

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS NOACH - 5757

For e-mail of current or back issues contact [csbulman@paulweiss.com](mailto:csbulman@paulweiss.com)

Some Internet Dvar Torah Lists

**VIRTUAL JERUSALEM:** E-mail to: [listproc@virtual.co.il](mailto:listproc@virtual.co.il) In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your\_Name" Some of lists: Aviner-Eng: Ateret Cohanim; Ask: Ask-the-Rabbi; Bircas: Parsha by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz; DafYomi: Ohr Somayach; Halacha: by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt; Parasha - Page: by Rabbi Kornfeld; Parasha-QA: Ohr Somayach; Torah-Talk: Parasha by Rabbi Steinberg; Weekly: Ohr Somayach on Parsha; Yhe-Halak by Rabbi Friedman; Yhe-MB by Rabbi Rimon; Yhe-UndHalakha by Rabbi Bick and Zvi Shimon; Yhe-IntParsha by Zvi Shimon; Yhe-Pesachim; Yhe-Metho by Rabbi Taragin; Yhe-Sichot - of Rav Lichtenstein and Rav Amital; Yhe-Jewhpi - on Jewish philosophy; Yhe-Parsha: by Rabbi Leibtag (& yhe-par.d); YS-Parasha and YS-personalities - from Shaalvim; YITorah; Arutz-7; Shabbat-Zomet. Send command "lists" for complete lists.

**SHAMASH:** E-mail to [listproc@shamash.org](mailto:listproc@shamash.org) In message write "sub 'listname' <your name>" Bytetorah: Zev Itzkowitz; Enayim: YU parsha; Daf-hashvua: London; mj-RavTorah: Rav Soloveichik ZTL on Parsha. Send "lists" for complete list.

**PROJECT GENESIS** E-mail to [majordomo@torah.org](mailto:majordomo@torah.org) with "subscribe listname <your e-mail address>" in message. Lists include: Torah-Forum-digest / DvarTorah / Halacha-Yomi / Maharal / Rambam / Ramchal / RavFrاند / Tefila / YomTov / Drasha. Send "lists" for complete list.

**SHEMA YISRAEL:** E-mail to: [listproc@jen.co.il](mailto:listproc@jen.co.il) In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your\_Name" Some of lists: Peninim - on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum; Outlooks on Parsha by Rabbi Zev Leff; Hear - insights from Rabbi Weber; Companion - Shalom Bayis by Rabbi Feinhandler; Yitorah; Daf-insights, Daf-background, Daf-review, etc. by Rabbi Kornfeld. Send "lists" for complete lists.

**CHABAD** E-mail to [listserv@chabad.org](mailto:listserv@chabad.org). In subject write: subscribe me. In text write: "Subscribe <code> (e.g.: code = W-2)" Some of Codes: D-3) Rambam Daily; W-2) Likutei Sichos On Parsha; W-3) Week in Review on Parsha; W-4) Once Upon A Chasid; W-7) Wellsprings - Chasidic Insight into Torah Portion. Send command "lists" for complete list of codes.

**ISRAEL NEWS** To: [Listserv@pankow.inter.net.il](mailto:Listserv@pankow.inter.net.il) Subject: Subscribe Listname <your name> Type "Subscribe <listname> <your name>". Lists include "Israline" and "Israel-mideast". Must confirm w/i 48 hours by sending to same address msg "OK xxxx" with xxxx the code receive in confirmation. Also Jer1 ([listproc@virtual.co.il](mailto:listproc@virtual.co.il)) has Arutz-7.

**WWW - Shamash** - <http://shamash.org> & <http://shamash.org/tanach/dvar.html>; Jerusalem 1 - <http://www.virtual.co.il>; YU - <http://yu1.yu.edu>; YHE - <http://www.virtual.co.il/education/yhe>; OU - <http://www.ou.org>; Chabad - <http://www.chabad.org>; Jewish Comm.Ntwk - <http://www.jcn18.com>; Project Genesis <http://www.torah.org>; ShamaYisrael - <http://www.shamayisrael.co.il>; Children - <http://www.pirchei.co.il>; YOSS Drasha <http://www.yoss.org/whindex.htm>; List - [http://www.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Religion/Judaism](http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion/Judaism); Israel - <http://www.ac.il>; Link page - <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/links.html>; Maven - <http://www.maven.co.il>

**5756 Internet Parsha Sheets on Disk** - If you want some or all of the Internet Parsha Sheets from 5756 including complete Rav Soloveichik and Rabbi Leibtag (in WP6.1 form), drop off formatted disks (6 for complete set) at 184-62 Midland Pkwy

"[ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)" "[ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)" Rabbi Frand on Parshas Noach

Parshas Noach: -----

The Raven Tells Noach "Send The Guinea Pig on This Mission"

The pasuk ÄverseÄ Bereshis 8:7Ä tells us that Noach sent out a raven to check whether land could already be seen. The Medrash says that the raven complained to Noach that, of all the animals and creatures in the ark, he was singled out for this mission. The Medrash continues that Noach answered him back, "What does the world need you for? You are not edible nor are you fit to be offered as a sacrifice." ÄThe commentaries on the Medrash point out that although there were other non-kosher birds on the ark, the raven was the least appetizing of all such birds.Ä

G-d, however, told Noach that he should not have been so harsh with the raven, for there would come a time that the world would need the raven. There would come a time when a Tzadik would arise who would make the whole world dry (referring to the decree of Eliyahu in the time of King Achav that there would be a drought) and this Tzadik would need the ravens to bring him food ÄKings I 17:6Ä.

By keeping Eliyahu alive, the ravens ultimately kept the world alive, because the world needed Eliyahu to remove his curse. Hence, the ravens would literally be responsible for sustaining all of mankind.

B'S'D' We have to understand a number of things. First of all, why did G-d in fact use the ravens to sustain Eliyahu?

I saw an interesting interpretation from the Menachem Tzion. The Menachem Tzion quotes the Talmud in Pesachim Ä113bÄ that there are three who love one another, one of whom is the raven. Thus, ravens do have a redeeming social value: Other animals, as well as human beings, do not get along. They fight and argue. Ravens, however, love one another.

This is why G-d picked the ravens to feed Eliyahu. Eliyahu felt that the generation of Achav was worthless. They were idol worshippers. He saw no purpose in their existence. Yet, the Gemara says ÄJerusalem Talmud Peah 1:1Ä that in the generation of Dovid, when even children were well versed in the laws of purity and impurity, at times when they went out to war there were casualties -- because there were slanderers among them; however in the generation of Achav, even though they were all idolaters, they were victorious in their battles because there was unity and love of Israel among them.

This is the lesson that G-d wanted to hint to Eliyahu: These ravens will feed you. These birds, who you think, and who Noach thought, have no redeeming quality -- they in fact have a tremendous quality. They love one another. This is a quality which is redemptive for the ravens and redemptive for the generation of Achav as well.

The generation of Achav should not be thought of as worthless. Although no one should ever minimize the sin of idolatry, the generation of Achav did have outstanding merit by virtue of the fact that they practiced Love of Israel (Ahavas Yisroel). Through the z'chus ÄmeritÄ of this Ahavas Yisroel, when they went to war, they were always victorious.

There is a second message that G-d was sending to Eliyahu. The ravens brought the meat to Eliyahu -- according to the Gemara in Chulin Ä5aÄ -- from the kitchen of Achav. "This Achav that you, Eliyahu, think is worthless, is, in a certain sense, sustaining you."

Thus, G-d is again teaching Eliyahu not to discount Achav and his generation. No human being can be discounted. Every creature has its purpose and has to be treated as such. Nothing in creation is without purpose. Even a raven and even an Achav have their purpose.

Moshe and Noach as Two Ship Captains in Stormy Seas

There is an interesting Medrash at the end of Devorim. Moshe Rabbeinu has a dialog with various personalities in Tanach. Noach boasts to Moshe that he is greater than Moshe, because he was saved from the generation of the Flood. To which Moshe responds, "No, you saved yourself, but were not able to save your generation; I, however, saved myself and saved my generation. When did I save my generation? When G-d said 'Desist from me and I will destroy them,' ÄDevorim 9:14Ä I pleaded with G-d and was successful in saving both myself and my generation. Therefore, I am greater than you."

The Medrash compares this to two ships that were lost at sea. In one case, the captain saved himself and let the boat sink. In the other case, the captain saved himself and saved the boat and passengers. The Medrash comments that, obviously, the latter captain deserves the greater praise. Therefore, the Medrash says, Moshe Rabbeinu was greater than Noach.

We've mentioned in past years, that even though Noach tried to have an effect on his generation, for whatever reason, he was not successful in saving the generation. The Zohar points out this is why the flood is referred to as "the waters of Noach" ÄIsaiah 54:9Ä, because Noach was to blame for not being able to save his generation.

I once read a eulogy that Rav Shmuel Rozovsky said on the Ponnevitzer Rav. The Ponnevitzer Rav was a tireless worker and labored for Torah causes throughout the world. He built the Ponnevitz Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, that is not only a Yeshiva but is an entire city. He spread Torah throughout the world. He was indefatigable. He could not be stopped. Even when he was already an older man, when other people of a much younger age would fall from exhaustion, the Ponnevitzer Rav would continue on his mission.

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky addressed the question, "What motivated the

Ponnevitzer Rav? -- What kept him going?" Rav Rozovsky said that he heard many times from the Ponnevitzer Rav that he was haunted by the fact that he himself was saved from the Holocaust of Europe but he wasn't successful in saving his generation. From the Lithuanian Rabbinate, the Ponnevitzer Rav was one of the very few that made it out of Europe alive, but he was constantly plagued by the fact that he had not been able to save his generation.

The Ponnevitzer Rav would accuse himself of the Medrash's accusation of Noach, "Myself I have saved, but my boat I did not save." Instead of sinking into depression, however, this thought motivated him. He became 'obsessed' with the idea that, "If I couldn't save that generation in Europe, there is a new generation that I can save." When I go to the Heavenly Yeshiva, I want to be able to say "I saved myself and I saved my generation."

We live, Baruch Hashem, in a time where we have the freedom and the ability and the opportunity to do mitzvos without limit. But, we also live in an era of a Holocaust. If not an era of a Holocaust of gas chambers, Rachmana l'tzlan, one in which Jews are being lost spiritually. I am afraid that one day we will also have to answer to an accusation that "We have saved ourselves, but we have lost our ship." We, with all our mitzvos, and our charity, and our learning Torah -- all very fine -- have, thank G-d, been able to withstand the "tests of America." But that is not enough. There is always an accusation of "You have saved yourself, but not your generation." Therefore, whatever our walk of life, whether its in teaching, or in community service, or whether it's in business or medicine or law or accounting or anything, there is always the challenge to not merely look after our own spiritual needs, but also those of our generation.

If we do not have the holy soul possessed by the Ponnevitzer Rav, and we live normal lives and are not 'obsessed' with this idea, as he was, at least we have to be motivated into some kind of action so that in the future, we will also be able to say "We saved ourselves, and we also saved our generation."

-----  
Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org  
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@clark.net  
-----

RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi Y. Frاند and Project Genesis, Inc.  
Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network 3600 Crondall Lane, Ste. 106  
Owings Mills, MD 21117 (410) 654-1799 FAX: 356-9931

"ohr@jer1.co.il" "weekly@jer1.co.il" 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 6 Cheshvan 5757 18 & 19 October 1996

Overview - It is now ten generations since the creation of the first man, Adam HaRishon. Adam's descendants 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 which were carried in the Ark 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 against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, 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 to be a slave to slaves. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended. 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.

#### Insights

Jewish Ecology "And G-d saw the earth and behold it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." (6:12) The Rosh Yeshiva's wife had to make a decision. Her dining room suite was on its last legs. An investigation was made. It would cost almost exactly the same amount of money to repair the old suite as it would to replace it with an identical new one. Obviously she would want to have a new suite, rather than an old one that had been patched up, however good the repair... Obviously. However, without a moment's hesitation she decided to have the old suite repaired. One of the talmidim asked her why she didn't prefer to have a new suite. She replied: "Around this table sat many of the great Torah sages of Europe at one time or another. When they came to Baltimore, they would always stay with us. It was at this table that Reb Chaim Ozer learned Torah, that Reb Boruch Ber ate gefilte fish on Shabbos. It was on this chair that the Chafetz Chaim sat..." When we think of ecology, we tend to think of our physical impact on Nature. However, our spirituality and our morality also impact the ecosphere. Two identical tables come off the factory assembly line. One table finds its way to a bar. One to a Yeshiva. The table in the bar is not the same table as the one in the Yeshiva. The table in the Yeshiva, supporting holy books and thoughts, is a different table. Not metaphorically -- but in reality. Its very essence is altered and uplifted. Such is the power given over to man: We can alter the very eco-structure of the world. We can destroy the world by polluting it with immorality. Or we can raise ourselves and the world with us to the heavens. Based on Mesillas Yesharim and a story heard from Rabbi Naftali Kaplan

Progeny of Love "These are the offspring of Noach -- Noach was a righteous man." (6:9) The essential offspring of a person are his righteous acts. Just as a person nurtures and cares for his offspring, sparing no love or effort to perfect them, likewise one should behave toward one's good deeds. One should lavish love to perfect even the least promising of them, as one would do with one's children, for no-one considers even the least of one's children insignificant. (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein)

The Taste of Freedom "The dove came back to him in the evening -- and behold, it had plucked an olive leaf with its beak." (8:11) By bringing back a bitter olive leaf in its mouth, it was as if the dove was saying to Noach "Better that my food be bitter and from the Hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He, than sweet as honey, and from the hand of man" (Rashi). During its stay in the ark, the dove had been obliged to rely on Noach for food in order to survive. It brought back a bitter olive leaf -- which it would not normally eat -- to express an idea that our Sages teach: The most bitter food eaten in freedom is sweeter than the sweetest food eaten in captivity. (Rabbi S.R. Hirsch)

What's in a Word "Then Hashem said to Noach, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household'..." (7:1) The word in Hebrew for ark is Teiva, which also means word. Throughout the history of the Jewish People, both in times of oppression and assimilation, our only refuge has been to "Come into the Teiva"; to come into the "word". That word is the word of prayer uttered from a contrite heart; that word is the word of the Torah, which has proved itself to be a "Noah's ark" for all our household throughout all of history. (Ba'al Shem Tov)

Haftorah: Isaiah 54:1-55:5

Just as in the Parsha this week, where Hashem promises never to bring another flood to destroy the world, so too the Haftorah carries Hashem's promise never to exile the Jewish People after the redemption from the current Exile of Edom. The Parsha depicts the terrible flood which destroys the earth and its myriad creatures at the decree of the Merciful G-d. It looks like the end, but it is, in reality, the beginning. Out of the ashes of a degenerate world sprouts the pure seed of Noach. Similarly, the destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash, and the dispersal of the Jewish People was like a "flood", which superficially seemed like a total disaster. The Prophet tells that rather than being the ruin of the nation, in reality this was its preservation, and like a mother left lonely and grieving, Zion will be comforted when the galus (exile) has achieved its appointed task of purification, and her children return to her.

