

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET
ON PARSHAS NOACH - 5756

(c/o CShulman@paulweiss.com)

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To: CSHULMAN, " " Highlights of the Torah weekly
por...
Date: 10/23/95 10:41am
Subject: Torah Weekly - Noach

* TORAH WEEKLY *

Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion
with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiros
Parshas Noach
For the week ending 4 Cheshvan 5756
27 & 28 October 1995
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Summary

It is now ten generations since the creation of the first man, Adam HaRishon. Adam's descendents have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and Hashem resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for Noach, the sole righteous man of his era, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth. Hashem instructs Noach to build an Ark in which to escape the Flood. After forty days and nights, the flood covers the entire earth, even the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days, the water begins to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the Ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends forth first a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later, Noach again sends out the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive branch in its beak. After seven more days, Noach once again sends forth the dove, which this time does not return. Hashem then tells Noach and his family to leave the Ark. Noach brings offerings to Hashem from the animals in the Ark which were carried for this purpose. Hashem vows never again to flood the entire world and gives the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. Noach and his descendants are now permitted to eat meat, unlike Adam. Hashem commands the Seven Universal Laws; the prohibition of idolatry, categories of forbidden sexual relations, murder, eating the meat of a living animal, and the institution of a legal system. The world's climate is established as we know it today. Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noach's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yafes, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Ham is cursed that his son Canaan will be the lowest of slaves. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom are descended the seventy nations of the world. The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in Hashem fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parsha concludes with the genealogy of Noach to Avram.

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Commentaries

B'S'D' "Noach was a righteous man -- upright in his generation" (6:9).
`There are those who say that the Torah is praising Noach here, and there are those who say it is denigrating him -- that Noach was righteous only in comparison to the rest of his generation, but if he had lived in the time of Avraham Avinu, nobody would have thought anything of him.' (Rashi) If the Torah itself praises Noach, why would one think to imply that it is belittling him?
Really, the idea is this: Noach recognized the depravity of his generation so clearly that he stunted no effort to distance himself from it in every possible way. Thus, he made himself into a tzadik. In the time of Avraham Avinu, however, there would have been no such motivation, since the people were on a much higher spiritual level. Consequently Noach would not have made the effort to perfect himself.
(Adapted from Rabbi Yoizil Horowitz)

"And G-d said to Noach ...Behold I am going to destroy the world..." (6:13).

Hashem first tells Noach that He is going to destroy all life, but doesn't tell him that it will be by a Flood. Then Hashem instructs Noach to build an Ark, and only after that does Hashem inform Noach that He is going to flood the world. Why did Hashem wait to tell Noach that He was going to destroy the world with water until after He had commanded the building of the Ark?

The obvious answer is that Hashem wanted Noach to build the Ark to fulfill His command, and not for his own rescue. For, without knowing that a Flood was the chosen method of destruction, Noach could equally well have built himself a deep earth trench as a fallout shelter against lethal solar radiation. From this we can learn a lesson for all mitzvos -- we should do them purely because they are the will of Hashem, even if we think we may know the reason...

(Adapted from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein)

"Behold I am about to bring the Flood waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which there is a breath of life under the heavens" (6:17).

The prophet Yeshayahu (Isaiah) refers to the Flood as the `waters of Noach', implying that Noach bears at least partial responsibility for the Flood. For, if Noach had taught his generation to know Hashem by instructing them to emulate Hashem's middos (character traits), they surely would have repented.

The Rambam (Maimonides) once had a dispute with a philosopher whether instinct or behavioral training governs the behavior of an animal. The philosopher held that an animal can be trained so completely that it can be made to do almost anything. To prove his point, he painstakingly trained a number of cats to stand upright, balance trays on their paws and serve as waiters. He dressed them for the part in white shirts with little black bow-ties, and conducted a banquet with the cats as the waiters. As these feline waiters were serving the soup, The Rambam, who had been invited to the banquet, released a mouse... The banquet room was turned to pandemonium as the cats, forgetting all their hundreds of hours of training, let their trays crash to the ground, rushing about on all fours after the mouse.

