a certain sense--responsible for it. He did not *daven* to Hashem to spare the people, nor did he inspire others to do *teshuva*. . .

זוהר כרך א (בראשית) פרשת נח דף סז עמוד ב ואני הנני מקים את בריתי וגו' ובאת אל התיבה **כיון דאמר ליה דישתזיב הוא ובניו לא בעא רחמין על עלמא ואתאבידו ובגין כך אקרו מן המבול על שמיה** כמה דאת אמר (ישעיה נ"ד) כי מי נח זאת לי אשר נשבעתי מעבור מי נח,

Yet, it seems inconceivable that Noach didn't care about others. The **Ramban** writes that Hashem gave Noach the task of building such a large Ark, to give time—120 years--for the people to be inspired by his actions to change. There must have been some attempt on his part.

רמב"ן בראשית פרק ו: ואם תאמר יעשנה קטנה ויסמך על הנס הזה. ראה השם יתברך לעשותה גדולה כדי שיראו אותה בני דורו ויתמהו בה ויספרו עליה וידברו בענין המבול וכנוס הבהמה והחיה והעוף לתוכה, אולי יעשו תשובה.

Rav Soloveitchik, in *The Rav: Thinking Aloud on the Parsha*, answers:

"Why did Noach not daven, and Moshe did daven? Noach held that Dor Hamabul were so entrenched in chet—kidnapping, gzeila, chamas, avoda zara, znus—that they could never be removed from it. Moshe believed that, no matter how deep Klal Yisrael had become sunk in their tuma, they always have the capacity to be removed from it. That's why Moshe Rabbeinu davened and Noach did not bother.

The key to influencing others is not rooted only in action or tefilla. As necessary as they are, action and tefilla will be effective only if they are rooted in a belief in people's essential goodness and their ability to change. **If you believe in people—that no matter how low they have sunk—that they can pull themselves out of the quicksand—if you truly believe--you can make it happen.** You can help others to achieve success. The actions and *tefilla* on their behalf depend on that belief.

Our actions are certainly more likely to succeed if we truly believe in what we are doing, and even Tefilla is like that. If we truly believe in Hashem and His ability to change our reality, daven differently.

Avraham believed in the people—therefore, he could influence them.

So, too, Moshe Rabbeinu believed in the people—therefore, he could influence them.

However, Noach did not believe in the people, and therefore did not influence them.

Noach was a *tzadik*, but the fact that nobody around him was inspired to change shows that there was something incomplete, something missing, in his *avoda*. Thus, he could not be the leader of his generation. That is what Chazal are trying to teach us by comparing him to Avraham and Moshe.

What was Noach missing? Why didn't he believe in others?

The **Kedushas Levi** writes that what Noach lacked was a belief in himself. He did not recognize his own abilities and his great potential to effect change in the world around him. **And when we don't appreciate our own potential, we have trouble seeing the potential in others.**

קדושת לוי בראשית פרשת נח
אך נדקדק בפירוש רש"י ז"ל (ז, ז) אף נח מקטני אמנה היה. האיך יכול להיות זה, כי הכתוב מעיד עליו 'נח איש צדיק
תמים היה בדורותיו'. ועוד קשה, למה לא היה מתפלל נח לבטל הגזירה.
ונח הגם שהיה צדיק גדול ותמים, היה קטן בעיניו מאוד, ולא היה לו אמונה בעצמו שהוא צדיק מושל ויכול לבטל הגזירה,
אדרבה היה חשוב בעיניו כשאר הדור, והיה חושב אם אני אהיה ניצול בתיבה ואני אין צדיק יותר משאר הדור המה גם כן
ינצל, לכן לא היה מתפלל על הדור. וזה שפירש רש"י אף נח מקטני אמנה היה, רצה לומר נח היה קטן בעיניו באמונה
שהוא צדיק תמים שיכול לבטל הגזירה, שלא היה חשוב בעיני עצמו כלום.

Avraham believed in himself and his own convictions; he was willing to go against his family to do what he knew was right. He believed in others, as well, and therefore he—rather than Noach--merited to be the **father** of the Jewish nation...

Likewise, Moshe believed in himself and others, and he—rather than Noach--merited to be the **leader** of the Jewish nation, to bring them out of *Mitzrayim* and give them the Torah.

Leading others is predicated on believing in others, and that must start by believing in ourselves...it begins with being inspired ourselves, and overflowing with passion and excitement...until it carries over to others...

Rav Ahron Lopiansky, in his sefer Golden Apples, writes (p. 26):

"The Torah describes Noach's righteousness in seemingly glowing terms: He walked step by step with Hashem. However, Hashem started this relationship when He decided that Noach was worthy. Hashem "motioned," as it were, and Noach followed. Noach's response illustrates the ideal of what a person is supposed to become, but not the ideal of how a person reaches that perfection. Ideally, the person himself should be the one to initiate this kind of relationship. Avraham, on the other hand initiated the relationship. This is Man in his ideal form. . . he developed into a Tzadik of his own initiative...a person who isn't flowing cannot overflow...If he himself is not inspired he cannot inspire others..."

We all have so much we can accomplish in life...**but first we must believe in ourselves and our ability to make a difference** in the world. We have to be filled with passion and enthusiasm and belief, and if we live like that, we can have a profound effect and so much influence in others...

אין דבר העומד בפני הרצון, if we truly believe and truly want to help bring the world to a state of perfection...where all mankind will believe in Hashem...and make the world a more peaceful and more spiritual place...with Hashem's help, we will be able to make that happen. May we see this day soon, with the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash, *bimhera viyamenu*...amen.