Jewish Dietetics "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)

Sing, My Soul! Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Askinu Seudasa - "I prepare a feast..."

I prepare a feast of faith Askinu Seudasa D'Meheimenusa  
The Shabbos meal is indeed a feast of faith, says the Sfas Emes, because the very eating is a source of nourishment for a Jew's faith in Hashem. This is consistent with the idea suggested by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in regard to the Torah passage: "You shall observe the Shabbos because it is sacred for yourselves" (Shmos 31:14). In regard to the Festivals the rule is that we divide the day -- "Half for Hashem and half for yourselves." In regard to Shabbos, however, even the eating and drinking which is "for yourselves" is also considered sacred.

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor:  
Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer Prepared by the  
Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International

"ohr@jer1.co.il" "parasha-qa@jer1.co.il"

\* PARSHA Q&A \* In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Noach For the week ending 6 Cheshvan 5757

#### Parsha Questions

1. What are the `offspring' of righteous people?
2. How did Man corrupt the Earth?
3. What sin sealed the fate of the Flood Generation?
4. Why did Hashem tell Noach to build an ark, instead of saving him some other way?
5. How was the Ark's roof shaped? Why?
6. Why did Hashem postpone bringing the Flood for seven days?
7. How high did the waters of the Flood rise?
8. Which creatures escaped the Flood without the aid of the Ark?
9. After the flood, some of the springs were left opened. Which?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the Flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. How many seasons are mentioned in the Torah?
14. What was permitted to Noach that was forbidden to Adam? What exceptions are there to this permission?
15. Why does the command to "be fruitful and multiply" follow directly after the prohibition of murder?

16. With which mitzvah were Shem's descendants rewarded, due to his act of covering his father?
17. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
18. Why did Ashur leave the land of Shinar?
19. Why was the punishment for building the Tower of Babel less severe than the punishment of the Flood generation?
20. Why was Sarah called `Yiscah'?

Bonus QUESTION: Verse 11:1 says "The whole earth had one language...."

Previous verses, however, indicate there were already different languages (e.g., 10:31). How can this be?

#### I Did Not Know That!

The Rainbow symbolizes the idea that the world deserves destruction, but Hashem `holds back' due to His promise to Noach. The rainbow's shape hints to this idea, since it is like an archer's bow. This symbolizes that the world deserves to be devastated as though by an armed warrior. However, the bow of the rainbow points upwards, away from the earth. This is as though the archer is pointing the bow away from his victim, symbolizing that Hashem will not destroy the world.

#### Recommended Reading List

Ramban 6:19 Miracle of the Ark 7:1 Preserving the World  
8:11 The Olive Leaf 9:12 The Rainbow 9:18 Ham and Canaan  
10:9 Nimrod 10:15 The Land of Canaan 11:32 The Death of Terach  
Sforno 8:21 The New World 8:22 The Pre-Flood World 9:6 The Crime of Murder 9:9 The Conditions of the Covenant 9:13 Meaning of the Rainbow

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 6:9 - Their good deeds.
2. 6:1 - Through promiscuity and idolatry.
3. 6:13 - Theft.
4. 6:14 - So people would see him building the ark, find out about the impending flood, and possibly repent.
5. 6:15 - The roof slanted downwards from the middle, so that water would run off on both sides.
6. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.
7. 7:20 - Fifteen amos above the mountain tops.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:2 - The useful ones, such as the hot springs of Tiberias.
10. 8:11 - That it's better to eat food `bitter like an olive' which comes directly from Hashem, rather than sweet food provided by humans.
11. 8:14 - A full solar year.
12. 8:14 - Eleven days.
13. 8:22 - Six.
14. 9:3,4 - Eating meat, except for limbs or blood taken from a live animal.
15. 9:7 - To equate one who abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
16. 9:23 - The mitzva of tzitzis.
17. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, convincing them to rebel against Hashem.
18. 10:11 - He saw his children were being influenced by the wicked Nimrod.
19. 11:9 - Because the people in the time of the Tower of Babel were unified -- they acted with love and friendship towards one another.
20. 11:29 - The word `yiscah' is related to the Hebrew word `to see.' Sarah was called Yiscah because she could `see' the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.

Bonus ANSWER: Everyone knew the original language -- Lashon Hakodesh. In addition, various families began developing different languages. Hashem `mixed up' their languages at the Tower of Babel by causing them to forget

Lashon Hakodesh.Malbim

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi  
Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer  
Jewish L EEEEEEEE Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of

J L E Ohr Somayach International  
J L E 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103  
J L Exchange Jerusalem 91180, Israel  
J L E Tel: 972-2-581-0315 Fax: 972-2-581-2890  
J J L E Mailto:ohr@virtual.co.il  
(C) 1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

From jr@sco.COM Thu Oct 17 19:44:33 1996  
<mj-ravtorah@shamash.org>; Thu, 17 Oct 1996 19:44:27 -0400 (EDT)

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Noach

The Haftorah for Parshas Noach (Isaiah 54:6-10) states that Hashem abandoned us for an instant but will gather us in with the greatest of mercy. Just as Hashem promised not to bring another flood upon the world, Hashem promised to no longer be angry with the Jewish People. The Rav wanted to understand the connection between these 2 situations. The Navi is saying that no matter how far the Jew may stray from Hashem, he always has a path back to Him. Hashem says that just as His covenant with Noach to never bring another flood is eternal, so to is His covenant with the Jewish People to return them to their homeland, never to be exiled again. The Rav explained the connection between the flood in the days of Noach and the Teshuva mentioned by the Navi.

The Zohar asks why is Noach's name connected with the flood, May Noach. The Zohar answers that in a certain sense Noach was responsible for the flood. He did not take the initiative to bring the people of his generation to repent or to beseech Hashem to spare them. The Midrash Rabbah (Zos haberacha 11:1) reflects this point in the story of the discussion between Noach and Moshe as to who was greater. Noach Said that he was greater than Moshe because he alone from his entire generation was deemed worthy of saving. Moshe replied that he was greater in that not only did he rescue himself, but he saved the rest of his generation as well when Hashem wanted to destroy the Jewish People after the episode of the golden calf. The Midrash quotes the well known parable of the 2 captains of doomed ships, one who managed to save himself (Noach) while the other was able to save all the passengers and crew as well (Moshe).

Noach was given the same proclamation of impending disaster as Moshe. When Noach was told that Hashem was going to bring a flood and destroy all of mankind and maintain His covenant with Noach alone, he simply did everything that was commanded to him. Noach was reassured that he would continue even though all others would perish. This was apparently acceptable to Noach. He did not ask Hashem to reconsider, nor did he embark on a mission to get mankind to change its ways.

On the other hand, when Moshe was told that Hashem was going to destroy the Jewish People, but that Moshe himself would survive and be the patriarch of a nation greater than Bnay Yisrael (in essence a covenant with Moshe) Moshe rejected this and prayed for the salvation of the people. It would appear from the Zohar and the Midrash Rabbah that had Noach prayed for his generation they would have been spared. Noach's accountability for his passivity in not praying for his generation warrants the linking of the flood waters with his name.

Moshe engaged in such fervent prayer on behalf of Bnay Yisrael, to such a degree that the Midrash says that he, Kivayachol, grabbed hold of the garments of Hashem in praying for the pardoning of the people. Moshe felt that no matter how deeply immersed in sin the individual might be and how justifiable a decree of destruction might be, there is always hope that the sinner might repent and the decree overturned. Noach felt that the people of

his generation were so contaminated by sin and so far removed from Teshuva that prayer on their behalf would not help.

The Rav noted that the flood may be viewed as a turning point in these two approaches to repentance and forgiveness. Perhaps Noach was correct in his view that, before the flood, the total immersion in sin could not be affected by Teshuva. Prior to the flood the Torah says: Vayar Hashem Ki Rabbah Ro'as Ha'adam VCHAL Yetzer Machshivos Libo RAK Rah Kol Hayom" ALL of man's instincts were evil, both in deed and in potential. The act of sin caused man to lose his Tzelem Elokim, it was such a corrupting influence that there was no returning from it. After the flood, when Noach builds and altar and brings sacrifices, the Torah describes that Hashem decided that He would not punish man again in such a manner.

Hashem recognizes that man has a natural inclination towards evil from his earliest youth. After the flood the words Vchal Yetzer and Rak Rah are no longer mentioned. There was a change in man's personality that no matter how steeped in sin he might be, he still has the ability to come back. He does not destroy his Tzelem Elokim. Man can rise from the depths of a generation deserving of a flood to the heights of building a Mizbeach and offering sacrifices of gratitude to Hashem. Destruction is required where there is no hope of repentance. The generation of the flood had no hope of repentance for they had forfeited their Tzelem Elokim. The generations following the flood were promised that no matter how deeply enveloped in sin they may be, they can regain the Tzelem Elokim, by repenting and returning to Hashem.

The Rav explained that this is the meaning of the words of Isaiah. Though you were deserving of destruction and exile because of your sin, there is still hope that you will be returned through the great mercy of Hashem. Just as the May Noach were the turning point that Teshuva could restore the Tzelem Elokim and change mankind from a state of Rak Rah, so to Hashem will never destroy the Jewish People and they can always do Teshuva and return to Hashem.

This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted.

---

#### HALACHA FOR 5757 COPYRIGHT 1996-7 SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS NOACH

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

**Wearing Tzitzis: Is It Mandatory?**

According to the Midrash quoted by Rashi (Bereishis 9:23) the Jewish people were awarded with the Mitzvah of Tzitzis because our forebear, Shem, took pain to preserve the modesty of his drunken father Noach by covering him with a garment.

The Talmud(1) states further that one who is scrupulous in his observance of the Mitzvah of Tzitzis will merit "seeing the Shechinah." But, the question is often asked, is one required to wear a garment with Tzitzis fringes attached to it, or is it merely optional?

According to the basic law, one is required to put Tzitzis on his garment only if the garment that he is wearing has four square corners, which most garments nowadays do not have. One is not required to put on a four-cornered garment in order to incur the obligation of Mitzvas Tzitzis. Nevertheless, it is fitting and proper for every male to wear a Tallis Koton all day. By doing so, he fulfills an important Mitzvah, one that serves as a constant reminder of all of the other Mitzvos of the Torah(2). Accordingly, it has become customary for all G-d fearing people to wear a Tallis Koton (a small four-cornered garment) all day(3). Since this has become the prevalent custom, one may no longer deviate from the accepted practice. Nowadays, therefore, one is obligated to wear a Tallis Koton all day long(4). Those who are meticulous in their Mitzvah observance do not walk four Amos without

Tzitzis(5).

Married men who wear a Tallis during Davening need not recite a separate blessing over their Tallis Koton. Rather, when they recite the blessing over the Tallis Gadol, they should have the Tallis Koton in mind(6). Unmarried men who do not wear a Tallis Gadol recite the Bracha on a Tallis Koton which must be of the proper size and material. Preferably, they should wrap the Tallis Koton around their head before putting it on(7).

Although one must definitely wear a Tallis Gadol during Davening, he should not pass up Davening with a Minyan if a Tallis is unavailable in Shul(8). In regard to Tefillin, however, it is better to Daven without a Minyan than to Daven without Tefillin(9).

Before the Bracha on a Tallis Gadol or Koton can be recited, the Tzitzis fringes must be separated from one another(10). Some Poskim(11) imply that if the strings are intertwined, then one has not fulfilled the Mitzvah of Tzitzis at all, while other Poskim hold that B'dieved one is Yotzei(12). [If taking time out to separate the Tzitzis will cause one to miss Tefilla B'tzibur, he may rely on the lenient view(13).] All Poskim agree that if the strings are tied [or glued] together, then the Mitzvah has not been fulfilled and the Bracha said over them is a Bracha L'vatallah(14).

Often, the Chulyos (the wrapped portion of the Tzitzis fringes) become unraveled or loosened. If this happens, the strings should be rewrapped and knotted. On Shabbos, however, this is strictly forbidden. Tightening or knotting the Tzitzis strings on Shabbos, may be biblically prohibited(15).