Without training, a person's baser instincts and desires will drag him onto all fours. However, the human being is distinct from the animals by virtue of his ability to perfect his middos so that they control his baser instincts. One who has not yet worked on perfecting his middos will, like the trained cat, be able to put on a show of discipline for a time, but only so long as no `mice' are released in his path... Only after a person has acquired good character traits, will the Torah reside in him, for even though only Torah can bring one's middos to ultimate perfection, where

there is no foundation of proper middos, the acquisition of Torah is impossible.

(Adapted from Shiurei Binah -- Rabbi Zev Leff)

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Haftorah: Yeshayahu 54:1-55:5

"Come all who are thirsty...go to the water...get wine and milk" (55:1).

Just as water, wine and milk keep best in plain inexpensive containers, so Torah, which satisfies the thirst of all who learn it, stays with one who is humble. The revealed part of Torah is like water: Just as the human body cannot exist without water, so the Jewish People cannot survive spiritually without the revealed Torah. The secrets of the Torah are like wine: They must be imbibed with care and are not equally tolerated by all. The Midrashim of the Torah are like milk and honey: They are sweet and nourishing, instilling love and fear of Hashem.

(Tiferes Zion)

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Sing, My Soul!

Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Eishes Chayil - "A Woman of Valor..."

The 22 concluding passages of King Solomon's Proverbs serve as a tribute to Hashem and his Torah on one level and on another level to the Shabbos and the Jewish woman who prepares the home for it. The simple and allegorical implications of "woman" used by Solomon find expression in the Talmudic interpretation of the passage: "He who has found a woman has found good" (Proverbs 18:22). If this is a literal reference to woman, say our Sages, see how good is the good woman that even Scripture praises her. If this is an allegorical reference to Torah, concludes the Sage Rava, see how good the good woman is that she has been chosen to serve as an allegory for Torah itself. In similar fashion we say these Biblical verses, each beginning with one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as a tribute to all the divine dimensions of the holy day we have just begun to enjoy and to the Jewish wife and mother whose accomplishments form the canvas on

which our song of praise is painted.

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PARASHAT NOACH
SICHA OF RAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT" A

Release My Soul From Bondage

"When Noach was in the ark, he would constantly pray to God: 'Release my soul from bondage (Psalms 142:8).'" (Midrash Tanchuma 58:11)

This prayer succinctly expresses the tragedy of Noach and his generation. The Zohar tells us that when Noach disembarked from the ark and saw the terrible results of the destruction, he turned to God and asked: "You are known as a merciful and compassionate God. Is this desolation an expression of your mercy?!" God replied reproachfully: "When I told you, 'The end of all flesh is coming before Me,' I will destroy the land,' Behold I will bring the flood,' what did you do? Instead of praying for the salvation of your generation, you busied yourself with building an ark to save

yourself and your dear ones. And now you show surprise at the destruction!?"

The Zohar thus expresses the rebuke that Noach received for his lack of concern for his generation. A person can only pray when he feels the need to do so. One can only pray for the welfare of the community if he considers himself a member of the community, and shares in its pain and suffering. If Noach felt distanced from his community, how indeed could he pray for their welfare?

Noach stood alone, separate from his neighbors. Only after he closed the doors of the ark did he begin to realize the extent of his isolation. With the closing of the doors of the ark, he suddenly became aware of the rift between himself and his generation. But his realization came too late; his isolation was complete.

At that moment Noach began to cry out to God: "Release my soul from bondage!" Not merely from the physical, external bonds of the ark, but from the spiritual shackles which bind the tzaddik (righteous person) and isolate him from his surroundings.

Noach observed the depraved and violent world which surrounded him and attempted to separate himself. He feared that if he came too close to his neighbors, he might find his own soul and behavior corrupted by them. Noach escaped from the chance to redeem his neighbors, and instead built up an "ark" to protect himself, hoping that his neighbors would observe his righteous behavior and change their ways.

In contrast to Noach, Avraham symbolized the involvement of the tzaddik with his surroundings. The moment Avraham heard of God's intention to destroy Sodom, he began to beg and pray for mercy.

The Jewish people came into being through Avraham, and not through Noach. The children of Avraham must feel a connection to their surroundings, and attempt to improve the entire world rather than isolate themselves from their neighbors.

