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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON NOACH - 5784

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from: YUTorah <office@yutorah.org>
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Subject: **YUTorah in Print for Noach**

Rav Soloveitchik on Bereshit: Vice and Virtue in the Vineyard

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider (Excerpted from Torah United, Teachings on The Weekly Parashah From Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and The Chassidic Masters (Ktav, 2023)

Immediately after the deluge comes a brief episode of Noach's ignominy. "He drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself in his tent" (Genesis 9:21). First on the scene was Cham, who "saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside" (9:22). Shem and Yefet then covered Noach respectfully. After waking from his drunken stupor, Noach cursed Cham—by way of Canaan—for his conduct (9:25). What exactly did Cham do that was deserving of a curse?

Schadenfreude... or Worse

The Ramban opines that Cham sinned by not modestly covering his father and by not concealing from others the shameful condition in which he had found him. He actively

sought to demean his father in a public forum, which is why it says that he broadcast it "outside" (Genesis 9:22).[1] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik takes this a step further. Cham seemed all too pleased to discover a deficiency in his father and make it public knowledge. Cham was the type of person eager to disabuse people of their false impressions, to scratch off the veneer and reveal the tin under what turns out to be only thin gold plate. "Show me a saint and I'll show you a sinner," say the Chams of the world.[2]

The fact that Cham was cursed, the Rav emphasizes, does not mean that Noach's behavior was excusable, but it was understandable. Cham should have been considerate and taken into account that his father survived the destruction of a world he had lived in for half a millennium. People have drunk themselves silly for less. His misstep did not deserve to be circulated for public scrutiny. Only the mean-spirited would expose their own father and blow a private peccadillo out of proportion. Both father and son showed poor judgment, but only one acted out of malice.[3]

The Talmud has two interpretations conveying that a more heinous sin took place. "Rav and Shmuel: one says that he castrated him, the other says that he sodomized him." [4] Rabbi Mosheh Lichtenstein, a grandson of the Rav and a rosh yeshivah at Yeshivat Har Etzion, understands these opinions to be communicating ways in which Cham rejected his father. Castration indicates that Cham felt his father's vitality had ebbed and that he was no longer an influence in his life. Sexual exploitation represents Cham's belittling his father and acting in a superior manner. He took advantage of his father to make himself more powerful.[5] Ethics vs. Etiquette

In contrast to Cham, his brothers acted laudably. "Shem and Yefet took (יָפֶת־וְשֵׁם־קָהָל) a garment and laid it on both their shoulders, and they walked backwards and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness" (Genesis 9:23). Although the general impression is that they acted in tandem, the verb for taking the garment is in the singular (קָהָל) and followed by Shem's name, which alludes to the fact that Shem took the initiative in performing the meritorious deed.[6] This is particularly noteworthy since many commentators understand Yefet to have been the eldest of Noach's sons.[7]

The Midrash identifies the rewards of the sons with specificity. Shem's descendants, the Jewish people, receive the garment which bears tzitzit, and Yefet's descendants receive burial. More specifically, the people of Gog, descendants of Yefet, will be given proper burial in the war of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 39:11).[8] In what way are these rewards appropriate recompense for the brothers' actions?

The Rav sees in these rewards a reflection of each one's motivations: ethics and etiquette. Shem covered his father out of ethical duty, which applies even where there are no onlookers to applaud. Ideally, the garment of tzitzit is intended to be worn underneath one's clothes (with only the tzitzit in view),^[9] which represents acting ethically even in private. Yefet, on the other hand, only acted out of concern for what Shem would say. He acted out of etiquette, which changes in different times and places, and is only observed in public. Since etiquette is, at its base, about human dignity, his descendants merited burial, the ultimate act of respect for human beings. Clearly, Shem's motivation was the greater of the two.

This explanation also clarifies Noah's blessing to the two sons: "May God bring beauty to Yefet, and may He dwell in the tents of Shem" (Genesis 9:27). Yefet was concerned with outward appearances, which is the realm of aesthetics. Therefore, beauty and aesthetics shall be the heritage of his progeny. Shem was driven by moral considerations, and so his offspring receive the Shechinah, the divine presence, in their midst. One who acts ethically and morally, especially when others do not, is deserving of God's direct rewards.^[10]

Exploring the Rav's Insight

The episode analyzed above occurred right after the cataclysmic Flood. Man set about reestablishing his presence on Earth. The passage describing this episode is traditionally set apart from surrounding ones with spaces, and its first two verses read: "The sons of Noah who left the ark were Shem, Cham, and Yefet.... These three were the sons of Noah, and from these was the Earth populated" (Genesis 9:18-19). To extend the Rav's thoughts, perhaps Noah's sons represent three types of people.

Cham promulgates hate and destruction, even against his own family. The Mishnah warns: "Shmuel the Younger used to quote: 'Do not rejoice in the downfall of your enemy' (Proverbs 24:17)."^[11] How much more is this true regarding a friend or family member.

Yefet's prime interest is the respect and honor that should be accorded all mankind. While this is valuable and merits reward, it is not intended to be the ultimate pursuit of man. Shem is sincerely dedicated to morality and virtue. This is the loftiest human ideal and especially praiseworthy when it is put into practice. No wonder, then, that Avraham, who defended unrepentant sinners, was his direct descendant. Additionally, Shem is traditionally known for having established a bet midrash, a house of study. Yaakov studied there for fourteen years to inculcate a moral compass that would guide him in his long exposure to Lavan's shiftiness.^[12]

As Jews we are both the physical and spiritual descendants of our ancestor Shem. His moral, principled conduct laid the

foundation for a noble way of life which would be developed and perfected by his esteemed descendant Avraham. Indeed, Shem's ethical code formed the spiritual bedrock of the Jewish nation for all time.

Notes: [1] Ramban on Genesis 9:18 (end). Rabbi Ovadiah Seforno similarly suggests that he rejoiced at the indignity of his father and eagerly spread the word to his brothers. Rabbi Yosef Bechor Shor finds fault with Cham's failure to cover Noah himself. [2] See Soloveitchik, *Yemei Zikaron*, 128–129. [3] Chumas Mesoras Harav, 1:62–63. [4] Sanhedrin 70a, quoted by Rashi on Genesis 9:22, s.v. ערות את וירא אביו. [5] Rabbi Mosheh Lichtenstein, "Noach and His Sons," <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/noach-and-his-sons> (accessed March 7, 2021). [6] Rashi on Genesis 9:23, s.v. ויפת שם ויקח, quoting Midrash Tanchuma and Bereshit Rabbah. [7] See, e.g., Rashi on Genesis 10:21 and Ramban on Genesis 6:10. [8] Rashi on Genesis 9:23, s.v. ויפת שם ויקח. [9] See Magen Avraham, 8:13. [10] Schachter, *Nefesh ha-Rav*, 272–273. The basic analysis might owe a debt to the commentary of the Netziv in his *Ha'amek Davar* on Genesis 9:23. He comments that Shem's alacrity in covering his father and not waiting for assistance, was an expression of his feeling that he had to act, akin to performing a mitzvah in which one is obligated. Yefet only stepped in to help after seeing his brother struggle alone to cover his father. [11] Pirkei Avot, 4:24. [12] See Rashi on Genesis 28:9, s.v. בביות אהור.

from: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>

date: Oct 19, 2023, 11:32 PM

subject: Shabbat Shalom: Devrei Torah for Shabbat Noach 5784

BS"D Please remember Hersh ben Perel Chana, the nearly 200 additional hostages in Gaza, members of the IDF, and fellow Jews in Israel during this period when we are all under constant attack. Remember our fellow Jews in the rest of the world as attacks against our people increase. The Chabad posting at the end of the first attachment gives Internet addresses for Tehillim (psalms) to recite daily to pray for our people. The downloads present the psalms in Hebrew and in English.

BS"D October 20, 2023

Potomac Torah Study Center

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NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Hersh ben Perel Chana, cousin of very close friends of ours, has been confirmed as one of nearly 200 hostages to Hamas in Gaza. The Wall St. Journal featured Hersh and his family in a front page article on October 16. Rabbi David Fohrman and AlephBeta.org produced a podcast this week exploring connections in evil between Hamas and parshat Noach. Chabad, OU, and many synagogues recommend psalms (Tehillim) to recite daily for the safety of our people. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully, with the help of Hashem.