\*\*\*

Cotton Garments

QUESTION: L'chatchilla, can one wear a Tallis Koton made out of cotton?

DISCUSSION: There is a dispute among the Rishonim as to whether it is a biblical requirement to attach Tzitzis to a four-cornered garment made of cotton. Some Rishonim(16) hold that only woolen garments are obligated in Tzitzis M'deoraissa, while others(17) include cotton as well. Both views are quoted in Shulchan Aruch(18), and the Rama rules that cotton garments do require Tzitzis M'deoraissa. Nevertheless, many Poskim advise a G-d fearing person to wear only a Tallis Koton made out of wool and thereby fulfill the Mitzvah according to all views(19). Other Poskim, however, do not insist on wool(20) and there were eminent Gedolim(21) who wore cotton garments to fulfill the Mitzvah of Tzitzis.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Menachos 43b, quoted in OC 24:6.

2 Shelach 15:39 quoted in OC 24:1: "That you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem and perform them." In addition., the Talmud (Menachos 41:1) says that wearing a Tallis Koton protects a person from Hashem's anger.

3 Aruch Hashulchan 8:2; Tzitz Eliezer 8:4; Yechave Daas 4:2.

4 Igros Moshe OC 4:4. See also Igros Moshe OC 5:20-25.

5 Mishna Berura 8:1. See also Tzitz Eliezer 14:49, who says that the Tallis Koton should be left on even if one is suffering from the heat.

6 Mishna Berura 8:24. This is especially recommended since often the Tallis Koton may not be the right size according to all views. In order to avoid reciting a Bracha in a questionable situation, it is best to recite the Bracha over the Tallis.

7 Mishna Berura 8:7

8 Imrei Yosher 2:201-2. Shu"t Be'er Moshe 5:5.

9 Mishna Berura 66:40

10 OC 8:7.

11 Artzos Hachayim OC 8; Biur Halacha 8:7 according to the view of the Gr"a and Olas Tomid.

12 Aruch Hashulchan 8:13; Chazon Ish OC 3:9.

13 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 9:7; Mishna Berura 8:18; Aruch Hashulchan, 8:13. According to the Artzos Hachayim, quoted above, one must separate his Tzitzis even at the expense of Tefilla B'tzibur.

14 Chazon Ish OC 3:9.

15 Ktzos Hashulchan (Badei Hashulchan 317:4); Az Nidberu 3:22; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 15:50.

16 Rif, Rambam.

17 Rashi, Tosfos, Rosh.

18 OC 9:1.

19 Chayi Adam 11:5; Shulchan Aruch Harav 9:4; Mishna Berurah 9:5; Igros Moshe OC 1:2; OC 2:1; OC 3:1; OC 3:52. In Igros Moshe OC 5:20-25 he adds that one who suffers from the heat is not required to wear woolen garments although he himself was particular to do so.

20 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and Aruch Hashulchan do not mention this stringency.

21 Chazon Ish (quoted in Shone Halachos 9:1) and the Steipler (quoted in Archos Rabeinu 3:188) based on the ruling of the Gr"a (Maase Rav 17).

There are several reasons given why the Gr"a ruled so, see Tzitzis - Halacha Pesukah pg. 77.

HALACHA is published L'zchus Hayedl Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

If you wish to sponsor a HALACHA Discussion, receive it free via the Internet or have any questions, please call (216)321-6381/ FAX (216)932-5762 or E-mail to:75310.3454@compuserve.com

\* Distributed by: \* The Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos \* 1801 South Taylor Road \* Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 \* HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT (VBM)

PARSHAT HASHAVUA

PARSHAT NOACH

by Menachem Leibtag

Mazel tov to rabbi moshe and atara taragin and the entire taragin family on the birth of a baby boy.

The MABUL (the Flood) and MIGDAL BAVEL (the Tower of Babel) are undoubtedly the two primary stories in this week's Parsha. However, each is preceded by a list of genealogies which appear to be rather irrelevant. Why does Sefer Breishit dedicate so much attention to "sifrei tolidot" (list of genealogies)?

This week's shiur explains how the "sifrei tolidot" of Sefer Breishit help to form its structure and to develop its theme. INTRODUCTION

The following table, which shows the flow of parshiot from the end of Parshat Breishit until the end of Parshat Noach, will help clarify our opening question.

Note how the major stories are 'introduced' by TOLADOT:

PSUKIM TOPIC

-----

5:1-32 TOLDOT ADAM - The genealogy from Adam until Noach

6:1-9:29 `-> ha'MABUL - The story of the Flood

10:1-32 TOLDOT BNEI NOACH - The genealogy of Shem, Cham & Yefet

11:1-9 `-> MIGDAL BAVEL - The story of the Tower of Babel

11:10-27 TOLDOT SHEM - The genealogy from Shem until Terach

11:27-12:3 `-> God's choice of AVRAHAM AVINU

Clearly, Chumash must tell us about the Mabul, Migdal, Bavel, and Avraham Avinu, for these events change the course of history. Why, however, must Chumash list the genealogies which appear to have little prophetic significance?

THE STRUCTURE OF SEFER BREISHIT

To answer the above question, we must first explain the overall structure of Sefer Breishit.

Although it is rarely noticed, the SIFREI TOLDOT actually create the framework of Sefer Breishit! The TOLADOT introduce EVERY story in the sefer from cover to cover. Let's explain:

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

For example: "eyleh toldot ADAM" (5:1) means - "these are the CHILDREN of Adam" - and thus introduces the story of Adam's

children, i.e. Shet, Enosh, Keinan, etc. Similarly, "eyleh toldot Noach" introduces the story of Noach's CHILDREN - Shem, Cham, and Yefet. [See Rashbam 37:2 for a more complete explanation.]

Some of the "toldot" in Sefer Breishit are very short; they simply state that the person lived, married, had children and died (e.g. the generations from Adam to Noach). Other "toldot" are very detailed, e.g. those of Noach, Terach, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. However, EVERY story in Sefer Breishit is an integral part of someone's "toldot".

Let's use a table, once again, to show how all the stories of Sefer Breishit are introduced by SIFREI TOLADOT. They form the 'skeleton' of Breishit, linking its various sections together:  
PEREK / TOLDOT.../ THE ENSUING STORY

|        |                  |  |
|--------|------------------|--|
| 1      | (none)           | The creation of SHAMAYIM V'ARETZ         |
| 2->4   | SHAMAYIM V'ARETZ | ADAM (Man) in Gan Eden & his banishment  |
| 5      | ADAM             | The generations from Adam until Noach    |
| 6-9    | NOACH            | Noach's family saved from the MABUL      |
| 10     | BNEI NOACH       | MIGDAL BAVEL/ dispersing into 70 nations |
| 11     | SHEM             | The generations from SHEM until TERACH   |
| 11->25 | TERACH           | Life of Avraham, Haran (Lot), and Nachor |
| 25     | YISHMAEL         | The children of Yishmael                 |
| 25-35  | YITZCHAK         | Yaakov and Esav (their rivalry)          |
| 36     | ESAV             | The children of Esav                     |
| 37-50  | YAAKOV           | The story of Yosef and his brothers      |

The first "toldot" of Sefer Breishit - TOLDOT SHAMAYIM V'ARETZ - is interesting and meaningful.

Recall that the first chapter of Breishit explains that God created SHAMAYIM v'ARETZ (heavens and earth). In the next chapter, we find the first use of "eyleh toldot:

"eyleh TOLDOT ha'SHAMAYIM v'ha'ARETZ b'hibaram..." (2:4)

What are the TOLADOT of SHAMAYIM and ARETZ - what are the CHILDREN of heaven and earth? If we follow the progressive pattern of Sefer Breishit, as shown by the above table, then "toldot shamayim v'aretz" MUST be referring to ADAM ha'RISHON.

In other words, even though there appears to be a clear division between SHAMAYIM and ARETZ in the first six days of Creation [better known as "rakiya", see 1:6], it seems as though MAN in Gan Eden reflects the ability to connect between them. This interpretation could help explain the significance of the pasuk which describes man's creation in PEREK BET:

"And Hashem Elokim took formed man from the dust of the EARTH and blew into his nostrils NISHMAT CHAYIM - the breath of life." (2:7)

This second ingredient may reflect the aspect of man which comes from (or at least returns to) heaven.

The next set of TOLADOT are the children of ADAM until Noach, followed by the TOLADOT of Noach, etc. This pattern continues until the very end of Sefer Breishit. [It is suggested that you review the above table to make sure that you understand the nature of this progression.]

These "sifrei tolidot" do more than 'keep the sefer together'; they also help develop the theme of Sefer Breishit. The SIMPLE (short) TOLADOT, which mention the person's name and that he had children, reflect the natural development of mankind, while the DETAILED (and usually lengthy) stories within these TOLADOT explain GOD'S INTERVENTION in the history of mankind. This is an important Biblical theme, for it teaches us that we are to find the hand of God in the development of civilization, especially with regard to important events.

#### THE TWO SECTIONS OF SEFER BREISHIT

Despite this successive nature of the TOLADOT in Sefer Breishit, they are clearly divided into TWO distinct sections.

Section ONE (chapters 1->11), deals with mankind as a whole, (sort of a universalistic approach), for NO special nation has yet to be chosen. We do find special detail about Noach, however; it is NOT because he is designated to become a special nation. RATHER, it is because through him mankind will be preserved. Furthermore, the seventy nations (chapter 10), representing ALL of mankind, evolve from his children.

We do find that Shem and Yefet receive special blessings, but the concept of a SPECIAL nation is not mentioned.

Section TWO (chapters 11->50), begins the story of AM YISRAEL, God's special nation. In this section, Sefer Breishit is no longer UNIVERSALISTIC, rather it becomes PARTICULARISTIC, for it focuses on God's choice of a special nation.

Chapter 11, TOLDOT SHEM, introduces Avraham Avinu, whom God chooses in chapter 12 to become the forefather of His special nation. The remainder of Sefer Breishit explains which of Avraham's offspring are CHOSEN [JHIRA, e.g. Yitzchak and Yaakov], and which are REJECTED [JHIYA, e.g. Yishmael and Esav].

This section concludes when this BCHIRA process is completed, i.e. ALL twelve sons of Yaakov are CHOSEN. They are to become the twelve tribes of Israel; none of their children can be rejected.

The following table summarizes (and compares) these two sections of Sefer Breishit:

I. UNIVERSALISTIC (1->11)      II. PARTICULARISTIC (11->50)

|                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| TOLDOT:                 | TOLDOT:                      |
| shamayim va'aretz       | Shem to Terach               |
| [Adam in Gan Eden]      | Terach (3 sons)              |
| Adam to Noach           | [Avraham chosen]             |
| Noach, three sons       | [Yishmael rejected]          |
| [the MABUL]             | Yitzchak chosen              |
| Children of Bnei Noach  | [Esav rejected]              |
| [the 70 nations]        | Yaakov chosen                |
| MIGDAL BAVEL            | Yosef and his brothers       |
| the 70 nations disperse | 70 "nefesh" go down to Egypt |

This sequence of "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 this concept in later shiurim.]

#### WHY IS AVRAHAM AVINU CHOSEN?

What is the thematic significance of these TWO sections? Why does Sefer Breishit suddenly change its focus from all mankind to one special nation? To answer this question, we must look for a connection between the last story of the first section - MIGDAL BAVEL, and the first story of the second section - BCHIRAT AVRAHAM. We can safely assume that a careful analysis of the story of MIGDAL BAVEL should help us explain the reason for this transition, and God's choice of Avraham Avinu.

#### 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 significant usage of the first person plural.]

"Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words. And as they traveled from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another: Come, LET US make bricks and burn them hard. 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 egocentric nature of this generation:

"v'naase LANU SHEM" [WE shall make a NAME for OURSELVES] (11:4) [see Sanhedrin 109a]

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

Although this generation appears to be better behaved than DOR ha'MABUL, God was still disappointed, for they established 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 sets the stage for God's choice of Avraham Avinu.

It is the destiny of Avraham, the primary descendent for "toldot SHEM", to bring God's Name ("shem") into the history of civilization; to fix ("tikun") the error of mankind at MIGDAL BAVEL. How and why, (iy'h) will be the topic of next week's shiur.

In light of our discussion, we can better appreciate a puzzling statement made by Ben Azai:

"Zeh Sefer TOLDOT ha'Adam...

It is taught - Rebbe Akiva says, "v'avavta l'ray'acha kamocho" - LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF - klal gadol ba'Torah - This is a GREAT PRINCIPLE of the Torah.

Ben Azai says, "zeh SEFER TOLDOT ha'ADAM" (5:1) - klal gadol m'zeh - is an even GREATER principle.

(Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4)

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

One could suggest that Ben Azai's statement is not referring specifically to the genealogies, but rather to the overall structure of Sefer Breishit as formed by the TOLADOT, and thus its theme. Although it is very important to 'love thy neighbor', the theme of Sefer Breishit - that Am Yisrael must lead all mankind to a theocentric existence - is an even greater tenet of our faith.

shabbat shalom, menachem

## FURTHER IYUN

### \* PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S SHIUR

#### A. AVRAHAM AND SHEM HA'SHEM

1. Note that 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). Read this entire section (12:1-13:4) carefully. Explain why Bet-el is the focal point of Avraham's aliyah.

2. Am Yisrael is commanded in Sefer Dvarim to establish the Mikdash "ba'makom asher yivchar Hashem l'shakeyn SHMO sham"! (Dvarim 12:5,11). Relate this to the above.