According to the Zohar (Parashat Mishpatim), Noach's generation was worthy of receiving the Torah. They possessed tremendous energy and drive, but their potential strengths were channeled in negative directions, towards evil and destructive behavior. Noach saw his generation's external negative traits and was quick to distance himself from them. If he had taken the time to look closer, he would have discovered the tremendous positive potential that lay dormant behind the outer wrapping, potential awaiting the tzaddik's touch to uncover the goodness and bring it to fruition.

(Originally delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Noach 5733. Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig, translated by Gila Weinberg)

From: "Jeffrey Gross <75310.3454@compuserve.com>"
To: CSHULMAN , " "Halachic Topics Related to the
Week...
Date: 10/26/95 4:30am
Subject: Parshas Noach-Tzitzis

HALACHA FOR 5756

SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS NOACH

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of halachic topics related to the parsha of the week.
For final Halachic ruling consult your Rav.

Tzitzis Production by women:

QUESTION: May a woman put the Tzitzis strings on the garment (Tallis Katan or Tallis Gadol)?

DISCUSSION: The Talmud in Gitin 45b excludes women from the writing of Tefilin, since they are not commanded in the Mitzvah of putting on Tefilin. Following this reasoning, Rabbeinu Tam applied this Halacha to the Mitzvah of Tzitzis. Since women are exempt from the Mitzvah of Tzitzis, they are prohibited from stringing the Tzitzis on the garment as well. The majority of the Rishonim do not agree with this. They allow women to be involved in all phases of Tzitzis production. Shulchan Aruch (OC 14:1) rules like the majority view. Nevertheless, for this and other reasons the Rama advises that L'chatchillah women should not be allowed to put Tzitzis on a garment(1). One should conduct himself according to this view(2).

However, only the insertion of the strings through the hole, the first set of Chulyos and the following double knot should not be done by women.

All Poskim agree that if already done, the Tzitzis are kosher and need not be redone.

Tzitzis Production by Minors

QUESTION: May a minor place Tzitzis on a garment?

DISCUSSION: Based on the previously mentioned Rama, some Poskim rule that a minor should not place Tzitzis on a garment. Other Poskim feel that minors are not included and L'chatchillah a minor is allowed to put Tzitzis on a garment. Mishna Berurah(3) rules that it is not proper to allow a minor to do so. There is, however, another problem with minors doing this. When strings are placed on a garment, they must be placed with the proper intention, L'shem Mitzvas Tzitzis. Since we can not be sure that a minor would do so, a minor may not place Tzitzis on a garment unless he was supervised by an adult. If a minor was not properly supervised, then the Tzitzis must be opened and redone

properly. A minor, however, may prepare Tzitzis for himself or for another minor. Even when he becomes Bar Mitzvah, he does not need to have them opened and redone(4).

Tzitzis Production at Night

QUESTION: Is it permitted to place the strings of the Tzitzis on the garment at night?

DISCUSSION: There are some Poskim(5) who recommend that this should not be done. Their reasoning is based on the Talmudic rule of Taase V'lo Min Haasui. Since night is not a time when one is obligated in Tzitzis, it follows therefore that one can not produce kosher Tzitzis at that time. The majority of Poskim(6), however, reject this argument. The Mishnah Berurah doesn't discuss this issue, but the Chofetz Chaim is quoted(7) as having permitted this practice. The Chazon Ish is quoted(8) as ordering Tzitzis to be prepared for him at night.

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FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Many Poskim rule that other Mitzvos such as putting S'chach on a Sukkah is included in this prohibition.
- 2 See Biur Halacha ibid. Aruch Hashulchan refers to this view as a Chumara B'ealma.
- 3 In 14:4 he quotes both views without ruling. In Biur Halcha he rules that it is appropriate to be stringent.
- 4 Biur Halacha 14:1.
- 5 Tosfos Chaim on Chayei Adam 11:1; Shalmas Chaim 3:28.
- 6 Tehila L'dovid 18:4; Aruch Hashulchan 14:7; Kaf Hachayim 18:2
- 7 Shu"t Rivevos Efraim OC 3:27.
- 8 Dinin V'ganhagos Chazon Ish 2:11.