For my introduction to Sefer Bereishis last week, I investigated some parallels in the parsha and later in the Torah that connect to good and evil – an appropriate focus on the first Shabbat after Hamas' pogrom against our people. This week, Rabbi David Fohrman and Imu Shalev (CEO of AlephBeta.org) have introduced a podcast on connections between parshat Noach and Hamas. (I have not yet had an opportunity to listen to the podcast, but I hope to do so before Shabbat.) Rabbi Fohrman mentions in particular that the Hebrew word "chamas" means violence – an appropriate definition of Hamas.

Parshat Noach contains two stories. It opens with the story of the flood and closes with the Tower of Babel. In both situations, Hashem intervenes in response to dangers from humans. From God's initial work creating a place for humans (plus animals and vegetation), the world and humans in it quickly become evil. God decides to undo the world and start over. The steps of destroying the first world parallel exactly the steps of God's creating the world, but in reverse (repeating the same words). Hashem follows the same steps to create a second world, with some subtle differences. God then permits Noach to open the teva and initiate a new world. This new world also starts a downward spiral. The parsha ends with people from numerous cultures living together in the plain of Shinar. The people decide to work together to make bricks and build a tower to show their greatness. On the surface, the people seem to be honorable. They live together in peace, work together on projects, and discover new types of technology. Why does God see a need to intervene and stop what they are doing?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks presents the best explanation I have ever seen of why the people of Shinar are evil. In chapter 10, the Torah reports that the people spread out and that each group has its own language. In chapter 11, suddenly we find that everyone has a common language. Using a variety of sources, Rabbi Sacks finds that the Assyrian leader Ashurbanipal II "made the totality of all peoples speak one speech." A cylinder inscription of Sargon II indicates that he imposed a common language and culture on all the small nations that Assyria conquered. Rabbi Sacks deduces that when God mixes up the languages of the builders of the Tower of Babel, He is restoring the traditional cultures and languages of the

nations that the Assyrians had stifled. God tells Noach and his descendants to disperse and settle the land – thereby developing different cultures to provide diversity in the world.

This diversity is what the people of Shinar destroy, and God wants to stop the process from going any further. Hamas represents a return of the spirit of "chamas" from the Torah – the evil of violence. Hamas wants to destroy Israel and other non-Arab cultures – exactly what Rabbi Sacks interprets as the basic ill of the people of Shinar. After killing all the Jews and taking over Israel, Hamas wants to go after the United States and other countries that do not follow what Hamas represents. Rabbi Mordechai Rhine's view is consistent. He states that there is a red line that no culture may pass, that doing so is pure evil and that every society must recognize. When a group passes this line, intellectuals and politicians must recognize that such a group is evil and that there is no excuse for tolerating them.

After the evils of the generations following Noach, God turns to a "plan C" – start with a few decent, honest, just individuals who will inform others of the evils in society and influence them to work for a better world, one dedicated to Hashem (rather than to human glory). Over time, hopefully these good individuals will help make the world a better place, one dedicated to God and His values, one that works to eliminate evil. For the remainder of the Torah, we turn to Avraham, his descendants, and his legacy.

My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, recognized evil when it reached our community, and he strongly spoke out against evil in our community and abroad. He was a chaplain in the Navy and looked forward each summer to his reserve duty with the men who served our country. He was a strong influence on my son Evan, when he decided to serve our country (but in the Air Force rather than on a ship).

Shabbat Shalom,
Hannah and Alan

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Hersh ben Perel Chana (Hersh Polin, hostage to terrorists in Gaza); Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Arye Don ben Tzivia, Reuven ben Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Leah bas Gussie Tovah, Riva Golda bat Leah, Sarah Feige bat Chaya, Sharon bat Sarah, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, and all our fellow Jews in danger

in and near Israel. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.
Shabbat Shalom, Hannah and Alan Alan A. Fisher
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Rabbi Yisoel Reisman – Parshas Noach 5784
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Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur
The Current Matzav in Eretz Yisrael

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Noach in a different world, a world of great worry, sadness for the past, and probably greater is the worry for the future. For Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael, for Klal Yisrael all over the world. But particularly for those who are Omdim Al Mishmar Artzeinu, those soldiers who are standing at the borders in the north and south of Eretz Yisrael and ready to be Moser Nefesh to protect Klal Yisrael.

I would like to share with you something that Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz has in Sichos Mussar. (In the new editions of Sichos Mussar, there is a section of Matzav Hazman or Regel Hazman which is at the end. Those are the Shmuzzin that he said during the six day war). There I believe in the 4th Maimar, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says something very powerful. He says, we know that Rochel Imeinu is the one who is (מבכה על-בניה), who cries for her children, who cries for Klal Yisrael. It is her cries that HKB"Y answers and says to her as the Navi Yirmiya says 31:15 (מנעי קולך מככי, ויעיניך, מדמעה). Rochel stop weeping and (ושבו מארץ אויב) Klal Yisrael will return. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz asks why not the other Imahos. What about Sarah, Rivka and Leah who certainly were as aware of the Tzaros of Klal Yisrael as Rochel was and why is it Rochel more than anybody else?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says something really incredible. He says it is not similar the feeling of pain to feel along with people who are struggling when you are there as when you are not there. Meaning to say, even a Neshama Kedosha like the Imahos, there is a difference in how they feel along with the Tzar of Klal Yisrael if they are there, if they are where Klal Yisrael is in the moment of Tzarah, and if they are not there. If they are not at that exact spot at the time of Tzarah. Rochel is there, she is at the side of the road and since she is at the side of the road, her feelings, her Hergaishim are stronger. The Imahos certainly Davened, the Avos as well. But it doesn't come to the feeling of someone who is there.

Says Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz in very powerful terms, that those who are in Eretz Yisrael and say that they will go to Chutz L'aretz and from Chutz L'aretz they will Daven for those who are in Eretz Yisrael, he says Sheker Heim Omrim, it is a lie. Those who are in Chutz L'aretz and are far away can't possibly Daven like those who are close. He encourages

everyone to stay. Mind you this is during the six day war, a time of far greater Sakana than we have today. The message that we have to take from this, is the underlying message. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz is saying, if you think you can Daven far away from this and Daven properly, Sheker Heim Omrim. It is not true. It is very difficult. It is a challenge that we have to respond to. It is a challenge that we need to realize. Those who are closer there, certainly feel the mood much more and more appropriately and their Davening is different. Those who are actually on the front lines even more so. Those of us who are so far away, we need to work very hard to be able to feel along with the feelings of Acheinu Bnei Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael. The sorrow of the extraordinary losses we've had. The pain of people who are being held captive by subhuman behaving people. The worry of so many of Acheinu Bnei Yisrael, so many young men who are standing ready really to be Moser Nefesh with great courage on behalf of Klal Yisrael. We need to be Mechazeik in our Tefilla.

The Torah presents two Pesukim as a source for the Mitzvah of Davening. Devarim 11:13 (וּלְעַבְדְּךָ, בְּכָל-לְבַבְךָ) Taanis 2a (אִיזוֹ הָיָה תְּפִלָּה). The Gemara says Tefillah is Merumaz in (בְּכָל-לְבַבְךָ). In loving G-d with all your heart. The Ramban in the Sefer Hamitzvos bring a different Posuk. He brings the Posuk of somebody who goes out to battle in Bamidbar 10:9 (וְכִי-תֵבְאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם, עַל-הַצָּר הַצָּר אֲתֶכֶם--). When there is a big army standing up against you (וְהִרְעַתְּם, בְּהִצְצֹרֶת; וְנִזְכַּרְתֶּם, לִפְנֵי יְרֵךְ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶּם, מֵאֲיֻבֵיכֶם וְהִרְעַתְּם,) (בְּהִצְצֹרֶת) blow the trumpets. The trumpets Zagt the Ramban is the Davening. It is the Davening of a Shas Tzarah, it is a Davening of a time of pain.

We find in the Mishkan the Maiseh Hamenorah that Kula Miksha Hi. The most famous of all of the Keilim that existed is that the Menorah was Miksha. What does Miksha mean? It means it was one solid piece. They took a block of gold and they chiseled out the Menorah. Extraordinarily difficult work and they chiseled out the Menorah. When you chisel out a utensil and it is one piece, it is much more difficult to do. It takes a lot more work to do. But what you end up with is much stronger because it is one piece.