3. See also Shmuel II 7:22-27 and Melachim I 8:42-44). [This concept of SHEM HaSHEM, God's name and/or reputation, appears numerous times in the Tanach and emerges as a primary Biblical theme.]

4. Relate to Zfania 3:9 - "ki az eh'foch el amim SAFA B'RURA, li'kro ku'lam b'SHEM HASHEM, u'luvdo shchem ECHAD."

5. Relate to Yeshayahu 2:1-6. Is there a contrasting parallel to Migdal Bavel?

B. The suggested thematic connection between Migdal Bavel and the "bchira" 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 - 1996 to Briyat ha'olam. Recall that Avraham was born in year 1948!

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/droshe.html>

Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel 1613 92nd Ave. SW

Calgary, AB, T2V-5C9 Phone:(403) 259-3230/8404

Dvar Torah: Noach, 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

#### NOACH: THE HUMAN BEING

"NOACH ISH TZADIK TAMIM HAYAH BE'DOROTAV" - "Noach was a righteous and wholehearted person, IN HIS GENERATION."

Usually this phrase is understood as: "the most righteous in his generation".

But our Rabbis were puzzled by the literal translation, which would seem to indicate a superfluous emphasis on Noach's righteousness in HIS generation only. Interestingly enough, two opposing explanations are given in the Talmud. (see Rashi ad hoc.)

The first interpretation is in Noach's favour. "He was righteous DESPITE his generation." Even though Noach saw only moral decay and wickedness all around him, he was able to overcome the peer pressure of society, and maintain his commitment to G-d, and to righteous values. How much more righteous would he have been were he to have lived in a generation with great leaders such as our forefather Abraham?

The second interpretation, however, is to Noach's detriment. "He was Righteous in ONLY IN HIS generation," but compared to great personalities of other generations, like Abraham, he would not have amounted to anything special. Only when compared to the wickedness of the generation of the flood, was Noach outstanding.

What a strange statement to make regarding one whom the Torah describes in only positive terms! Why would our Sages find it necessary to denigrate and belittle Noach's accomplishments in such a manner?

I would suggest that, quite the contrary, even this statement to Noach's detriment is really a compliment in disguise, and perhaps the more relevant role model of Noach for future generations. For diminishing Noach's own internal moral strength in fact boosts and augments his accomplishment! It emphasises his ability to withstand the pressures of the wicked society.

A great personality such as Abraham would have had no problem maintaining a righteous way of life even in the midst of an immoral society. But the lesson here is that one doesn't have to be an Abraham or an Isaac in order to maintain a commitment to one's spiritual values in a "spiritualless" society. Even a Noach, who, compared to Abraham, may not have been objectively an exemplary personality as such, was, never-the-less, able to overcome the temptations and pressures of a moral-less society, and rise above them.

In many ways, our generation is not much different from that of Noach's! It is a secular society, full of violence, immorality, and values contrary to Judaism and its teachings. It is oftentimes quite difficult for us to remember our commitment to our Jewishness.

But we can learn from Noach, who was righteous in HIS generation, DESPITE his generation. Noach was able to stand against all the immorality and injustice of his world, stand alone, and shout: I live for values in which I believe.

Most importantly, we must remember that Noah was not a spiritual "superman". He was an ordinary man, with an ordinary life. He was "in his generation", a product of his generation, a product of his society. Yet, he was able to rise above them, and live by his commitment to G-d and to spiritual values.

For many of us Noah is a more attainable role model than even Abraham. We shy away from the great Righteous giants of history, because they are too far removed from our lives. Noah is a symbol of our struggle, day by day, a struggle to maintain our commitment and values, in a world with different standards.

we must Learn from Noah, draw strength from his commitment. And in that way we shall all grow MEI'CHAYIL EL CHOYIL", "from strength to strength."

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT(VBM)  
STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT DELIVERED BY THE ROSHEI  
YESHIVA PARASHAT NOACH  
SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

\*\*\*\*\*  
A WARM MAZAL TOV TO AHARON AND MIRIAM HABER ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR SON NETANEL ZVI. MAY YOU RAISE HIM TO TORAH, CHUPPA, U-MA'ASIM TOVIM. SPECIAL MAZAL TOV TO RAV MOSHE TARAGIN AND HIS WIFE ATARA ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR SON, BROTHER TO GALL, SHOSHI, AND TAMAR!! RAV TARAGIN TEACHES IN YESHIVAT HAR ETZION AND HAS WRITTEN FOR THE VBM SINCE ITS INCEPTION. MAY YOU RAISE HIM TO TORAH, CHUPPAH, UMA'ASIM TOVIM! TRIPLE MAZAL TOV TO ASHER MEIR AND HIS WIFE ATARA ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR TRIPLETS, TWO BOYS AND A GIRL, SIBLINGS TO SHIRA, RENANA AND HLEEL. ASHER IS A MEMBER OF THE HAR ETZION OLLEL, AND WRITES FREQUENTLY FOR THE VBM HALAKHA SERIES, ALEI ETZION, AND OTHER YESHIVA PUBLICATIONS. MAY YOU RAISE THEM TO TORAH, CHUPPAH, U-MA'ASIM TOVIM!!!  
\*\*\*\*\*

A Comparison of Noah and Moshe  
Summarized by Ron Kleinman

In Devarim Rabba (11:3) we learn: "Many daughters have performed virtue, but you have exceeded them all' - to whom does this refer? To Moshe, who rose higher [in prophecy] than anyone else ... Another explanation [for this verse] is as follows: Noah said to Moshe, 'I am greater than you, for I was saved from [among] the generation of the Flood.' Moshe answered him, 'I am more elevated than you. You saved yourself but lacked the power to save your generation. But I saved myself as well as my generation, which was deserving of annihilation following the sin of the Golden Calf.' On what basis [do we arrive at this explanation]? It is written (Shemot 32): 'And God regretted the evil which He had decreed that He would do to His nation.' To what may we compare this? To two ships in the sea, each with its captain. One saved himself but failed to save his ship, while the other saved himself as well as his ship. Who is worthy of being praised? Surely the one who saved himself as well as his ship! Similarly, Noah saved no one but himself, while Moshe saved himself and his generation. Therefore we say, 'You have exceeded them all.'"

In this week's parsha we read (Bereishit 9:20), "And Noah settled down (va-yechal) to be a man of the earth, and he planted a vineyard." Chazal explain that the word 'va- yechal' means that he 'became profane' ("asa atzmol chulin"). We may ask: how is it that Noah, who in his early days was termed a 'righteous man ... perfect in his generation,' becomes a 'man of the earth,' makes his life profane, discards his garments (i.e. his distinction) and rolls about naked like an animal on the ground?

This verse may serve as the basis for those commentaries who interpret the description of Noah as being 'perfect in his generation' to his detriment, insofar as "the latter part of his life revealed his true essence" - a man of the earth, rolling about naked - "more accurately than the earlier part" - when he was not truly a righteous man, as we may infer from God's reflection: "For I regret that I created them, and Noah..." He was as guilty as the rest of society, but for some reason he "found favor in God's eyes" and his sins were temporarily forgiven.

What is the source of the distinction between Noah and Moshe? Possibly they had differing levels of spiritual capability - Moshe was blessed with something which Noah did not have. This would explain the Midrash: "Moshe said to Noah, 'You did not have the power [i.e. the potential or the ability] to save your generation.'"

However, it may be that the difference between them lay not in their capability but rather in their will. Noah was able but unwilling - he demonstrated spiritual apathy and lack of caring for his generation. Noah was quite content living up to the difference between himself - the "perfect, righteous one," and them - the corrupt masses. His ego lifted him above them, strengthened him. Had he lived in a generation containing other righteous men - in Avraham's generation, for example - "he would not have been considered anything at all." And what is the proof? His entire generation was wiped out; he alone remained in the world - and began behaving as a simple "man of the earth," devoid of any specialness.

One of my students once said, "While I sit in Yeshiva, I feel a certain lowering of my motivation. When I am outside of the Yeshiva, on the other hand, in a different - secular - society, I feel a greater motivation, and experience a sense of mission. There I feel a certain sense of obligation." This is not a commendable perception. Even when we find ourselves in a community where the challenges and the animosities are smaller than they are in the secular society, "outside," we have to feel a perpetual push to grow and develop. And outside, in the secular society, we have to actively prevent ourselves from entertaining feelings of pride. Our influence must be felt through personal example, by the radiation of spirituality to our surroundings; not by cultivating our ego and feelings of superiority. (Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Noah 5746. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

Copyright (c) 1996 Yeshivat Har Etzion. All rights reserved.

Peninim on the Torah  
Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum  
Noach

Noach walked with Hashem. (6:9)

Describing Avraham Avinu's relationship with Hashem, the Torah states, "Walk before me and be wholehearted" (Bereishit 17:1) While Noah walked with Hashem, Avraham walked before Him. Noah needed the support of Hashem to maintain his moral strength, while Avraham, who was morally independent, functioned on a higher level. Noah was not successful in turning back the tide of destruction decreed for the people of his generation. This is enigmatic. Noah spent one hundred and twenty years building an ark. During that time he chastised the people. Indeed, throughout the Midrashim we learn that Noah constantly rebuked the people in order to halt their corrupt deeds. Why did he not succeed in inspiring them to repent? What was the key to Avraham's success?

Horav Moshe Schwab, zl, cites Sforno, at the end of Parashas Bereishit, who explains that although Noah was worthy of saving himself, he did not find sufficient grace before Hashem to spare his family based solely on his own merit. Noah's family was saved only as a result of Hashem's grace. Sforno says that three great men did not have the merit to save their families. They were Noah, Daniel, and Iyov. He says that although each of them admonished others, they each also failed to teach their generation the knowledge of Hashem. Avraham reached out to others by teaching them about Hashem. Noah perfected himself, but did not succeed in perfecting others. Hence, his merit was sufficient only for himself.

Sforno teaches us that rebuke can take one of two forms. Noah reproved the people of his generation from a humanistic point of view. He admonished them concerning their interaction between people. He explained that one should not steal and prey upon his neighbor. While he may succeed in over-powering him today, someday he himself might become a target for someone else. Noah's rebuke emanated from a common sense point of view. If I am evil to another person, I will eventually have to answer to others for my actions. He did not emphasize man's higher calling or suggest how one could achieve spiritual/moral perfection. It is not sufficient to simply rebuke; it is essential that one couple the rebuke with advice on how to improve oneself. Noah did not show the people the derech Hashem, the path towards self-improvement. He did not teach them about a way of life

that contains no stealing or murder; one that refines a person's character traits while it purifies his moral perspective. It is not sufficient to tell someone he is doing something wrong; it is necessary to teach him a way to correct his behavior.

And the earth had become corrupt before G-d, and the earth became filled with violence. (6:11)

The text seems to imply that these people were corrupt only in the eyes of Hashem. In the eyes of society, however, they apparently did no wrong. What type of people were they that they were paragons of virtue according to the rules of society, while they were iniquitous before Hashem? Horav David Feinstein, Shlita, cites Chazal in the Talmud Sanhedrin 57A who define "ja,u", corrupt, as referring to immorality and idolatry. These are sins that do not really hurt anybody. Does anyone suffer if a person chooses to bow down to idols? Who is hurt by the immoral activities of consenting adults? The people involved in these sinful acts surely did not believe that they were engaged in criminal acts.

These people did not realize the extent of their invidious actions. The pasuk continues, "And the earth became filled with violence." Their "private" activities became public misdemeanors, as what seemed like innocuous private acts led to a situation out of human control. People cannot rebel against Hashem and expect to be considered fine, upstanding members of the community. Iniquity before G-d results in criminal acts towards one's fellow man. Hashem saw the signs, man's subtle lack of respect for his fellow man, which resulted in a complete breakdown of society.

Hashem would never have destroyed that generation if the sins had truly remained private. Had the world continued to be a viable place for that society, it would not have catalyzed such destruction. Hashem knew that corruption / idolatry and immorality inevitably lead to injustice and violence. Horav Feinstein cites a story related in Talmud Nedarim 91a as support for this idea. A story is told about a man who spent an afternoon in the private company of a married woman. When the woman's husband came home unexpectedly, the secret visitor immediately hid himself in order to avoid a scene. He remained in hiding until he saw the husband take a glass to drink from it. He immediately screamed, "Stop! I saw a poisonous snake drink from that glass!"

Chazal make a remarkable statement regarding this case. They concluded from this act of compassion that the visitor could not have committed a sinful act with the woman. Had this person been involved in an immoral act with the woman, the sin would have dulled his sense of compassion to the point that he would not have been motivated to stop the husband from unwittingly poisoning himself.

This is striking! How often do we hear people say, "My actions are between G-d and me. What I do does not affect anyone else." How untrue are these words! every sin transforms a person. It removes his "tzelem Elokim", G-dly image.

Hashem is the source of ethics and value. To disregard this fact is to remove oneself from the sphere of humanity as established by Hashem. Indeed, the Midrash elaborates upon the fact that man was created in the image of a monkey as well as in the image of a man. Thus, if man rejects his tzelem Elokim by defiling it with acts of immorality, he is left with nothing more than his altar image - a monkey! Hence, those sins which we think are "private" soon become public, as our attitude changes as a result of our exposure to sin.

And the land was filled with corruption. (6:11)

In the Midrash, Chazal teach that "corruption" refers to idolatry. We may wonder why idolatry stands out as the primary sin of that generation. What is there about "chamas," corruption, that infers idolatry? Horav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zl, responds by first defining the essence of idolatry. We are taught that if a certain city has decided to reject one ritual of the taryag, 613 mitzvos, regardless of the type of mitzvah, that city is declared an "Ir Hanidachas," a city that went astray and is to be totally destroyed.