From: "listserv@lubavitch.chabad.org (W-2-B LIST Chabad-Lubavitch)"
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B"H
 Torah Studies
 Adaptation of Likutei Sichos
 by
 Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks
 Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion

NOACH

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This Sicha brings together two related lessons of this Sidra: The virtue of Shem and Japheth in covering their father's nakedness and averting their eyes from it; and the use of a lengthy euphemism in place of the word "unclean," which teaches the necessity of delicacy in speech.

It then solves the paradox that on the one hand we should not notice the faults of others, while on the other, we should seek to correct their errors.

PURITY OF SPEECH AND SIGHT

On the verse from this week's Sidra, "of clean beasts and of beasts that are not clean (they came to Noah and into the ark, two by two)," the Talmud comments: "An unrefined word should never pass a man's lips, for the Torah goes out of its way and uses eight extra letters to avoid an unpleasant word."

Rashi explains that the word "tammay" would have saved eight letters in place of the phrase "that are not clean." And since the Torah is always as concise as possible, the message of this elaborate phrase is that one's speech should be at all times free of improper expressions.

The Sidra also contains, besides the directive about speech, a lesson about sight.

Shem and Japheth were so careful not to look upon their father Noah's nakedness that "they went backwards, and their faces were turned backwards, and they did not see their father's nakedness." And the reward promised emphasizes their virtue: "Blessed be the L-rd, G-d of Shem, and may Canaan be servant to them. May G-d enlarge Japheth and may he dwell in the tents of Shem."

But the story is slightly puzzling. It is clear from the fact that Shem and Japheth walked backwards, that they did not see their father's state. Why then does the Torah add the apparently redundant words: "And they did not see the nakedness of their father?"

The Mirror Which Reflects Faults

There is a saying of the Baal Shem Tov that if a person sees something wrong with someone else, this is a sign that he himself has a similar fault. He sees himself, as it were, in a mirror - if the face he sees is not clean, it is his own which is dirty.

Now, we can ask: Why should one not be able to see a genuine wrong in someone else without being at fault oneself?

The reason is that Divine Providence is present in every event. If we see bad in someone, this also has its Divine purpose, and that is to show us our own failings which need correcting. And we need to be shown our faults in an indirect way for "love covers all faults," and self-love is always strong.

Man is blind to his own shortcomings. He needs to see them exemplified in someone else, to force him to reflect on himself and see their counterparts in his own life.

But the task of the Jew is not only self-perfection, but also the improvement of others: "You shall surely rebuke your friend, even a hundred times."

Surely, then, when he sees his friend's failings, Providence intends him to help to correct them, not only to introspect on his own weaknesses?

To put it more strongly, a Jew is an end in himself, and not merely a means for others to make use of. How then can we be asked to use a friend for our own purposes? And without any palpable benefit to the friend concerned? If so, perhaps the reason one notices the fault is only to benefit his friend, and not that he also has the fault?

NOTICING AND CORRECTING

To understand this we must refer to the continuation of the above quotation from the Talmud: "A man must always speak in proper expressions."

The Talmud, after answering a relatively incidental problem, then asks, "But do we not find in the Torah the expression 'tammy'?" (i.e., the very term that we have been asked to avoid).

But this is strange. For the word "tammy" is found in the Torah in more than one hundred places! It is so obvious a problem that it should surely have been raised immediately, not after a more minor point. Nor does the surprised tone of the question seem appropriate to such a straightforward objection.

The explanation is, that in legal (halachic) contexts, the requirement of clarity and unambiguousness outweighs the consideration of propriety: And so "tammy" is used.

In narrative contexts, however, the concern for delicate expression compensates for the lengthier wording of these euphemisms.

Therefore the Torah's use of words like "tammy" does not contradict the principle that wherever possible we should use the more delicate phrase. And the Talmud raises its objection in the way it does, because "tammy" is used only rarely in the narrative sections of the Torah.

Indeed, even in the halachic sections, when the law does not relate directly to uncleanness but mentions it only in passing, the Torah still prefers the euphemism.