Actually, we find this somewhere else. We find in Parshas Behaloscha 10:2 (עֲשֵׂה לָךְ, שְׁמֵי הַצּוֹצְרוֹת כְּסֶר--מִקְשָׁה, תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם). That the trumpets that were blown were also made (מִקְשָׁה). It must be very hard to make a trumpet by etching it out from one solid piece of silver, but that is what the trumpets were. What is the similarity between the Menorah and the trumpets that both of them are made (מִקְשָׁה)?

I once saw I believe in the Sefer Drush V'ha'iyun, the following from Rav Zalman Sorotzkin. He says (מִקְשָׁה), when something is etched out of a solid piece, it is very hard to do but you end up with something very strong. The Menorah represents Limud Hatorah, it represents the proper study of Torah. It needs Ameilus, it needs a lot of hard work. Without

Yigia it is not possible to really accomplish. There are many people who learn, they relax, sit back with their coffee and cake and they learn. Okay, it is very commendable, but it is not what the Menorah is. The Menorah represents the highest level of Limud Hatorah. Torah which the Menorah represents Chochmas Hatorah. It requires Ameilus, a lot of hard work and being strong. You have to be powerful. There are a lot of moments where a person is learning and he feels a Yiush, he doesn't understand, he doesn't get it. There is something difficult, he doesn't get it. It requires a lot of strength, a lot of pushing and on the other hand it creates a very powerful Limud Hatorah.

The (הַצּוֹצֵרֹת), the trumpets are those that were used to call people to Milchama, to battle. The sound of the Tekia from the trumpet is a call to battle. (עַל-הַצֵּר הַצֵּר) נְכִי-תְבֹאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם, עַל-הַצֵּר הַצֵּרֹר (אֶתְכֶם--וְהִרְעַתְם, בְּהַצֵּצֹרֹת). Going out to battle requires a lot of hard work, a lot of courage, it is not easy. The Ameilus, the hard work, the focus, to be able to do what needs to be done is immense. A person can't make a mistake when a person goes out to such a front. He can't make a mistake. It is like somebody who etches out, he has to make the utensil out of one solid piece and he is chiseling. If he makes one mistake he has to start all over again. It broke and then it is not one solid piece. So too, somebody who goes to Milchama.

A person who sits and learns and a person who goes out to Milchames Yisrael, both of them are compared one to the other. They are both (מְקֻשָּׁה), they both require a tremendous amount of devotion and not only do they require a devotion but it has to continue. The Ameilus has to continue. You have got to be strong. You have got to be like iron. Davening at the time of Milchama, the Ramban says we learn from (וְהִרְעַתְם,) (בְּהַצֵּצֹרֹת). So that the Tefilla then too, has to be the Ameilus V'hatzlacha. It has to be with hard work and Hatzlacha.

I am failing. I am not Davening the way I should be Davening. It should be a different Davening. When I say (מְגִן אֲבִרְהֶם) and I talk about Hashem protecting. How can it be that not every time I have the right Kavana? When I say (רִיבֵנוּ, רִיבֵנוּ) (רִיבֵנוּ), Hashem fight our battles. How can it be I don't always have the right Kavana? How can it be? Somebody who is going out to battle can't make a mistake, he can't slip up once. It can't be. Those of us who are representing the Ameilus, the support system for those who are standing there, they need to have that same type of a power.

There is actually a third (מְקֻשָּׁה) besides the (הַצּוֹצֵרֹת) and the Menorah the Keruvim were also (מְקֻשָּׁה). I don't know why. It could be the Sh'leimus is in the connection between the Jewish people and the Shechina has to have that same hard Ameilus. It all goes to one place, it goes to the Keruvim which shows the love of Klal Yisrael to the Ribbono Shel Olam from where the Shechina speaks. Perhaps that is why it is all connected. But this call (בְּהַצֵּצֹרֹת, וְהִרְעַתְם), you got to be iron, you got to be

solid, you got to be powerful. B'ezras Hashem hopefully we will be and will have that Koach Ha'tefilla.

In Flatbush we are planning on this Sunday an outdoor Atzeres Tefilla in front of Rabbi Landau's Shul. Ashkenazim, Sefardim, Chassidim, all parts of the Orthodox Torah community of Flatbush are called to come together in one big Kol to Daven one Mincha as an Am Rav at 2 pm followed by Tehillim. We need to do it. We need to make it count. We need to make it be something that will be a protection. We need the strength, the Ameilus to stand and really we are going to Daven a proper Davening, feel a proper feeling and feel the Hergesh of Acheinu Bnei Yisrael. There is nothing going on in the world.

I remember my father in law Alav Hashalom telling me that when he was in the labor camps by the Nazis Yemach Shemam, he and his friends used to say to each other, could it be that there are Jews somewhere in the world sitting at a Shabbos table eating Cholent and saying Divrei Torah and enjoying the Shabbos table? Could it be? In middle of such a nightmare, could it be?

There are sometimes that I get this feeling and Boruch Hashem that Tzarah was an unparalleled Tzarah and Boruch Hashem today we are in a much better place. I don't mean to compare except the Hergish, the feeling that could it be that we are forgetting what is going on and the heavy weight that sits on Klal Yisrael. Could it be that we are really not thinking of Eretz Yisrael? Could it be that we stand a Shemoneh Esrei and don't feel that we are facing Eretz Yisrael? Could it be? Could it be that there are restaurants in Brooklyn where people are sitting and joking around and having parties? Could it be that there are people watching football games when these things are going on? Could it be that there is somebody in Flatbush that would be watching a football game when the Tzibbur is getting together at a Kinus Tefilla? Can there be such a human being? I don't think it could be. It shouldn't be. We have to feel, we have to be Margish, it is not easy. (מְקֻשָּׁה), we have to be tough and strong and B'ezras Hashem we will be.

HKB"H please see the coming together of Klal Yisrael, the efforts of Klal Yisrael. The tremendous outpouring of financial help in Eretz Yisrael. The government wasn't ready for 380,000 soldiers to be outfitted. I know somebody in the Golan in the army, it is cold there at night and the rain will come soon. They are not ready for it. We need to get together to do what has to be done. To find honest places, as there are many dishonest places. You have to make sure to be responsible and in an honest direction, give of ourselves, to give of our finances, to give of our hearts, to give of our time and IY"H Klal Yisrael will come together Vayichan Yisrael as one. K'am Echad we will be Matzliach. I want to wish everybody an absolutely wonderful meaningful Shabbos and we look forward to Besuros Tovos!

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The Noach in Each of Us: Israel at War By Mordechai Plotsker

October 19, 2023

As Sukkot came to a close, sirens echoed across Israel just before dawn on October 7, as hordes of Hamas terrorists from Gaza launched a horrifying surprise attack on countless Israeli towns and cities by air, ground and sea. While a significant number of the 5,000 missiles indiscriminately fired from Gaza were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome, countless others sadly penetrated population centers and military installations. This barbaric attack was nothing short of a modern-day Tisha B'Av, Kristallnacht pogrom.

During challenging times, we turn our line of sight to the Torah. The parsha begins by describing, in brevity, three remarkable qualities possessed by Noach. These are the generations of Noach; Noach was a) righteous (not involved in random violence (hamas) like the rest of his generation), b) perfect in his generations (consistent and thorough in the way he practiced his virtues), and c) Noach walked with God, an exceptional and rare virtue (Bereishis 6:9).

How then is it possible for Noach, who had these three powerful attributes to be, as Rashi notes, a "Ma'amin v'aino Ma'amin, one who lacks faith in God"? Noach, with his sons, his wife and his son's wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. (Bereishis 7:7). Explains the Medrash, "Were it not for the fact that the flood waters reached his ankles, he would have not entered the ark!" (Bereishis Rabbah: 32:9). Is Rashi suggesting that Noach, who demonstrated his faith in God, despite the ridicule from his less than average peers, by investing 120 years constructing the Titanic of his generation, lacked resolute faith in God to deliver on His word to destroy the world, and only boarded the ark when the water reached his ankles?

Citing BT Moed Katan, 16b, the Kedushas Levi explains tzaddik moshel b'yiras Elokim, the righteous govern through "fear of God." Here Rav Abahu explains that: "I (God) rule over man. But who (as it were) rules over me? The tzaddik! For I decree a harsh punishment, and the tzaddik cancels it with his prayers." Noach, however, did not actively attempt to positively influence people (by rebuking them). Noach may have felt inadequate to cancel a Divine decree perhaps because he did not consider himself much of a tzaddik. If he were to be saved, his lot would be no different as others that would also be saved. When God noticed this, He told Noach (Bereishis 6:13) that He would have to proceed with His intention to destroy the human race as there was no one who had tried to intercede.