Accordingly, asks Rav Yaakov, why should the fate of the generation of the flood have been decided because of idolatry? In truth, any sin which the people had committed on principle would have sealed their fate. To reject even one mitzvah of the Torah on principle is tantamount to serving idols. Such actions implicitly deny the divine origin of the mitzvos. Taryag mitzvos constitute one G-d-given entity. To displace or deny a mitzvah is to cause the entire structure to come tumbling down. As a servant cannot tell his master what to do, so, too, we cannot tell Hashem how to govern the world. If He has given us 613 commandments, then we must keep all 613 commandments. To refuse to observe even one command, is tantamount to open rebellion against Hashem. Our refusal denies Hashem's supremacy.

The people of that generation rejected the "bein adam lechaveiro," the laws governing man's relationship with his fellow man. They accepted cheating, stealing and other forms of corruption on principle. They denied that Hashem had established a specific code for humans. Their actions denoted avodah zarah, idolatry.

We must ask ourselves whether we ever reject a mitzvah because we feel it is not practical. Do we concoct our own interpretations of mitzvos to suit our lifestyles? We must remember that the difference between an idol worshipper and an observant Jew can be a single mitzvah.

"Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood." (6:14)

The Torah recounts the construction of two "structures" the Ark and the Mishkan. In a lecture to a group of students, Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, commented that these two structures can serve as metaphors to describe the disparity between Jewish education during pre-World War II Europe and its parallel in contemporary society. The Mishkan was an edifice dedicated to spiritual ascendancy. All the people who resided in proximity of the Mishkan were "spiritually correct." They were not exposed to harmful environmental influences which were antithetical to their faith in Hashem and His Torah. Their commitment to the Almighty was not tested every time that they walked out of the shelter of their home. The Mishkan, therefore, served as a place where people could assemble and ascend to greater spiritual heights, to establish a closer bond with holiness.

The Ark served an alternative purpose. It was a vehicle of rescue unto which to save a select group of humans, animals and fowl from certain destruction. While the Mishkan was a medium for enhancing one's individual spiritual level, the Ark was a structure without which humanity would have been decimated.

In previous generations, the institutions of Torah education served to further develop the students' knowledge of Torah. The spiritual climate outside of the school was not adverse to a child's continuing observance. In today's society, however, Jewish Day Schools serve as a means for protecting a Jewish child from the various ills of contemporary society to which he is routinely exposed. Indeed, our Torah institutions are similar to the Ark that transported Noach to safety amidst the waves of destruction.

And Cham saw...his father's nakedness and told his two brothers. And Shem and Yafes took a garment...and covered the nakedness of their father and their faces were backward. (9:22,23)

We have here before us a distinction between the two reactions among Noach's sons, the reaction of Cham as opposed to that of his brothers, Shem and Yafes. Cham observes an indiscretion on the part of his father, and he immediately exploits it. Not only does Cham jest about his father's failing, but he also goes out of his way to publicize it. He shows no filial respect whatsoever. His two brothers, on the other hand, throw the mantle of love over their father's weakness; they turn their heads away, so even they would not view their father's shame.

We can derive an important lesson from this narrative. Children cannot help but detect fault in their parents. It may be something in their physical appearance, their demeanor, or in some cases, religious orientation. The Torah teaches us the attitude one must display towards a parent's

shortcomings. One must never mock or belittle a parent! Moreover, one should turn his head and ignore what might be apparent to others. Shem and Yafes walked backwards. They refused to take note of their father's inebriated state. They did not want to be cognizant of his present circumstances. Their act defines filial love.

Not all homes are perfect, and not all parents are paragons of virtue, social graces and culture. Some parents speak with an accent; others have a difficult time earning their daily bread, perhaps even being employed in positions that might prove "embarrassing" to their children. It is regrettable that many individuals in today's society thrive upon disdaining those who are not on the same social plateau as they. This writer once witnessed a somewhat heated conversation between a mother and her son. The mother, a recent émigré to the United States, was preparing to go to Parent's Night at the local Day School. Due to his parent's conscientiousness and hard work, the young boy had acclimated very quickly to the new culture. He actually spoke and dressed the part of a young American Yeshiva Day School student. Prior to his mother's departure for the meeting, the child expressed concern about his mother's lack of "American" style clothing. He told her, "Try also not to speak too much because of your accent. I do not want you to embarrass me." When the mother heard this unintended insult from her child, she responded with tears streaming down her face, "I am your mother regardless of what I wear and how I speak. I came to this country to provide for you a better life than I had. Remember that whatever you have, it is because I have lovingly provided it for you, sometimes at great personal and financial expense. Do not ever be ashamed of your mother!"

Perhaps this is an admonition we should all heed.

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>

"kollel@mcs.com" "haftorah@torah.org" Haftorah Parshas Noach  
Message from the Haftorah Parshas Noach Yeshaya 54

This week's haftorah projects the glorious future of the Jewish people and describes the splendor of Jerusalem in breathtaking dimensions. In the midst of this indescribable vision the prophet Yeshaya draws a striking comparison between our present exile and the flood in the time of Noach. Yeshaya says in the name of Hashem, "For a brief moment of anger I concealed My countenance from you but with everlasting kindness I will show My compassion. As with the waters of Noach about which I swore that they will never again flood the world so have I sworn never again to become angry with Israel." (54: 8, 9) The prophet assures the Jewish people that their painful years of exile will soon draw to a close never to be repeated.

Drawing attention to the flood, he guarantees that, "As the world has never experienced a second flood so will the Jewish people never experience another exile." This peculiar equation between the flood and the Jewish people's exile suggests a strong association between the two. It appears that Hashem's unconditional guarantee to withhold a flood from this world serves as sound evidence to the eternal redemption of the Jewish people.

In order to appreciate this association, let us analyze Noach's role during the flood and Hashem's response to it. The Torah tells us in the beginning of our Sidra that the flood was sent because humanity turned totally inwards. The Torah states, "And the land was corrupt before Hashem and the land was full of robbery." (Breishis 6:11) All of mankind became focused on themselves satisfying all of their personal pursuits without taking anyone else's privileges and rights into consideration. They regarded everyone and their possessions permissible to themselves in order to satisfy their personal interests and desires. Humanity was literally destroying itself with every person concerned only for himself, showing no care or respect for anyone else. During the months of the flood it became Noach's sole responsibility to restore morality to the world. The prevalent principles and policies in the Ark, Noach's world, had to be kindness and compassion. Every moment spent there had to be filled with caring and sharing. Hashem therefore charged Noach with the overwhelming responsibility of providing and tending to the needs of every living being in the Ark. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 108B see Maharsha ad loc.) relates a conversation between Noach's son, Shem, and Eliezer wherein Shem

stated that he never formally went to sleep throughout the twelve months he was in the Ark. Noach's family was totally preoccupied with their magnanimous chore of continuously following the varied feeding schedules of each living being. In this way, the family was totally involved in acts of kindness, providing for others every moment of their stay. This total reversal of priorities, placing their entire focus on the needs of others reestablished the world. In fact, our Chazal in the Midrash (Breishis Rabba 33:4) understand this to be the single merit through which the flood waters ended and Noach's family was permitted to leave the Ark and reenter the world.

Upon reentry, Noach immediately approached Hashem through sacrificial offerings and pleaded with Hashem never to repeat the devastating flood waters. In this week's haftorah we discover that Hashem responded with an oath that a flood of those dimensions would never reoccur. Apparently, Noach's total dedication to kindness bore everlasting fruits and in response to Noach's kindness Hashem promised to shower His boundless kindness on the world. The Malbim (see commentary on Yeshaya 54:10) reflects that the nature of kindness distinguishes itself in regards to the recipient's worthiness. Unlike compassion and mercy which are governed by and fashioned according to the worthiness of the individual in need, kindness knows no bounds. In essence, one need not be worthy in order to qualify for Hashem's kindness. In view of this, the Malbim explains that a pledge of Hashem's kindness is, by definition, an eternal commitment. Throughout the era of the flood Noach totally preoccupied himself with kindness and, in response, Hashem promised that throughout the era of this world He will preoccupy Himself with the world's kindness. This kindness translated into the unconditional guarantee that regardless how undeserving the world becomes it will never experience total destruction.

In view of this, Yeshaya draws our attention to this guarantee and states in the name of Hashem, "For the mountains may jar and the hills may shift but My kindness will never leave you and My covenant of peace will never falter." (54:10) As we have seen regarding Noach's kindness, Hashem promises to respond to our kindness with a similar unconditional guarantee. This kindness means that Hashem will never respond to our shortcoming with expressions of anger. Irrespective of our behavior, never again will the Jewish people experience exile and other similar manifestations of Hashem's wrath. Once the Jewish people return to Eretz Yisroel, never again will Hashem remove His sacred presence from their midst. Hashem's kindness is eternal and after the Jewish people will receive His promise of kindness, it will be an unconditional and everlasting one.

This insight reveals to us the hidden message of Chazal and profoundly reflects upon the affluence of our generation. Chazal (see Rashi, Breishis 12:2) inform us of the character of the generation preceding Mashiach. They explain Hashem's introductory Bracha to Avrohom Avinu stated in the beginning of Lech Lecha in the following manner. There will be certain generations wherein Hashem's influence will be realized through our acts of kindness, others through our acts of devotion and sacrifice and others through our commitment to Torah and truth. But in the era which precedes Mashiach the prevalent virtue will be kindness. (based on the reflections of HoRav HaGaon Rav Shimon Shkop zt"l) This particular era distinguishes itself by being the launching pad for the era of Mashiach. This preceding era and its merits must secure the coming of Mashiach and all associated blessings. Amongst the blessings of Mashiach's times is Hashem's promise to shower us with His everlasting kindness, guaranteeing our eternal stay in Eretz Yisroel. But this commitment of everlasting kindness will only come in response to our selfless and personal commitment to unconditional kindness. This explains why never before has the opportunity of kindness availed itself to the Jewish people in such extraordinary proportions as in our days. Yes, with our generation accepting its responsibility and displaying of loving kindness we will deserve Hashem's unconditional response of His everlasting kindness. Yeshaya therefore points us to the flood and assures us that, as Hashem responded to Noach's kindness with His unconditional guarantee we should realize wholeheartedly that Hashem will also respond to our kindness with that same unconditional guarantee and shower His blessing upon His people for eternity.

by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel, Kollel Toras Chesed, 3732 West Dempster Skokie, Illinois 60076 847-674-7959 fax: 847-674-4023 e-mail: kollel@mcs.com URL: <http://www.mcs.net/~kollel/> Rabbi Siegel's topic-of-interest lectures are available through the Kollel's Tape of the Month Club. For a free sample, send your name and address.

-----  
Haftorah, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi Dovid Siegel and Project Genesis, Inc. The author is Rosh Kollel of Kollel Toras Chesed of Skokie Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network 3600 Crondall Lane, Ste. 106 Owings Mills, MD 21117 (410) 654-1799 FAX: 356-9931

"kornfeld@netmedia.net.il" parasha-page@jer1.co.il

The Weekly Internet

P A R A S H A - P A G E

by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

-----  
==We are grateful to Wolfe Isler of Netanya, and his family, for their donation towards the publication of the weekly Parasha-Page. May Torah always fill the homes of him and his offspring! \*\*\* Please contact me if you would like to dedicate a future issue of Parasha-Page or help to support its cause. Help spread Torah through the farthest reaching medium in all of history!

-----  
== Parashat Noach 5757

THE 17TH OF THE SECOND WHY 17 TISHREI? In the 600th year of Noach's life, in the second month on the 17th day of the month all the fountains of the deep burst forth and the windows of the heavens were opened to let forth rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. (Bereishit 7:11-12)

The day of the year which marked the start of the Great Flood seems to be entirely random. What made the 17th day of the second month such a fateful day? A friend of mine, Harav Chagai Preschel (presently at the Tikvat Ameinu High School in Moscow) offered the following explanation.

II A 47-DAY REPRIEVE Rebbi Eliezer (Rosh Hashanah 11b) informs us that the "second month" of the verse quoted above is Cheshvan, which is the second month counting from Tishrei -- the month during which Hashem created the world. On the previous first of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment) Hashem deemed the world to be unworthy and decreed upon it the Great Flood (Rosh Hashanah 12a).

When the city of Ninveh was to be punished Hashem granted them a 40 day reprieve, giving them one last chance to repent and change their evil ways (Yonah 3:4). This is the way of Hashem; even after He decides to eradicate a city or nation as punishment for its sinful ways, He still allows them an extra 40-day opportunity to repent. When the Jewish People sinned by serving the Golden Calf (Shemot 32), Hashem did not wipe them out immediately, as had been decreed. Rather, He gave them 40 days to repent during which Moshe prayed to Hashem, Who accepted his prayers and forgave the Jewish People (Rashi, Devarim 9:10). Before bringing the Great Flood as well, Hashem gave the world 40 days to repent. But 40 days after 1 Tishrei only brings us to 10 Cheshvan -- why did the Flood begin only seven days later, on 17 Cheshvan? Rashi provides us with the last piece of this puzzle:

"In another \*seven days\* I will bring rain upon the earth..."

(Bereishit 7:4) -- the seven days mentioned here were the days of mourning that followed the passing of the righteous Metushelach (Methuselah). In order to allow people to pay their respects to Metushelach, Hashem delayed the Flood for seven days. (Rashi Bereishit 7:4, from Sanhedrin 108a)

On 17 Cheshvan, exactly seven days after 10 Cheshvan, the Great Flood began!