This applies not only to speech but also to sight. When one sees a Jew doing something wrong, one's first concern must be to seek the "halacha" (i.e., the duty) required of him - namely, that one reproaches him and tries, with tact and grace, to correct his ways. But when one finds oneself seeing this wrong not as something directed at himself (i.e., something that he must correct), but just as a failing in his fellow (when one's attitude is critical without being constructive), this is evidence that this is a "mirror," and that one is oneself at fault.

THE VIRTUE OF SHEM AND JAPHETH

And this explains why the Torah, after saying that Shem and Japheth turned their faces away from Noah, adds "and they did not see their father's nakedness." It is here emphasizing that not only did they (physically) not see him; they were not even aware of his fault as such - they were concerned only with what must be done (which was to cover him with a mantle). Ham, the third brother, did however see his father, and thus betrayed his own failings.

The story conveys to us the moral that not only should we not talk about the shortcomings of others (as Ham did in telling his brothers about his father), but we should not even think about them except insofar as it lies with us to set them right. And whoever follows this, participates in the reward, "Blessed be the L-rd, G-d of Shem" and "May G-d enlarge Japheth," and contributes to the unity and brotherly love of Israel which will bring the Messiah to the world.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. X pp. 24-29)

From: mlIjer1.co.il (Menachem Leibtag)
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To: yhe-parshaIjer1.co.il (Chumash shiur focusing on theme and structure by Menachem Leibtag)
Date: 95-10-26 21:07:37 EST

PARSHAT NOACH

Ben Azai, in the Yerushalmi Ndarim 9:4 makes a puzzling statement:

"Zeh Sefer TOLDOT ha'Adam..."

Tanaya - Rebbe Akiva omer "v'ahavta l'ray'acha kmocha", klal gadol ba'Torah (that you should love your neighbor as yourself is a important principle of the Torah).
 Ben Azai omer, "zeh sefer toldot ha'Adam"- klal gadol m'zeh! (the genealogy of Adam is even a great principle) (see also, Torah Tmimah on Breishit 5:1)

How could one possibly state that the very technical list of the genealogies from Adam to Noach found in Breishit 5:1-32 even consitutes a principle, let alone one more important than the famous dictum that "one should love his neighbor as himself"!

 When studying Sefer Breishit, we often dismiss the genealogies found at the end of Parshiot Breishit and Noach as immaterial. Nevertheless, these genealogies are an integral part of Chumash, and as Ben Azai claims, their significance must be understood.

This week's shiur will show how the "sifrei tolodot" found in Sefer Breishit form its structure and develop its theme.

SIFREI TOLDOT

Although usually unnoticed, Sefer Breishit is actually comprised of a collection of various "sifrei tolodot". After the story of the creation in seven days (1:1-2:3), the phrase "ayleh toldot..." introduces each ensuing narrative.

As the following table will demonstrate, these "sifrei toldot" comprise the 'skeleton' of Breishit, linking its various sections together:

PEREK	AYLE TOLDOT ...	THE STORY OF ...
1	----	The creation of "shamayim v'aretz"
2-4	"shamayim v'aretz"	Man in Gan Eden
5	Adam -	the generations from Adam to Noach
6-9	Noach-	Noach's family saved from the Mabul
10	Bnei Noach-	the dispersing of the 70 nations
11	Shem -	the generations from Shem to Terach
11-25	Terach -	Avraham, Haran (Lot), and Nachor
25	Yishmael -	the children of Yishmael
25-35	Yitzchak -	Yaakov and Esav (their rivalry)
36	Esav -	the children Esav
37-50	Yaakov -	Yosef and his brothers

These "sifrei tolodot" do more than keep the sefer together, they also help develop its theme of "bchi'ra" (choosing) and "dchi'ya" (rejecting).

Note, that some of the "toldot" are very short, as they simply state that the person lived, married, had children and died. e.g. the generations from Adam to Noach. Yet, other "toldot" are very detailed, i.e. those of Noach, Terach, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

Each successive "ayle toldot" focuses on a specific descendent that came from the previous "toldot", and the narrative usually explains why that descendent was chosen and others rejected.