Rabbi Norman Lamm dovetails the reasoning of the Kedushat Levi opining that, "the object of emuna (faith) in this context,

is not God but oneself. All of us, by virtue of our mortality and finitude, need God, and God knows we all need each other. After 120 years of building the ark, Noach remained a ma'amin (believer) who perhaps thought to himself, "I have been spared so long, I will surely be spared longer. Concurrently, Noach was also an aino ma'amim, lacking faith in himself, thinking, there is nothing that makes me worthy of being saved. I am helpless and hopeless. Extremes of over and under-confidence, of both an excess and a want of faith in oneself, is a sign of m'katney emuna, a lack of faith in God. Since the tragedy unfolded more than a week ago, Klal Yisroel had initially felt hopeless, helpless and withdrawn. We were ma'amin when the news alerts started flowing in, and v'aino ma'amim that such a horrific series of events could actually occur. How can we dance hakafot? What can we, so far away, do to help? And yet, overnight, the United States, Canada and countless countries flooded El Al planes with what will become known as one of the largest and consistent transfers of equipment, morale and psychological encouragement the world has ever witnessed.

We all became tzaddikim, capable of turning the tide in this war, regaining lost territory and neutralizing terrorists responsible for the murder of our brothers and sisters in cold blood.

Dozens of duffle bags, boxes filled with medical, logistical, operational and tactical gear are being transported daily. Most importantly, our chayalim are in receipt of religious garments such as tzitzit and kippot, and religious "clothing" that take the beautiful form of daily Tehillim and mishbeirach for harchavat hadaat, blessing for peace of mind. Children are writing letters, reservists are being cheered as they board flights from Newark airport, and the food—plenty of shawarma and Bissli too. Mi k'Amcha Yisroel, Who is like Your nation Israel!

We are now operating around the clock as Gur Aryeh Yehuda. Why? Because Netzach Yisrael lo yishaker," (1-Shmuel, 15:29). We have readily replaced the aino ma'amin with a ma'amin confident mentality. We are united in conviction, resolute with determination and ready to engage a new chapter of Jewish history replete with Jewish pride in our collective steadfast commitment to Torat Yisroel, kedushat Yisroel and Am Yisroel.

And this he said of Judah: "Hear, Hashem, the voice of Judah. And restore him to his people. Though his own hands strive for him, Help him against his foes." (Devarim, 33:7).

Am Yisroel chai, v'kayam!

Mordechai Plotsker runs a popular 10-minute nightly shiur on the parsha with a keen interest on the invigorating teachings of the Berditchever Rav, the Kedushas Levi. Plotsker resides in Elizabeth with his wife and children, and can be reached by email at marc.plotsker@gmail.com.

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subject: What The Israel-Hamas War is Really About

Rabbi Dov Lerner

Six decades ago—in a highly secretive, logistically complex, and profoundly important mission—four undercover Israeli operatives seized one of the world’s most wanted criminals in the dead of night on a quiet street in Argentina. The year was 1960. Their captive was Adolf Eichmann. Responsible for orchestrating the transportation of Europe’s Jews to the ghettos and the camps and one of the highest-ranking members of the Third Reich, he was charged with crimes against humanity and put on trial in Jerusalem for the world to see.

The press coverage was comprehensive and unprecedented, and it gripped the global imagination for months on end. Day after day, pages and pages were dedicated to disseminating the hours of harrowing testimony. But of all the extraordinary reporting that emerged from that court, journalism’s most lasting contribution was a single four-word phrase, coined by a renowned philosopher who reported on the case for *The New Yorker*. Her name was Hannah Arendt, and her phrase was “the banality of evil.”

Sitting amid the countless rows of correspondents, diplomats, and observers, she covered the Eichmann trial from start to finish, and she confessed that the thing which perplexed her most about the entire episode was Eichmann’s absolute mediocrity. Knowing that he had directed deportations, led liquidations, and advanced the extermination of an entire population, she had expected the man at the defense bench to seem like a demonic, diabolical, monstrous creature. She had expected to see a savage villain to match the evil reputation that preceded him.

But sitting quietly behind bulletproof glass, he appeared simply as an inconspicuous bureaucrat—unexceptional and unremarkable in every way. And it was this nondescript presence that led her to invent the expression “the banality of evil”—along with the idea that while we may expect brutal atrocities to be carried out by malformed fiends, crimes against humanity can be committed, almost casually, by otherwise ordinary people.

As the horrors perpetrated by Hamas have come to light, many questions have come to fore. But perhaps the one question that has occupied the minds of every civilized person on Earth has been not theological—“how God could let this happen?”—but anthropological. How could human beings be so inhumane? How could human beings be so depraved and perpetrate such outrageous barbarity?

And, from my perspective, the answer to that question is—regrettably—rather simple. There is nothing in human nature that makes us humane. There is nothing in our DNA that teaches us that every single person on Earth deserves care and attention and sympathy and dignity. As creatures, we are

all moral blank slates, motivated at our core by a sequence of what one notorious biologist has called ‘selfish genes.’ Driven by the impulse to survive, our primal instincts are egocentric and self-absorbed, narcissistic and oblivious to any call for sacrifice or philanthropy.

It may well be true, as some anthropologists have suggested, that evolution favors not the fittest but the friendliest—and that we, as a species, have survived over time by expanding our horizons, deepening our sympathies, and investing in friends. But even this theory does not see human beings driven by a sense of moral obligation but, fundamentally, by a bid for self-preservation—where our friends are not an end in themselves but the best bet for our own survival.

Though I was born and raised in Great Britain, I am—despite their flaws—in near-constant awe of the founders and framers of the United States and its laws. But there are two words in the American Declaration of Independence to which I take exception. Speaking of the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, Thomas Jefferson wrote: “We hold these truths to be self-evident.” They are not self-evident. The idea that every single human being has a right to life is not self-evident to our selfish genes; it needs to be taught. The idea that every single human being has a right to liberty is not self-evident to our selfish genes; it needs to be taught. And the idea that every single human being has a right to seek meaning and pursue happiness is not self-evident to our selfish genes; it too needs to be taught.

And that is where the Torah’s story begins—with the opening pages of Genesis.

Standing at the summit of Mount Sinai, a single prophet and leader of slaves inscribed a groundbreaking phrase as the culmination of the very first chapter of the Jewish constitution: “God created humanity in His image.” (Genesis 1:27).

Standing at the foot of Sinai the Israelites were told that, at the dawn of time, God pierced the darkness with light and filled the void with life. And then we were taught a vital truth that was anything but self-evident: that every single human being is a vessel of divinity.

When we were born as a nation, we were taught a moral truth that had evaded civilization for millennia—a moral truth that had escaped the potentates and populations of Egypt and Greece and Mesopotamia, smothered beneath the weight of selfish genes and egomania—the moral truth that every single human being, no matter their rank or stature, is worthy of respect and compassion and dignity and care.

It is not “natural” to treat every human being with deference and esteem; it is not “natural” for our appetites to surrender before the call of moral responsibility, which is why—for a whole variety of scholars including Joshua Berman,[1] Kyle Harper,[2] Tom Holland,[3] Eric Nelson,[4] Tomer Persico,[5]

and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks[6]—the moral law revealed at Sinai erupted as a revolution in the affairs of humankind.

As Rabbi Sacks put it: “Hitler was not wrong when he called conscience a Jewish invention.”[7] It is not human nature to be humane but the foundation of our faith—a creed that needs to be taught and reinforced repeatedly.

It is not accidental that, in an ordinary year, after we read the first pages of Genesis, our sages direct us to a passage in Isaiah when he says: “So says God... I have summoned you... to be a light unto the nations” (42:6).

God filled the world with light, but He summons us to spread and defend it. The reason that we are willing to pay such a high price for private tuition is not simply so that our kid’s friends have kosher homes, but because we know that the moral code invoked at Sinai is not innate and needs to be taught.

That is why the attempts at impartiality or neutrality on the part of some elite universities is not only tragic but dangerous. It is not human nature to be humane—ethics are not innate. If institutions of higher learning aspire to be more than merely way-stations of information, they ought to train their students not only to process data or articulate different views but to choose a moral frame.