III WHY 17 IYAR? Rav Preschel's suggestion is indeed eye-opening. Unfortunately, however, Rebbi Eliezer's opinion that the Great Flood started in Cheshvan is not agreed upon by all. According to Rebbi Yehoshua, the "second month" of the verse, during which the Flood

started, was \*Iyar\*! As the Gemara tells us:

Rebbi Eliezer said: The world was created in the month of Tishrei... Rebbi Yehoshua said: The world was created in the month of Nissan...

Consequently the two differed as to when the Great Flood took place. Rebbi Yehoshua maintained that the rain started on the 17th of Iyar... while Rebbi Eliezer said that it began on the 17th of Cheshvan.

(Rosh Hashanah 11a, 11b)

There remains a controversy among the early commentators whether we accept the opinion of Rebbi Eliezer or Rebbi Yehoshua (See Rashi, Tosafot and Ritva to Rosh Hashanah 8b, 12a, 27a; Parasha-Page Noach 5756). Is there any way to explain why the Flood began specifically on 17 Iyar according to Rebbi Yehoshua?

IV PRE-EXODUS NEW-YEAR'S DAY AND DAY OF JUDGMENT In a Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 29:1), Rebbi Eliezer tells us why 1 Tishrei is the yearly Day of Judgment. The first man was created on 1 Tishrei. He sinned, was judged and was granted life despite his sin on that same day. Hashem chose to judge mankind on 1 Tishrei every year as an omen that they too will merit atonement and be granted life on that day. As the Ran (14th cent. Spain) points out (Rosh Hashanah 16a), this only accounts for the opinion of Rebbi Eliezer. Why should the Day of Judgment be on 1 Tishrei according to Rebbi Yehoshua, who is of the opinion that man was created in the beginning of Nissan? (See Parasha-Page Rosh Hashanah 5756). We may suggest a novel approach to this question. The Torah tells us that although Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the New Year, when it comes to numbering the months Nissan is month #1 (that is, the New Year begins with month #7!). We count our months from Nissan in order to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt which took place in Nissan (Shemot 12:2 and Rashi). Radak (13th cent. Spain) to I Kings 8:2, Ritva (14th cent. Spain) to Rosh Hashanah 11b and others point out that it seems clear from the verse in Shemot 12:2 that \*until\* the Exodus, Tishrei not only marked the beginning of the \*year\*, but it was also labeled "month #1" in the order of the months. Nissan was granted its special status only after the Exodus, in order to commemorate that event. This is all, however, only according to the opinion of Rebbi Eliezer. Since Rebbi Eliezer held that the world was created in Tishrei, there was no reason for Nissan to be the first of months before the Exodus. According to Rebbi Yehoshua, however, the world was created in Nissan. Shouldn't Nissan have been considered the first of months, then, from the beginning of time? The answer to this question is perhaps that before the Exodus, Nissan \*was\* indeed both the first of months and the beginning of the year according to Rebbi Yehoshua. What changed at the Exodus was that the beginning of the \*year\* -- not the beginning of the month-count -- was shifted. In order to make Nissan a unique month for the Jewish People (who left Egypt in Nissan) and for them alone, appointed Tishrei (the month of the autumnal equinox rather than the vernal equinox) as the beginning of the year for all of mankind! The curious situation whereby we celebrate the New Year and its accompanying Day of Judgment in Tishrei while counting our months from Nissan, makes it clear that Nissan does not derive its elevated status simply out of chronological precedence.

In Rebbi Yehoshua's opinion, before the Exodus \*Nissan\* was the beginning of the year, the time for judgment and the beginning of the month-count only \*after\* the Exodus did 1 Tishrei become the beginning of the new year and the Day of Judgment. We can now apply Rabbi Preschel's formula to Rebbi Yehoshua's opinion just as simply as we applied it to Rebbi Eliezer's opinion (in section II). The Great Flood started exactly 47 days after 1 Nissan, according to Rebbi Yehoshua, because that was the Day of Judgment during the era that preceded that Egyptian Exodus!

B"H

The Chassidic Dimension  
Adaptation of Likutei Sichos  
by  
Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion  
Copyright (c) 1996 and Published by  
Sichos in English  
Noach  
Praying for Others

Our Sages relate that Noach did not pray for the welfare of humanity before the Flood, unlike Moshe who prayed for the welfare of those who made the Golden Calf.

There is a dispute among the rabbis with regard to Noach's lack of prayer: R. Yehuda concedes that Noach failed to pray like Moshe did, but points out that Moshe beseeched G-d in the merit of the Patriarchs.

Since Noach could not have done so, he cannot be blamed for his failure to pray on behalf of others.

R. Yitzchak, however, maintains that even though he was unable to invoke the merit of the Patriarchs, Noach should nonetheless have beseeched G-d's mercy on behalf of the world's population.

The Torah commands us to judge every person favorably, to give every individual the benefit of the doubt. Why then does R. Yitzchak seem to condemn Noach's behavior, rather than recognizing that Noach lacked people in whose merit he could plead for Divine mercy?

In fact, we can argue that R. Yitzchak agrees that Noach was unable to pray for his generation, because he was lacking individuals on whose merit he could rely.

R. Yitzchak is not seeking to indict Noach, however, but rather wanted to be sure that his failure to pray for the welfare of others would not set a precedent for future generations.

R. Yitzchak therefore concludes that it is necessary to portray Noach's lack of prayer as a flaw -- although, in his case, there was nothing else he could have done -- for it teaches later generations that all possible means must be used in order to obtain mercy and compassion for one's fellows.

The statement of R. Yitzchak thus in no way contradicts the command to judge every person favorably, for he too judges Noach favorably, and agrees that he would have had to rely on the merit of others in order to succeed in his prayers.

R. Yitzchak merely intended to encourage other individuals always to intercede on behalf of their fellows, although the chances of success may seem remote.

Moreover, if Noach's failure to pray for the welfare of others had not been discussed, then this itself could have a detrimental effect on Noach, for his behavior, innocent though it was, may have led to the misconduct of others. There is a lesson here for us all.

A person may well do all he can in order to have a beneficial effect on his environment, but fail due to circumstances beyond his control.

Such an individual might well think that, since he did all he could, he has no further moral obligation to himself or to others, and can now rest comfortably; the fact that he didn't succeed is not his fault.

R. Yitzchak therefore teaches us that a person may very well have done as much as he was capable of doing, and is not merely fooling himself into thinking so. Nevertheless, says R. Yitzchak, one cannot make peace with such a situation. He must continue to "beseech mercy for his generation"; failure to do so can well be considered a fault.

Such relentless concern for the welfare of others may well bring G-d to negate those factors that are causing the untoward situation, for He provides every Jew with the opportunity to successfully seek Divine mercy on behalf of his generation.

Especially so, since the Rambam rules that the "Torah guarantees that the Jewish people will ultimately repent at the conclusion of their exile, and will immediately be redeemed."

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXV, pp. 19-22

In commenting on the verse "G-d (Elokim) remembered Noach....", Rashi notes: "This Name (Elokim) is the Name of the Attribute of Justice. It was transformed to Mercy through the prayers of the righteous."

Why did this remembrance have to come from the Attribute of Justice and be transformed into Mercy? Why could it not have originated from G-d's Attribute of Mercy?

Later in the Torah portion of Noach, the verse goes on to state, "G-d smelled the pleasing fragrance, and said to Himself: 'Never again will I curse the soil because of man....' "

The Midrash notes that the "pleasing fragrance" alludes to the "fragrance of our father Avraham that rose from the fiery furnace... the fragrance of Chananya, Mishoel and Azaryah that rose from the fiery furnace... the fragrance of the Jewish generations that were subject to horrible decrees on account of their religion."

The Midrash thus informs us that the self-sacrifice of Avraham, Chananya, Mishoel and Azaryah, and of all the Jews who lived in times of harsh decrees, were instrumental in persuading G-d to say: "Never again will I curse the soil because of man."

Our Sages ask: "Why wasn't the pleasing fragrance of Noach's offering sufficient? Why was it necessary to include the 'fragrance' that rose from the self-sacrifice of all these righteous individuals?"

G-d's pact with Noach to never destroy the world finds expression in His promise that "As long as the earth lasts, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall never cease."

The fact that nature now conducts itself entirely without change indicates that it has been vested with an infinite level of holiness, for nature itself, like all things physical, does not in and of itself possess the ability to endure without change. It is only because a degree of G-dliness -- "I am G-d; I have not changed" -- is vested within nature that it is immutable.

Since this constancy derives from G-d's infinite power and is revealed specifically in and through nature, it follows that, in order to elicit such a force, a commensurate level of spiritual service within nature is necessary.

This spiritual service is self-sacrifice, *mesirus nefesh*, a service that contains two key elements: *Mesirus nefesh* points to a level of service that is not subject to change -- when a person serves G-d with *mesirus nefesh*, then the strongest forces in the world will not keep him from serving in his accustomed manner.

On the other hand, it is specifically through these very hindrances and obstacles that an individual's power of *mesirus nefesh* is revealed.

This is why the power of *mesirus nefesh* is more prominent during exile than it was while the Holy Temples existed. For the very concealment and difficulty of exile arouses the power of *mesirus nefesh*.

Accordingly, the very concealment that ostensibly hinders spiritual service actually strengthens it, up to and including the level of *mesirus nefesh*.

As lofty as was Noach's spiritual service, it could in no way compare to *mesirus nefesh* -- the strength within every Jew that reveals G-d's infinite force within the world, and which enables nature to endure without change. It was thus necessary to include the "fragrance" of those who displayed *mesirus nefesh*.

This also explains why G-d's "remembrance" had to come from the Attribute of Justice and be transformed to Mercy, rather than from the Attribute of Mercy itself.

In order for material nature itself to reveal G-dliness, it is necessary that the Divine Name Elokim, which enables nature to exist, be transformed into the Attribute of Mercy, by which G-dliness is revealed.

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, pp. 30-36

<http://www.ou.org/torah/ti/>

Torah Insights for Shabbat Parashat Noach 5757  
October 18, 1996, 6 Mar Chaeshvan 5757

The Gemara acknowledges that Avraham observed the entire Torah, not only the Written Law but the Oral Law as well, as it states: "Avraham listened to

my voice and kept my charges, my commandments, my statutes and my laws ( toros)." " Toros," plural, refers to Torah Shebikesav, the Written Law, and Torah Shebaal Peh, the Oral Law.

Avraham's observance raises all kinds of questions regarding his status. Although he is the father of the Jewish people, the first Patriarch, Avraham was not a Jew technically, since the Jewish nation first came into existence centuries later at Sinai.

How are we to understand the spiritual status of our forefathers? Were the Patriarchs and their descendents expected to live lives based on Torah principles, or were they restricted only by the sheva mitzvos benei Noach, the seven Noahide laws?

Furthermore, the Gemara rules that it is a capital crime for a non-Jew to observe the Shabbos. For this reason, candidates for conversion to Judaism, who are taught the mitzvos and begin to observe them, are nevertheless careful to turn on a light on Shabbos or to violate the Shabbos in some other way until they are actually converted.

This being so, how could generations prior to mattan Torah observe the Shabbos, when they were not considered Jewish?

This principle also presents a practical problem, which was posed to Rav Soloveitchik, zt"l. Each year a number of babies are, Rachmana litzlon, abandoned and left as wards of the state. In which religion are they to be raised?

The Rav maintained that children found in Jewish neighborhoods should be considered Jews, and children found in non-Jewish neighborhoods should be considered non-Jews.

But what of children who are found in neighborhoods where Jews and non-Jews live side by side? The Rav argued that the restrictions of both Jew and non-Jew be placed upon the child.

Where, then, does that leave the child in relation to Shabbos? Does such a child observe Shabbos as a Jew, or, as a possible non-Jew, must he violate the Shabbos?

There are several ways around the problem. One solution, cited by the Binyan Tzion, is based on the fact that the non-Jews follow a solar schedule while the Jewish nation follows a lunar schedule. Thus, the Jewish Shabbos begins Friday night and ends Saturday night.

Non-Jews, who are tied to a solar calendar, can refrain from melachah on the Jewish Shabbos and still violate the seventh day -- their sevenths day -- by working on Saturday night.

The Minchas Chinuch offers another solution. The Torah gives certain measurements necessary in order for a violation of Shabbos to occur. For example, a Jew who cooks on Shabbos is only culpable if he cooked something the size of an olive or greater. Anything less is not considered cooking.

But the Rambam maintains that these measurements do not apply to non-Jews. Thus, a non-Jew who cooked even one grain of rice on Shabbos has violated it. Accordingly, one could desecrate the Shabbos as a non-Jew, while simultaneously upholding it as a Jew.

The special status of Shabbos prevents it from being celebrated by the rest of the world. Shabbos belongs solely to Am Yisrael, "a sign between [G-d] and the children of Israel."

Through our observance of Shabbos, our special tefillot on Shabbos, and our added opportunities to study Torah on Shabbos, we proclaim that special sign that separates our nation from the nations of the world. Rabbi Leo Landman

Rabbi Landman is Rabbi of Congregation Talmud Torah of Flatbush

"bircas@netvision.net.il"

Parshas Noach adapted from Chasam Sofer HeChadash on the Torah (Article #1)

The Chasam Sofer comments on the following italicized words from Parshas Noach, Chapter 7, Verse 1: "Then HASHEM said to Noach, 'Come to the Ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation.'" He points out that in Rashi's

commentary to these words, that Rashi says: "And it doesn't say 'for it is you that I have seen to be righteous, perfect before Me in this generation.' From here we can see, Rashi continues, that we only say part of a person's praise to his face, but we say all of his praise when he is not before us.