This sequence of "sifrei toldot" continues until this "bchira" & "dchiya" process ends. Thus, the last "ayleh toldot..." found in Sefer Breishit is that of Yaakov Avinu (37:2), as all twelve of his sons are chosen and none are

rejected.

?This may be the significance of his name change to Yisrael, iy"h, we will deal with the concept in later shiurim.X

An analysis of the progression of the "sifrei tolodot" in Sefer Breishit will be instrumental towards finding the Divine purpose of this "bchira" & "dchiya" process.

The "tolodot" of Sefer Breishit can be divided into two distinct sections.

Section One, chaps. 1->10, deals with mankind as a whole. This unit presents a universalistic approach, as no special nation has been chosen, nor does there seem to be any need for such. Noach, himself, was not chosen to become a special nation, rather to preserve mankind. From his offspring, the seventy nations, representing all mankind, evolved. Although Shem and Yefet received special blessings, there was no concept of a special nation among those seventy.

In Section Two, chaps. 11->50, we find the story of Am Yisrael. In this unit, Sefer Breishit is no longer universalistic, rather, particularistic.

Beginning in chapter 11 with the genealogy of Shem, the sefer focuses on God's "bchira" of a special nation and its destiny. This section concludes as all twelve sons of Yaakov are chosen as the twelve tribes of Israel and they and their children ("70 nefesh") descend to Mitzraim.

The following table will review the "bchira" & "dchiya" process in both sections of Sefer Breishit.

I. UNIVERSALISTIC 1->10	II. PARTICULARISTIC 11->50
-----	-----
TOLDOT:	TOLDOT:
shamayim va'retz	Shem to Terach
?Adam in Gan EdenX	Terach (3 sons)
Adam to Noach	?Avraham chosenX
Noach (chosen)	?Yishmael rejectedX
?the MabulX	Yitzchak chosen
offspring of bnei Noach	?Esav rejectedX
(Shem, Cham, & Yefet)	Yaakov chosen
70 Nations disperse	70 "nefesh" to Mitzraim
?Migdal BavelX	

From a thematic point of view, the question we must ask is: what caused this turn-about? At what point does Hashem decide to focus on developing one nation specifically as opposed to all mankind equally? The answer must lie in the short narrative that deals with Migdal Bavel, which forms the divider between these two sections of Sefer Breishit. Analyzing that narrative will be critical towards understanding the reason for this transition, as the results of Migdal Bavel will necessitate the choice of Am Yisrael as God's special nation.

MIGDAL BAVEL

When reading the first four psukim of the story of "migdal Bavel", it is hard to pinpoint one specific sin:

?Note, however, the use of the first person plural.X

"Everyone on earth had the same language and the same

words. And as they travelled from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another: Come, LET US make bricks and burn them hard. Brick became their stone, and bitumen their mortar. And they said, Come LET US build US a city and a tower with its top in the sky, AND WE WILL MAKE A NAME FOR OURSELVES, lest WE shall be scattered all over the world." (11:1-4)

From a cursory reading, it is not clear exactly what was so terrible about this generation. After all, is not achieving 'achdut' (unity) a positive goal? Likewise, the use of human ingenuity to initiate an industrial revolution, developing man-made building materials, i.e bricks from clay etc., seems to be a positive advancement of society. Furthermore, there appears to be nothing wrong with simply building a city and a tower. Why was God so angered, that He decided to stop this construction and disperse mankind?

Chazal focus their criticism of this generation on their antagonistic attitude towards God (see Rashi 11:1). One key phrase in the Torah's explanation of the purpose for the tower reflects the ego-centric nature of this generation:

"v'naase LANU SHEM" ?WE shall make a NAME for OURSELVESX (11:4) ?see Sanhedrin 109aX

Instead of devoting themselves to the NAME OF GOD, this generation removed Him from the picture altogether. The builders of the tower united for the sake of an unholy end. Their projects emphasized man's dominion and strength.

Although the behavior of this generation appeared to be more moral than that of "dor ha'Mabul", God was still disappointed as they instituted an anthropocentric society instead of a theocentric one. Their primary aim was self-aggrandizement, to 'make a name' for themselves.