The idea that free speech will inexorably lead to moral clarity and the unwavering devotion to the sanctity of humanity is completely misconceived—so while they ought to permit free speech, they ought to brand not only Hamas but any defense of Hamas for what it has been revealed to be: evil, depraved, and inhumane.

There are competing ideologies out there—where the weak are to be culled, and the old are to be killed, and the other is to be exterminated—and silence or neutrality gives them the space to grow. At the end of his tenure, as a final reminder to our ancestors, Moses said: “Life and death I place before you... choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

We are now in a defensive war against human beings who promote an inhumane ideology—whose barbarity threatens our brothers and sisters, the civilians of the region, and the rest of humanity. This war is to secure Israel’s borders, but more than that it is to combat a cult that incites violence, creates carnage, and celebrates death—it is to liberate those held hostage by those who forsake their humanity.

We can no longer turn the other cheek, because we have a duty to protect the weak and counter the malignant creed which teems in the tunnels beneath the streets of Gaza, where it breeds moral depravity. Tragically this war—as all wars—will entail the loss of human life on all sides, and our minds will no doubt be swimming in images that inspire agony. And at times like this we are reminded of words written by John Stuart Mill: War is an ugly thing—but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war, is worse... [And] as long as

justice and injustice have not terminated their ever renewing fight for ascendancy in the affairs of [hu]mankind, human beings must be willing, when need is, to do battle for the one against the other.[8]

Evil can be banal because goodness needs to be taught. Cruelty can be casual, inhumanity can become natural, and what we see as unfathomable and incomprehensible can come to pass if we do not do our part to instill human hearts with compassion. Ronald Reagan once said:

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it, and then hand it to them with the well taught lessons of how they in their lifetime must do the same. And if you and I don’t do this, then you and I may well spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it once was like in America when men were free.

The idea, first taught on the summit of Sinai to a single prophet and a small band of slaves, has been disseminated by multiple faiths across the ages over the face of the earth so successfully that we take it to be self-evident—but our summons to defend and spread the light of revelation is not yet complete.

As long as other ideologies still compete for believers, as long as evil or moral ambiguity still breeds unabated, we have an obligation to stand up and speak out and give voice to heaven’s vision for humanity, where everyone—including the weak and the old and the other—has a divine spark and the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of purpose.

May the coming weeks bring us all a little closer to true peace as we try, with all our hearts, to contest inhumanity and sow the seeds of our collective redemption.

[1] Joshua A. Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). [2] Kyle Harper, “Christianity and the Roots of Human Dignity in Late Antiquity,” in *Christianity and Freedom, Volume 1: Historical Perspectives*. eds. Timothy Samuel Shah and Allen D. Hertzke (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). [3] Tom Holland, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (London: Little, Brown Book Group, 2019). [4] Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). [5] Tomer Persico, *Adam Be-Tzelem Elohim: Ha-Ra’ayon She-Shinah Et Ha-Olam Ve-et Ha-Yahadut [In God’s Image: The Making of the Modern World]* (Rishon le-Tziyon: Yedi’ot Aḥaronot, 2021). [6] Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *A Letter in the Scroll: Understanding Our Jewish Identity and Exploring the Legacy of the World’s Oldest Religion* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

[7] *Ibid.*, 190. [8] John Stuart Mill, “The Contest in America,” first published in *Fraser’s Magazine* (February 1862).

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<https://en.yhb.org.il/revivim1065/>

Revivim -- Rabbi Eliezer Melamed The Sanctity of War and Its Victims

War today, unlike when we were exiled, must be like the heroism of King David's wars – with humility before God, but striving for total victory * What can we learn from the timing of the tragedy occurring specifically on the Shabbat of Simchat Torah * The irresponsible conduct of the media even during these days * The sanctity of the fallen, and the comfort they will have in the future

The Great Challenge

A great challenge faces us during these days, to strengthen with heroism for a defensive and forceful war, for the sake of the nation and Land. In times of milchemet mitzvah (an obligatory war), the entire nation must participate in the war. The soldiers must go out with valor to the front, to strike a crushing blow against the enemy. And those who remain at home must also gird themselves with valor, for their tranquil heroism at home is what the soldiers at the front line, rely upon. The state and military leadership also relies on their heroism.

Types of Prayers in Exile vs. Today

During the long, difficult days of exile, the heroism required of us was to survive despite everything. And the type of prayers expressed pleadings of the poverty of the remnants of Israel, not to be destroyed. However, today, in God's kindness we have merited returning to our Land, and the prayers must be like those of King David when he went out to war. He prayed intensely, and humbly asked God to help him and his soldiers be valiant and skilled in warfare, so they could vigorously pursue their enemies, and not return until they were destroyed.

King David's Prayers

An example of his prayer is in Psalms 144:

“Of David. Blessed is the Lord, my Rock, Who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for war. My kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield in Whom I take refuge, Who flattens peoples beneath me.”

But this is not the arrogance of an impetuous hero, but rather a hero who knows he is mortal.

“O Lord, what is man that You should know him, the son of man, that You should consider him? Man is like a breath; his days are as a fleeting shadow.”

His prayer in Psalms 18 is also an example. David first turns humbly to God – recognizing that everything comes from Him.

And through this, acknowledges that with God's help, he and his soldiers defeat the enemy battalions. “For by You I run upon a troop, and by my God, I scale a wall” – in order to conquer the enemy. “He trains my hands for war, so that a copper bow is bent by my arms. You have given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has supported me, and You have treated me with great humility. You have broadened my steps beneath me, and my ankles have not slipped. I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them, never turning back until they were consumed. I have crushed them so that they cannot rise, they fall beneath my feet. You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued my besiegers beneath me. And of my enemies, You have given me the back of their necks; those that hate me, I have destroyed. They cry out, but no one saves them, even to God, but He does not answer them (for they are the wicked who rose against Israel).” Then I ground them as dust before the wind, like mud in the streets, I emptied them out”. And the victory would be great and known throughout the world, to the point that through it: “You make me head of nations, a people I knew not, served me. At the mere hearing of the ear they obeyed me” (they will obey my demands); foreigners (the enemies) shall lie to me; foreigners shall wither, and shall fear their imprisonments” (they will flee the places they thought to take cover against Israel's army). And in merit of this, we will thank God: “Hashem lives and blessed is my Rock, and exalted is my God, the God of my salvation. The Almighty One who grants me vengeance, and destroys peoples instead of me. My shelter from enemies, even those who rise against me, You raise me above; from the violent man, You deliver me. Therefore, I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the nations, and to Your name I will sing praises”. And in the merit of this, the kingdom of Israel will grow greater: “He gives great salvations to His king, and performs kindness to His anointed; to David, and his offspring forever”.

Total Victory

Throughout the generations, the Philistines were the bitter, formidable enemies of Israel. However, after David's wars with them we no longer hear of them. King David of Israel, alive and enduring, totally vanquished them, and the land rested from them for four hundred years. May it be God's will that our soldiers fight with valor, ingenuity, and professionalism, and with God's help, our brave soldiers' strike the enemy a crushing blow, resounding throughout the world. So all earth's inhabitants will know the words of the Bible are being fulfilled, the People of Israel are returning to their Land, and all who support them are blessed, while those who rise against them, are cursed.

Awakening to Repentance amidst War

This war began on Simchat Torah which fell on Shabbat. On account of this, it is incumbent upon us to awaken in regards to two fundamental, inter-connected matters: 1. to strengthen the

observance of Torah study on Shabbatot and Holidays. 2. To understand the blessing contained in Torah study, and rejoice in it.

More specifically: Our Sages said:

“The Sabbaths and Holidays were given to Israel in order that they might study Torah” (Jerusalem Talmud, Shabbat 15:3). Meaning, one should divide Shabbat and Holiday time – half for Torah study, and half for Shabbat pleasure of meals and family (Pesachim 68b). It is impossible to describe the tremendous importance of Torah study on Shabbatot and Holidays, through which enlightenment, guidance and blessing flows to all the deeds we perform on weekdays. Understanding this, one rejoices in study with exceptional joy.

As our Sages said:

“God said to Israel: “My children, did I not write to you in My Torah ‘Let not this book of the Torah cease from your mouths, but recite it day and night’? (Joshua 1:8). Even though you labor for six days, you shall dedicate Shabbat to Torah alone. Therefore they said, a person should always rise early and study on Shabbat, and go to the synagogue and study hall, read the Torah and study the Prophets, and afterwards, go home, eat and drink, to fulfill that which is stated (Kohelet 9:7): ‘Go, eat your bread joyfully, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart’” (Tana D’Vei Eliyahu Rabbah 1).