Rashi is referring to the fact that our Parasha, in Chapter 6, Verse 1, reads: "...Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations;" Thus Rashi explains the apparent discrepancy between the descriptions of Noach contained in Chapter 6, Verse 1 and Chapter 7, Verse 1, and does not attribute it to any lacking of Noach, but rather to the midot of not giving a person complete praise to his face.

The Chasam Sofer states that in his opinion the discrepancy between the descriptions of Noach in the above two verses can be explained by reference to that which is written in a Midrash, from Bereshis Raba, Perek 30, #8, to the effect that every righteous person in the Bible about whom it is said that they were perfect, that the years of their lives is divisible by the number seven: For example, concerning Abraham, (Chapter 17, Verse 1) about whom it is written, "...walk before me and be perfect," we see that the years of his life are divisible by seven, (he lived to be 175 years old); concerning Yaacov (Chapter 25, Verse 27) about whom it is written, "...but Yaacov was a perfect man" we see that the years of his life are divisible by seven, (he lived to be 147 years old); but concerning Noach about whom it was written that he was perfect the matter needs study because the years of Noach's life are not divisible by seven (Noach lived to be 950 years old.) We see however, that Noach lived 350 years after the flood, and that 350 is divisible by seven. Therefore we see that the fact that Noach was called perfect relates to his life after the flood and not to his life before the flood. This is clarified in the opening line of Parashas Noach where we read: "... Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations". The plural usage of the word generations refers to two generations, and it is to the second generation, the one after the flood, to which the appellation perfect applies. To the generation of the flood, however, with respect to which it is written "...for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation," the appellation of perfect does not apply, for the years of his life in the generation of the flood (600 years) is not divisible by seven.

From: "owner-torah-forum-digest@torah.org"

#### TYPING "HASHEM" ON THE NET

Date: Thu, 8 Aug 1996 17:33:03 -0700 From: "Y. Adlerstein" <yadler@mail1.deltanet.com> Subject: TYPING "HASHEM" ON THE NET  
Hillel Markowitz wrote: >There is no kedusha to >the English word "god" whether it is capitalized to mean Hashem or not >capitalized to mean some avoda zara ÄidolÄ. Rav Soloveitchik Z'L many >many years ago walked into a high school class wrote the word in big >letters on the board at Maimonides High School in Brookline and erased it >to drive home this point. Many people put the "-" in just to show that a >reference to Hashem is being made as opposed to some other usage as a >sign of respect. It is no more than a personal chumra.

While the preponderance of evidence seems to negate any kedusha in a plain-wrap word for "deity" that is not an exact translation of one of the seven NAMES of G-d, I don't think that it is fair to call it nothing more than a personal chumra. As one of the gedolim of the last generation, Rav Soloveitchik could certainly pasken any way he wanted, and demonstrate his psak dramatically. But others (and at this point, a very large part of the population, if not the majority, have assumed this chumrah) follow different piskei halacha. See, for example, the last paragraph of Shu"t Achiezer 3:32, and Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim, v. 4 pg. 69 and the sources he cites. Yitzchok Adlerstein

Date: Thu, 15 Aug 96 22:29:54 EDT From: Yosef Goldstein <JOE-G@VM.VIPS.COM> Subject: Typing "Hashem" on the net

I would like to share the words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch on this topic. His words are VERY clear and since the Kitzur has been translated into English it is available for all to see. (For those readers who are comfortable in Hebrew Y. Adlerstein had posted some good sources to look at.) NOTE: This is a my own "free translation"

Chapter 5 paragraph 14: In a bath house one is prohibited from speaking or thinking of any thing Holy. It is prohibited to mention the names that specifically refer to the holy one blessed is he, EVEN IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, (Such as G-TT in German and anything like that in any language) in a bath house or Bathroom. ....

Chapter 6 Paragraph 3: It is forbidden to use the name of Hashem in vain, and anyone that does use the name of Hashem in vain transgresses on the positive commandment that says "One should fear Hashem your G-d" another Posuk says "If you do watch etc. to fear Hashem who is honored and awesome...." And this is included in fearing Hashem, not mentioning his great name except when he is praising (G-D) or when saying a blessing (skipping some text) This does not only apply to the unique name of G-D but this also applies to any name that specifically refers to G-d. This does not only apply to Hebrew names of G-D but the names of G-d in ANY LANGUAGE. (Skipped text) It is also prohibited to write the name of G-d in any letter in any language. There are many that mistakenly write the names of G-d in German or they write Ad-ieu in French which means with G-d. This is strictly prohibited because eventually the letter ends up in the trash....

As we see from his words writing ANY name of G-d in any language is prohibited. (As Rabbi Adlerstein pointed out Rabbi Solevechick was a competent posek and he apparently, at least according to Reb Hillel Markowitz's account, did not agree with this. He was in the minority and the majority opinion is that it is prohibited)

Once we are on this topic Writing HASHEM is permitted because this is not a name of G-D it just refers to G-d. The literal translation of Hashem is "The name" which hints to the name of G-D. Therefore Hashem is written with no dashes, it may be erased and that is why it is popularly used to translate the names of G-D when talking, learning or when writing.

I hope this clears up this matter Wishing everyone a Kesiva Vechasima Tova  
A Good writing & sealing - related to Rosh HaShana / Yom Kippur  
Yosey

Date: Fri, 16 Aug 1996 10:09:21 -0400 (EDT) From: Ellen Payne Solomon <payne@yu1.yu.edu> Subject: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
Someone told a story about Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik erasing G-O-D from a blackboard in Maimonides, a Jewish high school in Boston, and said that the story was proof that the word "G-d" has no kedusha (holy status) when in English. His father, Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik, would not go into the bathroom with a dollar bill in his pocket, since the bathroom is an unclean place (i.e. inappropriate for prayer or housing religious articles), and American money has "In G-d We Trust" printed on it. So we see there is not just one answer. Ellen Solomon

Date: Fri, 16 Aug 1996 11:28:27 -0400 From: dh21@chrysler.com Subject: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
Hillel Markowitz wrote: >There is no kedusha to >the English word "god" whether it is capitalized to mean Hashem or >not capitalized to mean some avoda zara ÄidolÄ. Rav Soloveitchik Z'L >many many years ago walked into a high school class wrote the word in >big letters on the board at Maimonides High School in Brookline and >erased it to drive home this point. Many people put the "-" in just >to show that a reference to Hashem is being made as opposed to some >other usage as a sign of respect. It is no more than a personal >chumra.

It should be clarified, I believe, that there are two separate issues being discussed under this topic: 1)Do non-Hebrew names of G-d have holiness? and 2)Even if the do, would one be allowed to type in that non-Hebrew name (or even one of the real Hebrew names, for that matter) onto a computer screen and post it to an internet discussion group, knowing that it will be "erased"?

I will not rehash the issues relevant to question #2. However, the poster's assumption that "the halacha" follows Rav Soloveitchik (because he demonstrated his PSAK so dramatically), with any other opinion being a "personal chumra", brings to mind the startling words that I heard from Rav Moshe Heineman of Baltimore several years ago on this same topic: (paraphrase) "Being that the english word G-d has kedusha, one should therefore not remove an American dollar bill from one's pocket while in the bathroom". Keep in mind that the name "G-d" on this dollar bill was printed by a machine operated by a non-Jew, presumably with no intention either on the part of the machine or its operator to do anything other than their job, to print currency with its correct design.

His rationale: When the founding fathers, sic, put the words, "In G-d we trust" onto American currency, they meant it, and their intention was for the same G-d that we pray to three times a day".

Was Rav Heineman stating a "personal chumra" with Rav Soloveitchik stating the actual halacha? Or, was Rav Heineman stating the halacha with Rav Soloveitchik's followers being lax sinners? Or, were they each stating the halacha as they understood it, leaving the rest of us, who are disciples of neither, to find our own Rav to guide us as to how to proceed? My point: Recognize that there is a broad range of valid halachic opinions on many issues, don't assume that anyone who does different from you is just following a "personal chumra", "aseh l'cha Rav", and, try to find out what the mainstream opinion is on a given issue before drawing your own conclusions based on the one opinion that you have heard about.

David Hojda dh21@chrysler.com

Date: Fri, 16 Aug 1996 11:50:39 EDT From: abrahamson@juno.com (Eliezer C Abrahamson) Subject: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
frisch1@MIT.EDU (Jonathan Katz) wrote: >Bill Bickel writes: >>The fact that a word is being >>written in binary code is irrelevant, because a language is a >language -- >>otherwise, what's forbidden to write in Hebrew would be permitted in >>English. > >Actually, I believe that this is the case. Technically, the name of >G-d is >holy only when written in lashon ha-kodesh (the holy language) of >Hebrew. > >In fact, this has to be the case. Or else, how do we know that a word >we >are using (in English) does not mean "G-d" in some other language? Or, >for >that matter, that it >never\_ meant "G-d" in >any\_ language?! To go >even >further, what if I decide to start speaking my own language and define >my >own words to mean "G-d". Would people then have to be careful using >these >words as well? > >Let's take this even further. Assuming that the word "G-d" (in >English) has >holiness because it refers to G-d, what about words like "the >All-powerful", "the Almighty", even words like "out Father" (when >referring >to G-d). Do we need to write these like "Alm-ghty" as well?! Come >on...

The written name of G-d is only holy when it is written with the full backing of Emunah (belief). This is true for ALL forms including the hebrew tetragrammaton. It is for this reason that Bibles, prayerbooks, and other religious writings from nonbelievers have no kedusha even when written in hebrew. For example, I once found in shaimos (collections of worn-out holy writings and books, awaiting burial) an old German siddur. At first I was elated till I noticed that it was printed by a well-known denier of Judaism. The siddur was essentially a parody (though I don't think it was intended to appear that way). The siddur was in hebrew (with German translation) and contained substantial amounts of direct quotes from Tanach. I asked a well-known posek what I should do with it (I wanted to keep it). He said I had to burn it. This demonstrates that the kedusha in the Shem is dependent primarily in intent. Thus if one does not know that a word refers to G-d it has no holiness even if it does.

Secondly, there are a number of references to G-d which do not have full kedusha. Hashem is an obvious example. (Even though it literally means "The Name" and should not have any inherent kedusha but it has come to be synonymous with the Name itself.) G-d is probably in this class because I have never noticed any hesitancy amongst religious Jews to speak the name

when relevant. Lazer

Date: Wed, 28 Aug 1996 01:20:40 -0400 From: MosheAdler@aol.com  
Subject: Re: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
In a message dated 96-08-27 21:27:00 EDT, you write: > Once we are on this topic Writing HASHEM is permitted because this is > not a name of G-D it just refers to G-d.  
But Hashem is commonly used as a name of G-D, isn't it? And what about G-D? This is obviously also His name!  
Moshe Adler

Date: Wed, 28 Aug 1996 08:33:00 -0400 From: Leonard Mansky  
<Len613@aol.com> Subject: Re: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
In a message dated 96-08-27 21:27:19 EDT, Yosef Goldstein (Torah-Forum) writes: >It is also prohibited to write the name of G-d in any letter in any language. >There are many that mistakenly write the names of G-d in German or they write >Ad-ieu in French which means with G-d. This is strictly prohibited because >eventually the letter ends up in the trash.... > >  
>As we see from his words writing ANY name of G-d in any language is >prohibited. > > Once we are on this topic Writing HASHEM is permitted because this is >not a name of G-D it just refers to G-d. The literal translation of >Hashem is "The name" which hints to the name of G-D. Therefore Hashem is >written with no dashes, it may be erased and that is why it is popularly >used to translate the names of G-D when talking, learning or when >writing. > > I hope this clears up this matter  
It not only does not clear the matter up but, rather, makes a case for not mentioning Hashem in any way at all. What is a name? It is a distinct identifier of someone or something. My Webster dictionary reads, <That by which a person or thing is called or designated, in distinction from other persons or things; appellation...>  
By this definition, saying that <<Hashem is permitted because this is >not a name of G-D it just refers to G-d.>> is just Yosef's opinion. Used wisely Hashem becomes another of the Names of Gd. Ad-noy was originally developed, in the same way, as a substitute for the Tetragrammaton; but it also became one of the sanctified Names that we do not say or write except during prayer.  
By this reasoning, it would not only be forbidden to write the Names being discussed, but also the substitutes that everyone recognizes as distinctively referring to Hashem. These include, Hashem itself, G-d, Gd, Ad-noy, Ha-hem, H', or anything else that is distinctly identifiable by the reader. Even if intended as a descriptor, not a Name, it becomes a Name by frequent usage. << This does not only apply to Hebrew names of G-D but the names of G-d in ANY LANGUAGE.>> Yosef's statement, taken to its ultimate conclusion, means that his own statement itself should be forbidden because it mentions the Name in commonly used written parlance, classified as a language in its own right. I cannot believe his interpretation to be valid as it prevents any discourse, and Torah forums, whatsoever. Therefore a reasonable compromise is to continue doing what we have been doing; namely changing the spelling of the more traditional Names in some way so as to indicate our sensitivity, and yirat Hashem (awe of Gd). I will however endorse and repeat Yosef's wish for all: Kesiva Vechasima Tova  
A Good writing & sealing - related to Rosh HaShana / Yom Kippur  
Leonard Mansky