Migdal Bavel should not be seen as just another story about mankind, nor simply as the history of the development of language. This story is critical for understanding the purpose of the Jewish nation.

To appreciate this purpose, we must compare the events of Migdal Bavel to the story of Avraham Avinu.

TOLDOT SHEM, V'SHEM HA'SHEM

When Avraham Avinu first arrives in Eretz Yisrael, he builds a mizbayach at Bet-El and calls out b'SHEM HaSHEM (12:8). After his sojourn in Egypt due to the famine, Avraham returns to this mizbayach at Bet-El and once again calls out b'SHEM HaSHEM! (13:4 / see also 21:33). Similarly, his offspring, the nation of Israel, are commanded in Sefer Dvarim to establish the Mikdash "ba'makom asher yivchar Hashem l'shakeyn SHMO sham"! (Dvarim 12:5,11). As we explained in our shiurim on Sefer Dvarim, the Mikdash was to become the focal point through which Hashem's reputation will become known to all mankind (see Shmuel II 7:22-27, Mlachim I 8:43).

?This concept of SHEM HaSHEM, God's name and/or reputation, appears time and again throughout chumash as a very important theme.X

Based on this structure of Sefer Breishit, and the juxtaposition between the story of Avraham Avinu and Migdal Bavel, it appears that God chose Avraham in reaction to the

events of Migdal Bavel. Avraham was selected to become the father of a nation that would serve as a catalyst for all nations to ultimately find God. By establishing a special nation following special mitzvot in a special Land situated at the crossroads between the two great centers of ancient civilization, God intended that Am Yisrael would help assure that all mankind would establish theocentric societies.

? This connection between Migdal Bavel and the "bchiyra" of Avraham Avinu is supported by the Midrash that states that Avraham was 48 years old when he recognized God for the first time. Avraham Avinu reached age 48 on the same year that Peleg died, which according to Chazal corresponds to the precise year of Migdal Bavel!X

MIGDAL BAVEL AND THE BET HA'MIKDASH

Further proof of this biblical theme can be found in an intriguing contrasting parallel that exists between the story of Migdal Bavel and the Bet haMikdash. The generation of Migdal Bavel used their unity and creativity towards a common goal to build a city and tower in a valley for the purpose of making their own name great, which was antithetical to God's purpose of creation. In contrast, Am Yisrael is destined to use their unity (achdut) and creativity for a the purpose of building a city (Yerushalaim) and a tower (the Bet Hamikdash) on its mountain top. This Mikdash becomes the product and symbol of a theocentric society, as it represents the ideal relationship between man and God.

The following table will review this contrasting parallel:

MIGDAL BAVEL	BET HA'MIKDASH
City	Jerusalem
Tower	the Temple
valley	mountain
unity for man	unity for God
man's reputation	God's reputation (shem Hashem)

Although this goal was only partially achieved, it emerges as primary theme of the prophecies of "acharit hayamim" (messianic times). Once again, we find linguistic and thematic parallels to Migdal Bavel, for example:

In Zfania we find:

"ki az eh'foch el amim SAFA B'RURA, li'kro ku'lam b'SHEM HASHEM, u'ludvo shchem ECHAD." (3:9)

Similarly in famous "n'vuat acharit ha'yamim" of Yeshayahu (2:1-4), we find the unity of all nations gathering to Yerushalayim (city), to the House of God (tower), at the mountain of the Lord ("har"- mountain, as opposed to "bi'kah" - valley, as found in Migdal Bavel). Here we find all the nations gathering to listen to and learn the words of God's Torah which will come out of Zion.

"ki mi-tzion te-tzey Torah u'dvar Hashem mi'Yerushalayim."

These two sources emphasize once again that our role as the Nation of Avraham is to lead mankind in the proper direction, away from the ethics of the Migdal Bavel society.