Without Torah Study, Great Accusation Arises Against Settling the Land

Our Sages said:

“The Torah said to God: “Master of the Universe, when the Jews enter the land, this one will run to his vineyard and that one to his field; what will become of me?” God responded “I have a partner with whom I will pair you. Its name is Shabbat, on which they do not work, and thus can engross themselves in you” (Tur §290).

The accusation against Yishuv Ha’Aretz (settling the Land of Israel) is grave – seemingly, a continuation of the Sin of the Spies. However, conversely, if, God forbid, Israel abandons the Torah, their hold on the Land will weaken, until, heaven forbid, they could be exiled from it. As the prophet states:

“Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and withered like a wilderness, without anyone passing through? And the Lord said: It is because they have forsaken My Torah, which I set before them, and have not hearkened to My voice, nor walked by it” (Jeremiah 9:11-12).

Even today, the claim arises – you are settling the Land, enlisting in the army, studying science, going to work, but what of the Torah?! And the only response to this monumental question is: Shabbat and Holidays! The day on which we study the Torah of Eretz Yisrael. Just as illumination for the six weekdays extends from Shabbat, so too, the Torah study of Shabbat sheds light on Yishuv Ha’Aretz, military service,

science study, and all aspects of work. Thereby, all labor, science, army service, and social and family life become elevated to the level of the Torah’s sanctity, since they are guided by it.

Irresponsible Media

To our great dismay, even during such difficult times, we must painfully tell the truth: We have an irresponsible media. Many spokespeople in the media continue harming national unity and security. Exploiting the terrible agony of the families of the fallen and kidnapped, they spread cowardice. Instead of being awed by the spirit of volunteerism and heroism, and strengthening the desire for victory and morally justified vengeance it warrants, they find faults. When ground forces are putting their lives on the line, every responsible person must speak about only one topic – defeating the enemy, and saving the state!

The Fallen are Holy

Those who sacrifice themselves for the sanctification of God’s name, attain the highest level beyond which there is none higher. In their death, for the sanctification of God’s name, they transcend the individual framework within which every person exists, to the general level of Israel’s sanctity, connecting to God, and becoming sanctified through His sanctity. Therefore, even though they die prematurely in this world, they live very much so in the entirely long World to Come, to the point that “No one can stand in their section” (Bava Batra 10b). In their merit, life in this world continues and intensifies, since through their life in this world, they merited becoming sanctified with supreme sanctity, revealing through this, the supreme point of sanctity in this world. Even Jews who did not intend to sacrifice their lives, yet were killed merely for being Jewish, like those murdered in the Holocaust, and victims of terror attacks, are considered kedoshim (holy). For throughout the lengthy history, it became clear to all, that Israel embodies monotheistic faith, and by their very identification as Jews, they bear God’s name, which the world’s wicked desire to kill them for. Therefore, already in a person identifying as being Jewish, there is mesirut nefesh (self-sacrifice), and anyone murdered for being Jewish, is considered like a soldier killed sanctifying God’s name in the war of heroism for the continuity of the Jewish people. All the more so, regarding Jews living in Israel, and participating in its building, and all the more so, those who settled with mesirut nefesh in kibbutzim and communities near the border. Their bereaved families, who raised these holy souls – become sanctified with them.

Avenging Their Blood

Our Sages said: “If you sanctify My name, I too will sanctify My name through you...” (Sifra, Acharei Mot 8:13).

And so great is the sanctification of God’s name accomplished through them, that already at the time they are killed, the revenge God will take against the wicked who killed them, is

determined and accomplished. And since for God, past, present and future are seen as one, already when they are killed, there is an illumination of their sanctification of God's name in the Upper Worlds, and they already stand, as if resurrected.

Therefore, when they die, God as it were, says: "Today, I am exalted through them in the eyes of the nations, deniers of the Torah. Today, I take revenge against their enemies. Today, through them, I revive the dead. I am Hashem, I am the faithful Judge to take revenge, and Trustworthy to reward".

Their Comfort in Israel's Redemption

Our Sages said God is responsible to avenge their blood, as it states: "He will execute justice upon the nations into a heap of corpses; He crushed the head on a great land" (Psalms 110:6). When Israel is deserving, with God's help, the revenge comes through the Israel Defense Forces. When Israel is undeserving, the revenge is delayed and comes through indirect ways, but it ultimately comes, and harshly.

Our Sages further said, that in the Upper Worlds, there is an appointed angel for every Jew murdered by non-Jews. He, as it were, inscribes their name on the garment of the Holy One blessed be He, and they will remain inscribed there, until God avenges their blood. And these holy souls do not consent to be comforted until Mashiach himself is revealed, and comes to comfort them. With him, lights and pleasures descend to gladden them, and angels dress them in garments of honor (based on Zohar 1:39:1, 41:1).

from: YUTorah <office@yutorah.org>

date: Oct 19, 2023, 7:04 PM

Subject: YUTorah in Print for Noah

Virtue Ethics

Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman

Was Noah an ethical person?

While some commentaries find fault with Noah, it is hard to circumvent the explicit accolades that "Noah was a righteous person (ish tzadik) and perfect (tamim) in his generation" (Gen. 6:9). Even if we read "in his generation" like Rabbi Yohanan, limiting his greatness to that particular era (Sanhedrin 108a), these phrases are still high praises for Noah. The commentaries distinguish between the three terms, "person," "righteous," and "perfect," providing us with a brief moral treatise, spotlighting Noah as an exemplar of virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics, an idea usually attributed to Aristotle, is an ethical theory which focuses on cultivating internal characteristics that lead us to act morally. In contrast to the theory that ethics is about following rules (deontology), or about obtaining the best outcomes (utilitarianism), virtue ethics emphasizes developing the internal motivation to do the right thing for the right reasons. While Jewish ethics contains a deontological element, reflected in the imperative to follow Jewish law, Rabbi Yitzchak Blau, following the lead of some

20th century Jewish philosophers, argues that there is also a strong thread of Jewish virtue ethics, particularly evident in the writings

of Rambam ("The Implications of a Jewish Virtue Ethic," 2000). One resonant example is when Rambam writes that it is better to give a thousand individual coins to different poor people, rather than giving a thousand coins to one poor person (Commentary on the Mishna Avot 3:18). While a utilitarian may argue that the best outcome would be to substantively help one pauper, Rambam instead focuses on the character of the donor. The habit of giving, formed by the many smaller donations, will better cultivate the trait of magnanimity. Noah's virtue ethics are first reflected in the word ish (person). Abarbanel writes that ish indicates that Noah is someone of stature, having earned respect from his community. As Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch notes, "according to the remarks of our sages, the name ish is not lightly used in the Tanach." If the term is used to describe someone, it means that he earned that title by proving his worth through refined character. For Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, ish signifies a person with "daat," or intellectual acumen (Darash Moshe, p. 4). One cannot be righteous or perfect, unless one also possesses practical wisdom.

Other commentaries point to Noah's virtuous character by distinguishing between the terms "righteous" and "perfect." For instance, Rabbeinu Bahya writes that being "righteous" refers to avoidance of immoral behavior and the performance of moral action, while being "perfect" indicates that Noah was internally virtuous. Noah did not just follow the rules, or make ethical decisions based on the best outcome, but acted based on virtue ethics. His morality was not just an external expression but was reflective of a pure heart and mind. Noah did not just perform acts of righteousness, but he was righteous.

In a time where we are suffering from the moral corruption and atrocities perpetrated by Hamas, we must respond by modeling virtue and embodying truth, justice, and righteousness.

from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

date: Oct 19, 2023, 7:01 PM

subject: **Tidbits for Parashas Noah in Memory of R' Meir Zlotowitz ztl**

Parashas Noah • October 20th • 6 Cheshvan 5784

BeHaB begins this coming Monday, October 23rd. BeHaB is a series of three fast days on the Monday, Thursday and subsequent Monday following the months of Tishrei and Nissan (BeHaB is an acronym for Beis (Monday), Hei (Thursday), Beis (Monday)). A Mi Shebeirach is recited before Mussaf this Shabbos for those who fast on these days. Many congregations recite Selichos on these days. The reasons given for BeHaB include: 1) to atone for any sins that one may have committed over Yom Tov; 2) to atone for work performed

over Chol Hamoed; or 3) to strengthen the health of the body in anticipation of the change of season.

In Eretz Yisrael, V'sein Tal u'Matar is added to Bareich Aleinu starting at Maariv, Motzaei Shabbos, 7 Cheshvan/October 21st. Chutz La'Aretz will begin at Maariv on Tuesday night, December 5th. Someone traveling to or from Eretz Yisrael should seek halachic guidance.

The final opportunity for Kiddush Levanah in the USA is Motzaei Shabbos, October 28th.

Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Kiddushin 68 • Yerushalmi: Shevi'is 13 • Mishnah Yomis: Chagiga 1:2-3 • Oraysa: Next week is Yoma 21a-23b

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!

The series of days of BeHaB begin on Monday, October 23rd.

NOACH: Noach is righteous • Building the Teivah and gathering animals • Noach is six hundred years old when the great flood begins • Noach and family enter the Teivah • Rains fall and waters rise from the depths for forty days, covering the mountains • Everything on land is obliterated • The waters roil for 150 days, then begin to recede • The Teivah comes to rest on the Ararat mountains • The raven is sent from the Teivah • The dove is sent out twice, bringing back an olive leaf the second time • The dove is sent out a third time, and it does not return • Noach and family leave the Teivah • Noach offers sacrifices • Hashem promises to never again bring a flood • Noach and his children are now permitted to eat meat • The sign of the rainbow • Noach's planting of a vineyard and subsequent denigration • Canaan is cursed • The descendants of Noach's 3 children - 70 nations fill the earth • The tower of Bavel • Ten generations from Noach to Avram

Haftarah: The haftarah (Yeshaya 54:1-55:5) cites Hashem's promise to never again punish the world's sins by a complete Mabul-like devastation.

Parashas Noach: 146 Pesukim • No Taryag Mitzvos listed The Mabul is referred to as Mei Noach, the "waters of Noach" (Yeshayahu 54:9). As Noach, in fact, was a righteous individual who was spared from this great punishment, why is his name invoked in the name of this great tragedy?

Rav Meir Zlotowitz z"l would explain: The Zohar describes the contrast between Noach and Moshe Rabbeinu. Regarding Moshe, the Pasuk refers to the salvation of Kerias Yam Suf as Moshe's accomplishment. This is due to Moshe constantly interceding on behalf of the Bnei Yisrael, going so far as to offer his own life and destiny to save Klal Yisrael from destruction. In contrast, Noach failed to beseech Hashem to have mercy on mankind and save them from obliteration.

Because of this failure, this tragic event is referred to as "Noach's waters". Even if the situation of a fellow man seems beyond hope, one should never fail to beseech our Father in

Heaven on behalf of his fellow brethren, who are all Hashem's children.

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Rabbi Frand on the Parashah 3 -- Growing & Building Parshas Noach

אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו את האלקים התהלך נח
These are the offspring of Noach — Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d (6:9). In the opening pasuk [verse] of our parsha, the name Noach is mentioned three times: "These are the offspring of Noach – Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d." [Bereishis 6:9]. The Medrash Tanchuma takes note of this strange sentence structure and comments that the pasuk alludes to the fact that Noach is an individual who had the distinction of seeing three different worlds: He saw the world when it was settled; he saw the world when it was destroyed; and he saw the world when it was settled once again.

Rav Simcha Wasserman expressed the thought that anyone who lived in Europe before the Holocaust, who lived through the Holocaust, and then merited to come out of the Holocaust and settle either in the United States or in the Land of Israel may also say about himself that he saw three worlds: He saw a settled world, a world in destruction, and a world once again settled.

To have seen Europe in its final days of Jewish glory – the great Yeshivos, the great Jewish communities that existed there – this was to see a "settled world". To have witnessed what Rav Simcha witnessed, including the death of his father, Rav Elchonon Wasserman (may Hashem revenge his blood) at the hands of the Nazis and to have seen the desolation and destruction that he witnessed was to have seen a world in destruction. To have then come to the United States and settle in Los Angeles California and try to build Torah there and to have then resettled in Eretz Yisrael and have established a Yeshiva there too – he saw a world resettled once again.

Rav Simcha Wasserman commented that he learned in the Telshe Yeshiva in Europe. Telshe was in Lithuania, which is very far North. In the summer the days are extremely long and the nights are extremely short. He remembers walking in the city of Telshe in the summer time and he looked to the North and saw a sky that was pitch black and full of stars. As he looked to the southwest he saw a beautiful red sky in which the sun was just beginning to set. As he looked to the East he could already see the rays of light before the moments of dawn. On one day, in one moment, he saw a sunset, he saw

pitch darkness, and he saw the beginning of another sunrise. This memory became the metaphor for him of what he witnessed later in his life. He witnessed the sun setting on the European Jewish community; he witnessed its darkest night; and he witnessed the new sunrise that occurred after the war. This thought does not only apply to Rav Simcha Wasserman, but to all Jews whose lives spanned World War II.

Rav Simcha Wasserman continued his comments by quoting a pasuk at the end of Parshas Noach: “And Noach, the man of the earth, debased himself (vaYachel Noach) and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk...”

[Bereishis 9:20-21]. The Sages criticize Noach for planting a vineyard as his first act of planting after the Flood. “He should have involved himself in other types of planting.” This act made him somewhat pedestrian (vaYachel comes from the same root as chullin = mundane).

Rav Simcha Wasserman commented, what do you want from this fellow? The man literally just saw the destruction of the world! He came out of the Ark to find a totally desolate world. It is understandable in those circumstances that a person should be depressed. It is also understandable that a person would want to deal with his depression. In those days, the way one dealt with depression was “Give wine to those bitter of spirit” [Mishlei 31:6]

The answer is that the Torah does not say that Noach became a wicked person. He did not do something bad or evil. It was understandable. But the Torah comments that he made himself “chullin” [mundane, pedestrian]. If a person has seen an entire world destroyed and he merits to be among the very few who are saved, there is no time for depression or to worry about one’s own emotions. Such a person has a job to do. He must rebuild, pick up, and start over.

There are some situations in life where a person does not have the luxury to think about himself. In such circumstances a person cannot wallow in his sadness and depression. The person must deal with it: If the Almighty picked me and saved me from among all those who did not make it, it must be because the Almighty wants me to do something with my life. Such was the philosophy of Rav Simcha Wasserman. He saw his father and his father’s entire Yeshiva in Baronovich destroyed, but he came out of the Holocaust, dusted himself off so to speak and became a disseminator of Torah in his own right. He not only preached the above thought, but he practiced what he preached. It is because of the amazing strength of character of individuals like himself and like the Roshei Yeshiva and the Chassidic leaders who were saved and came over to America and started over, rather than wallowing in their depression that we now are the recipients of their contributions and can enjoy the fruits of a spiritual world that is once again blossoming.

Noach Had Children Late In Life

The pasuk at the end of Parshas Bereishis [5:32] says: “And Noach was 500 years old and he gave birth to Shem, Cham, and Yafes”. Rashi asks why others of Noach’s generation gave birth to children at the age of 100 on average while Noach did not have any children until much later in life. Rashi answers that G-d did Noach a favor, so to speak. If he had children at a normal age and they turned out to be wicked, G-d would have had to kill them out with the rest of their generation. If, on the other hand, they were righteous, then by the time of the Flood they in turn would have already had several generations of descendants and Noach would need to build several Arks to house all his descendants. Therefore, Noach’s children were born close in time to the Flood, such that Noach’s oldest son was not yet a “bar onshin” [at the age when he would be subject to Heavenly punishment] when the decree concerning the Flood was issued.

Let us put ourselves in Noach’s shoes for a minute. Noach was the greatest Tzadik in his generation. Everyone else was having children and grandchildren. Noach was infertile and childless. Where is there justice in this world? Noach must have had such thoughts for 400 years! He must have been asking himself “What does G-d have against me? What does he want from me? Why is he doing this to me? I am the most righteous person of my generation!”

The answer is that the Almighty has His calculations. He knew that there would be a Flood and everyone would be destroyed. He knew that it was best for Noach that he not have children for those 400 years. So the Almighty does Noach a favor and makes him infertile.