We can now return to Ben Azai's statement that "sefer

toldot ha'Adam" is a greater principle than "love thy neighbor". As every sefer nevuah must have a theme which relates to the nature of the relationship between man and God, we can learn from structure of Sefer Breishit that mankind is expected not only to establish a moral society, but also a theocentric one. Unity and a moral society, albeit important, must be directed towards God. This conclusion may be the true meaning of Ben Azai's statement, as it can be reached by an analysis of "sifrei toldot ha'Adam" in Sefer Breishit!

shabbat shalom
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. One could suggest that events that took place at Migdal Bavel represents the natural course of society. Nations join together for the common goal of showing mankind's superiority and greatness. Unfortunately they do not seek G-d. As time passes, nations disagree with each other, they fail to communicate with one another as each has different goals and ideals.

Hashem decides to stop this building project by breaking the people's unity. They can no longer communicate with each other, they do not understand each other's language, they no longer have a common goal in their project.

1. Use this suggestion to explain a possible meaning of language in the Migdal Bavel narrative.
2. Why would different goals cause nations to argue and disperse.
3. What is the natural cause of the development of languages?
4. In what way is language unique to mankind?

B. Note that in the entire Migdal Bavel narrative, Hashem's name is exclusively shem havaya.

1. Relate this to last week's shiur.

C. The word "toladot" implies 'the offspring of ...'. For example, "zeh sefer toldot ha'adam" introduces the story of the children of Adam. Similarly, "aylel toldot yaakov..." introduces the story of the children of Yaakov (Yosef and his brothers), etc. ?See the Rashbam on this pasuk / 37:2!X.

1. Based on this explanation, what is the 'toldot' of shamayim and aretz. (see 2:4)
2. How does this help us understand the nature of man, and his creation in perek bet (from two sources - afar & ruach)?
3. See 2:5, in what way is "matar" similar?

D. THE MABUL - two reasons --> two promises.
(excerpts from last year's shiur, unedited)

Just as there is a double story of creation, the same is true for the story of the Mabul. There are two reasons for Hashem's decision to bring the flood. The first reason relates to the ideas we have seen with 'shem Havaya' and can be seen in perek 6:5-8. As we saw in perek bet the reason for the Mabul here is because of sins of mankind. If the purpose of creation is man and man is not worthy of remaining part of the creation,

then he and the animal kingdom (created for him) must be destroyed.

The second reason (perek 6:9-13) is given in 'shem Elokim'. Here the aretz (the land) has sinned. Man is only part of this creation process. All living things (kol basar) are to be destroyed, because all living things went astray from what Hashem expected of them. Man's deeds are not the sole reason for the flood as he is only part of a much larger picture. This is necessarily reminiscent of Perek Aleph.

Elokim tells Noach to take animals 'zachar un'kayva', 2x2, etc., (perek 6:14-22) . Havaya tells Noach to take the tahor animals 7x7, 'ish v'ishto' and the unclean animals 2x2 (7:1-5). These latter will be needed later in order to bring a Korban. As we will see, bringing a Korban is applicable when G-d is being represented by shem Havaya - the aspect of G-d with which man can develop a relationship.

When the Mabul ends both these 'aspects' of Hashem that decided to bring the Mabul need to promise never to bring another similar type of destruction. In perek 8/ p'sukim 20-21 Noach brings a Korban to Havaya after which shem Hashem promises "Lo osif l'kalel et ha'Adama ba'avur Ha'adam". ?compare carefully to 6:5-8 !X Just as before, the focus is on man and his deeds. In perek 9, shem Elokim promises never to bring a Mabul again on the ARETZ. It was the aretz, kol basar, that sinned and therefore the brit of the Keshet v'Anan is with the Aretz. Man again is only part of a much larger picture. ?as before, compare carefully to perek 6:17-21X

In the beginning of perek 9, Man receives brachot from Elokim very similar to those brachot he received on the sixth day of creation. However, he has lost some of his power and is no longer at the same level of importance: instead of total control over the animal kingdom (u'rdu vkivshuha) we have only their fear of man, "umoratchem v'chitchem...". As opposed to Perek Aleph where man was vegetarian, after the Mabul he can eat other animals: he has become part of the animal kingdom. Furthermore, since he can now kill other animals to eat them, man must be warned that he is not allowed to kill his fellow man. Although down a level, he must still be aware of the fact that he is unique and must still attempt to reflect the Tzelem Elokim within himself.