Our own perceived misfortunes are one of the hardest things for any of us to understand. We are limited by time and space and can only see what is happening in front of our eyes. There are times when we can’t believe the things that happen to us and we perceive them as the greatest punishment. We must have this bedrock faith, which is so much easier to preach than to integrate into our psyche. This is the true Jewish outlook on life. If we could all know what the Almighty has in mind for us, we would understand that G-d is not doing us a disservice, but He is doing us the greatest favor!

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Noach are provided below: Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

from: contact@michalhorowitz.com date: Oct 18, 2023, 11:01 AM

Parshas Noach: A Window You Shall Make for the Ark
By **Michal Horowitz**

We are all familiar with the narrative that unfolds in this week's parsha, Parshas Noach. It had been ten generations since Adam and Creation, and all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. G-d decided it was necessary to destroy all life forms – from man to animal – and even the three tefachim of top soil were washed away and destroyed in the deluge.

The only human survivors of the flood were Noach and his wife Naama, their three sons, Shem, Cham and Yafes, and the wives of their sons. As for the animals, any animals that were in the ark survived, as well as all the fish in the sea (Rashi to 7:22).

Before the flood began, Hashem gave Noach precise instructions as to how to build the Ark. It was to have three floors – the top for the people, the middle for the animals, and the bottom for the garbage. The roof was to be sloped so the rain would run off it and down. Included in the instructions to build the Ark, Noach was commanded: צָהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתִּיבָה – a tzohar you shall make for the Ark (Bereishis 6:16).

What was the tzohar that Noach was to construct? Quoting Medrash Bereishis Rabbah, Rashi offers two opinions:

צָהַר. גִּ' אֵל סֵלֶוֶן וְגִ' אֵל אֶבֶן טוֹבָה הַמְאִירָה לָהֶם

There are those who say the tzohar was a window, and there are those who say it was a precious gem that gave illumination for them.

As they were in the Ark for an entire year, and the world was inundated with water and darkness, we understand the second opinion of Rashi: אֶבֶן טוֹבָה הַמְאִירָה לָהֶם. The tzohar was a precious stone or gem that illuminated the Ark for them. (This too is somewhat difficult to understand. We might wonder; how could one stone illuminate the entire Ark and provide enough light for all of its inhabitants? However, certainly Hashem could make a neis and the entire Ark would be illuminated from one stone. Once the stone was up and Noach's hishtaduls was done, from that one stone – much light would shine forth [It is not lost on me as I type these words that from our massive outpouring of national hishtadlus, Hashem can make many great miracles and much light can and will shine].)

However, according to the first opinion quoted by Rashi, אֵל סֵלֶוֶן, that the tzohar was a window – for what did the eight people in the Ark need a window? It was storming, the world was full of destruction, there were the rain waters pouring down from above, the waters of the deep rising from below, destruction at every moment floating all around and over the Ark... What purpose would a window serve the Ark's inhabitants?

One answer remains as important for Noach in his time as it is for us, each individual in Am Yisrael, today. When the world around is storming, one may not ensconce him or herself in a protective cocoon without a window to the destruction

happening outside, all around. It is morally reprehensible and against the Torah to say, "I am safe (or live under the illusion of safety, for today, no Jew anywhere in the world is safe), I am protected, I have my secure Ark which will keep me warm, dry, and protected, and hence, I can close my ears, my eyes, my heart, my mind and my life to the destruction around me." When the world is storming – when our nation is fighting for her Land and Home! – when our soldiers are stationed at the southern and northern borders (at the time of this writing), when one hundred and ninety-nine captives are confirmed held in Gaza – including babies, elderly and disabled – when thousands of our brothers and sisters have lost their lives, and so many are bereaved, R"L, it is criminal to close our "windows", to live with the (false) illusion of safety, and to shut our hearts, minds and prayers to their plight!

When one member of Israel is suffering, the entire Israel suffers along – כָּל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יָבֹכּוּ אֶת-הַשָּׂרֵפָה, אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף ה' – (Vayikra 10:6). A window you shall make for the ark.

Israel Prize laureate and presidential candidate **Miriam Peretz**, who lost two of her sons (Uriel and Eliraz HY"D) during their service in the IDF, has paid condolence visits to over 30 families who lost loved ones in Hamas' recent barbaric attacks on Israel.

Speaking with Kan Reshet Bet, Peretz said, "Every morning, I have terrible lists, I did not ever think that I would have binders of names. One after the other, I go from morning to night between bereaved families all across Israel... we need all the help. Yesterday I went to fourteen families, people who I don't know."

Peretz also noted that there are families who are surrounded by thousands of visitors, and there are those who have only a few. She recalled that there was one mother who called her and asked her to come, because she was already standing on the porch. "Many times they need to hear that their sons and daughters who fell, fell not because they ran to battle but because they wanted to live. The greatest comfort is that we live," she said.

"When a grandmother tells me, 'I won't make kuba any more,' I embrace her and show her the rest of the siblings and tell her, 'What about them? You won't make kuba for them?' And then the grandmother says, 'No, no, for them, I'll make it.'"

"There are no bereaved families here – there is a bereaved country," she emphasized.

(<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/378588>)

צָהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתִּיבָה – there are those who say a precious gem and there are those who say a window.

הַכּוֹתֶבֶת בְּבִכּוּי, בְּבִרְכַת יִשְׁעוֹת וְנַהֲמוֹת, ה' יִרְחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל אֲרֻצֵּינוּ,
Michal

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Ksav Sofer

By **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**

Parshas Noach Grand Larceny

Hashem said in His heart: “I will not continue to curse the land because of Man...nor will I again continue to smite every living being as I have done.”[1]

That’s a relief, even if it is a bit unexpected. Why would G-d want to limit Himself in this way? He had good reason to act the way He did. The same circumstances could conceivably arise in the future. Wouldn’t the same punishment fit comparable crimes?

Hashem’s statement itself seems upside-down. He places punishment of the earth ahead of smiting Man. Shouldn’t it be the other way around? The earth was only obliterated because of Man’s sins. If Hashem pledges never to punish Man in the same way in the future, then there will be no need to punish the earth. Man’s sin is the cause; wiping out the earth is the effect.

Or maybe not. Let’s remember what Ramban[2] writes about Adam’s menu. Originally, he was to eat only the seeds of plants, and the fruit of trees. Meat was forbidden to him, because animals bear some resemblance to Man, and it was not appropriate to destroy souls that show some similarity to ours. Man surely was greater than the animals, but that greatness was not so a priori, and not to be celebrated.

The mabul changed the equation. Noach was responsible for saving all animal life, by taking the animals along on the ark. All animals from then on owed their very existence to Man. It became appropriate from Man to make complete use of them. Now, let’s look at the interim. As a consequence of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Man was told that he would be able to eat only by the sweat of his brow. In other words, he was effectively restricted even in his vegetarian diet. Whereas before the sin he could avail himself freely of things that grew on their own, this was no longer the case. His sin had reduced his stature. He could no longer see himself as so superior even to plants, that he could take them for granted. He had to earn his right to them through his toil.

Adam’s progeny continued the decline, till they arrived at the generation of the Flood. By this time, they were so corrupt – so diminished and unentitled – that they lost their license to consume anything at all! Taking anything from this world would be a form of theft, similar to what Chazal say happens when any of us take pleasure without first reciting a berachah. On the scale of humanity as a whole, it would be grand larceny.

Seen this way, mankind has to disappear not as a punishment, but because there was no appropriate way to sustain itself. All the sustenance Man needed was off-limits. Taking any food from the earth was unethical. “The earth was full of robbery”[3] does not mean only that they stole from each other, but that all of their ordinary eating was also theft!

A mankind that could not eat could not endure. G-d had no choice but to purge it from the face of the earth. And since the earth itself was created for Man, it, too had lost its purpose. Noach’s righteousness not only saved mankind, but created the license for him and his descendants to enjoy and utilize the world that he salvaged. This is the key to understanding what Hashem meant in our pasuk in speaking about sparing the world even before pledging not to destroy mankind. Having taken the burden of continuing world civilization on his shoulders, Noach’s post-Flood world would forever be in his debt. His descendants would always possess some entitlement to enjoy its benefits. The “food chain” would never be fully disrupted for them, and therefore there would be no need to destroy the world or Man to prevent his taking what did not belong to him.

1. Bereishis 8:21 2. Bereishis 1:29 3. Bereishis 6:13 Ksav Sofer © 2023 by Torah.org.