Date: Wed, 28 Aug 1996 09:35:12 -0400 (EDT) From: Michael J Broyde  
<relmb@emory.edu> Subject: Re: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
One writer while discussing whether the word god can be written out quotes the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch stating: > This does not only apply to the unique > name of G-D but this also applies to any name that specifically refers > to G-d. This does not only apply to Hebrew names of G-D but the names of > G-d in ANY LANGUAGE. (Skipped text) It is also prohibited to write the > name of G-d in any letter in any language. There are many that > mistakenly write the names of G-d in German or they write Ad-ieu in > French which means with G-d. This is strictly prohibited because > eventually the letter

ends up in the trash.... He then continues:

> As we see from his words writing ANY name of G-d in any language is > prohibited. (As Rabbi Adlerstein pointed out Rabbi Soloveichik was a > competent posek and he apparently, at least according to Reb Hillel > Markowitz's account, did not agree with this. He was in the minority and > the majority opinion is that it is prohibited)  
This misunderstands, I believe, the approach of Rabbi Soloveitchik and the many other poskim who agreed with his psak. They ruled that the English word "god" is NOT a classical unique name for the the One above, but rather is a generic term used for any diety, including for example the gods of olympus or even in an adjectival sense of "a godly person." It was only in those languages that have unique words for the Almighty (like French) that are always references to the One above that the kitzur is referring to. English is not such a language. In addition, there remains a fundamental dispute as to whether the halacha really is in accordance with the psak of the kitzur shulchan aruch on this matter. One can find a wealth of poskim -- early, late and modern -- who rule that secular names for the One above are, even if unique -- are not kodesh. Michael Broyde

Date: Tue, 24 Sep 1996 12:25:57 +0200 (IST) From: eli turkel  
<turkel@math.tau.ac.il> Subject: G-d's Name  
Regarding "Typing "Hashem" on the net" Rabbi Adlerstein says: >> As one of the gedolim of the last generation, Rav Soloveitchik could >> certainly pasken any way he wanted, and demonstrate his psak dramatically.  
On Yom Kippur we mention that the high priest said the "shem ha-meforash" According to Rambam this is the the four letter name consisting of a "yod", "heh", "vav", "heh" with the proper pronunciation (others claim it is one of G-d's names with 42 or 72 letters). This was pronounced only in the Temple by the priests. As such I heard from Rav Soloveitchik Zt'l that one is not allowed to pronounce the name "J. witnesses" since their first name is an approximation to the "shem ha-meforash"  
Just as an aside the phrase "shem ha-meforash" in the davening is explained as either G-d's proper name or else that G-d's name came out explicitly from the high priest so that "meforash" is not an adjective describing the name but rather a verb describing how it came from the High priest's mouth.  
Eli Turkel turkel@math.tau.ac.il

Date: Wed, 25 Sep 96 17:35:07 EDT From: Yosef Goldstein  
<JOE-G@VM.VIPS.COM> Subject: Re: Typing "Hashem" on the net  
In torah-forum v2 #74 Michael Voytinsky, Len Mansky and Moshe Adler all questioned my posting about the difference between writing G-D, Hashem or spelling out the name G - O - D.

I will attempt to clear up the issue by explaining one basic rule that pertains to this topic. That rule is: There are very SPECIFIC names of G-D that may not be written and then erased or treated with disrespect. Those names have an intrinsic holiness just because they are g-d's names. However if one were to refer to g-d without referring to him by name, such as the master of the universe (The Ribono shel Olom) Then that has no holiness and may be erased etc. In hebrew the distinction between these rules are Shaimos (Names of Hashem) and Kinnuyim (Or the words that refer to Hashem.) One may equate this concept to proper names and pronouns. A proper name has Kedusha whereas a pronoun does not.

Having said this, I think many of the points mentioned will be resolved. Michael Voytinsky asks " What is the difference between writing "G-d" or writing the same thing with an "o" instead of the dash? The meaning is the same in both cases. Since writing is nothing more than a method of conveying a meaning through symbols, the two are functionally identical." Excellent point. In fact I just had the same discussion with a Talmid of Rav Soloveitchik (Who holds that there is no holiness in ANY name of G-D except when written in Hebrew.) I told him that whereas G - O - D was the accepted word and translation for G-D. The symbol G-d is an accepted way of hinting to the reader that we are referring to G-D. It is very true that this is the accepted way of writing G-d (For Frum Jews) But it is still NOT G-D's

name!

Mr. Voytinsky's second point also falls away since the word bog in the English language has no relation to divinity at all there is no reason not to write it. I could make the case that when one is transliterating Russian into English and one writes bog it still would not have any holiness since this would certainly also be no more than a symbol referring to the Russian word BOG which, when written in Russian would truly be a name of G-d.

Mr. Voytinsky's next thought is valid. He writes: " I always thought that the part about not taking Hashem's name in vain means something more along the lines of not making gratuitous references to Hashem, not swearing in His name, etc. - not putting a dash in place of an 'o' in a discussion that already concerns him. Certain a blasphemous joke would remain just as blasphemous regardless of whether the dash or the 'o' was used." The reason this is valid is because even were one to use a Kinnuy one mustn't take it in vain. (Although I think the severity may be different)

Mr. Voytinsky's last point was " In English it is quite possible to refer to a god, where it is quite clear that Hashem is not being referred to, but some other divine entity (which happens not to exist, but that is a side issue). How does capitalizing 'god' suddenly make it a proper name? Capitalizing it seems to have the same effect as saying 'the god' would." This is valid point.

However since we have explained that there is a holiness that is related to a name of G-D therefore when one writes about a Roman god, a Greek god or any other god since one is NOT referring to the master of the universe no holiness is transferred into this word. In parshas Haazinu we find the word ELOHA referring to strange or foreign deities and many Chumashim have a notation saying that that name was NOT referring to G-D and therefore contained no Kedusha.

Mr. Voytinsky's final editorial comments about his feeling it was absurd to differentiate between write G-D with an "O" or a dash has no relevance to the practical halacha and as we pointed out there is a valid difference between a proper name and a symbolic reference to G-d.

This brings us to Mr Adler's question: " But Hashem is commonly used as a name of G-D, isn't it? And what about G-D? This is obviously also His name!" It is very commonly used to refer to G-D But that still does not make it a proper name, imbued with Kedusha.

In the interest of brevity, which I may have blown already, I will not go thru Leonard Mansky's reply point by point. However the explanation Written above, the difference between using one of THE names of G-D as opposed to his Kinnuyim, does answer all of his points.

I would, however, like to address this paragraph written by Mr. Mansky: "I cannot believe his interpretation to be valid as it prevents any discourse, and Torah forums, whatsoever. Therefore a reasonable compromise is to continue doing what we have been doing; namely changing the spelling of the more traditional Names in some way so as to indicate our sensitivity, and yirat Hashem (awe of Gd)."

I mentioned in my original posting as I do in my other postings, that I am giving my Own free translation of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. I also quote "chapter and verse" to allow anyone to get one of the published translations of the Kitzur for further reference. I would not give my own translation if I had any doubts as to the validity of my translation. That being the case I encourage all the readers of this and every jewish forum to learn the halacha from the sources. PLEASE do not make your own conclusions as to what would be allowed or prohibited and saying that the logical outcome from "X" would be "Y". See what the Halacha says. Ask your LOR. Don't Jump to conclusions. And IF your conclusion is that something is prohibited, than stick with it. Logical compromises do not exit in Halacha. This is either allowed or not.

Since I have Written this a new Torah Forum was posted and Reb Michael Broyde who also took me to task. He asserted that ONLY a name that ONLY means G-D has any kedusha. He writes that therefore G-D which has many meanings may be erased. A word like DI-EU which ONLY means G-D is what the Kitzur was referring to, when the kitzur said that G-D in ANY laguage may not erased. I would like to argue with him on several points. 1. I have asked a friend who knows French and I was informed that this is not

true. There is a Die-u that refers to G-d and Dieu that refers to any type of deity. The second point is, I do not think the Rov gave this as a reason for allowing G - O - D to be erased. In fact I did speak with a VERY close and "choshuver talmid" (distinguished student) of "the rov" and he told me he KNEW that "the Rov" based his opinion on the Rambam that held that the ONLY time there was kedusha in a name was when it was written in Hebrew. I did search for this Rambam and I could not find it. (I do not have any CD-rom software I did it the old fashioned way so I may have missed it.) However I was informed by a T-F reader that the Shach in Yoreh Deah (A commentary on a specific area of the Shulchan aruch) definately says that ONLY in hebrew is there any kedusha.

I hope this sheds some light on the subject Yosey

From: "owner-torah-forum-digest@torah.org"

### SYNAGOGUE DUES

Date: 14 Aug 96 16:13:42 EDT From: Jeffrey Belne <102023.1420@CompuServe.COM> Subject: Are synagogue dues charity? I would like to know if Synagogue membership dues are considered part of an individual's charity contributions.

Date: Tue, 20 Aug 1996 14:38:25 -0400 (EDT) From: Joseph Solovitch <solovij@gov.on.ca> Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity? In response to Jeffrey Belne's query: "I would like to know if Synagogue membership dues are considered part of an individual's charity contributions".

How timely, when membership for shul comes up at the same time as we give to avert the decree against us for our sins. I would reply that yes only if a good part of the dues were collected for charity. If not, it seems that membership is for your own use, and not for those in need. This got me thinking and the following was pulled from the Net, at

<http://members.aol.com/jewfaq/tzedakah.htm>

The 3rd paragraph does mention giving to synagogues, but I read that as donations to synagoges so that others can enjoy these services, or so the shul can then distribute as tzedakah. Seems that dues by itself would be stretch.

~~~~~  
Giving to the poor is an obligation in Judaism, a duty that cannot be forsaken even by those who are themselves in need. Tzedakah is the highest of all commandments, equal to all of them combined. A person who does not perform tzedakah is considered equivalent to an idol worshipper. Tzedakah is one of the three acts that gain us forgiveness from our sins. The High Holiday liturgy states that G-d has inscribed a judgment against all who have sinned, but teshuvah (repentence), tefilah (prayer) and tzedakah can reverse the decree.

According to Jewish law, we are required to give one-tenth of our income to the poor. This is generally interpreted as one-tenth of our net income after payment of taxes. Those who are dependent on public assistance or living on the edge of subsistance may give less; no person should give so much that he would become a public burden.

The obligation to perform tzedakah can be fulfilled by giving money to the poor, to health care institutions, to synagogues or to educational institutions. It can also be fulfilled by supporting your children beyond the age when you are legally required to, or supporting your parents in their old age. The obligation includes giving to both Jews and gentiles; contrary to popular belief, Jews do not just "take care of our own."

Judaism acknowledges that many people who ask for charity have no genuine need. In fact, the Talmud suggests that this is a good thing: if all people who asked for charity were in genuine need, we would be subject to punishment (from G-d) for refusing anyone who asked. The existence of frauds diminishes our liability for failing to give to all who ask, because we have some legitimate basis for doubting the beggar's sincerity. It is permissible to

investigate the legitimacy of a charity before donating to it.  
Joseph Solovitch \* Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream. Archives of Ontario \* Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. Å416Å 327 1544 \* And let say: Amen solovij@gov.on.ca \* ÅExcerpt Prayer for Peace,Rabbi Nachman of BratslavÅ

Date: Tue, 20 Aug 1996 09:56:50 -0700 From: Roger David Carasso <roger@carasso.com> Subject: Are synagogue dues charity?  
Jeffrey Belne <102023.1420@CompuServe.COM> asks "if Synagogue membership dues are considered part of an individual's charity contributions."

It is generally agreed that Maaser (i.e. Charity) may not be used to cover an obligation (on the other hand, when the means to fulfill a mitzvah from any other source are lacking many authorities permit the use of Maaser). In the past Jewish communities were more independent and self-governing, and communal commitments were less voluntary in nature. As a result most synagogue donations are used for essential communal needs like salaries, lighting, etc., and Maaser money was not to be used. Only the proportion of the synagogue donation corresponding to the proportion used for the poor could have been taken from Maaser funds.

Today there is a greater leniency of recent authorities because Jewish communities are not independent and self-governing and communal commitments are more voluntary in nature (Rabbi S.Z. Auerbach).  
Roger (See my page <http://www.carasso.com/roger/charity.html>)  
roger@carasso.com

Date: Tue, 17 Sep 1996 08:41:43 -0400 (EDT) From: Jonathan Robbins <jonathan@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu> Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?  
Jeffrey Belne wondered if Synagogue membership dues are considered charity contributions. Bill Bickel replied:

> I believe I read somewhere that they're technically not, for some > religious reason; but I've come to muddle the issue, not to clarify it: > > Assuming I'm right, let's say you deduct it anyway: If the IRS disallows > it, then, they'd be doing so based on religious grounds, which of course > they couldn't do. The IRS definitely allows contributions to religious organizations to be deducted for those individuals who itemize their income tax deductions. For those who are interested, I can provide more detail.

Your comments, however, raise another issue that has often bothered me: why do synagogues charge people to belong? I know for a fact that not as many people participate in synagogue activities because membership is so expensive. Without knowing, I'm guessing that the issue of whether halacha considers membership dues charity is unanswered in the early texts. That's probably because, and again I'm only guessing, in the past people didn't have to PAY to pray!

In this time of crisis in American Judaism, shouldn't synagogues be doing all that is possible to bring people in? Does this jive with high membership dues?

Jonathan Robbins Jonathan@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu

Date: Tue, 8 Oct 1996 19:35:45 -0400  
From: ljweiner@pipeline.com (Lisa Weiner)  
Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?

ÅNote that Joel issued an immediate correction, agreeing that dues may be deductible in some cases... --YMÅ

I think there is a difference between synagogue dues and symphony society dues, for ex. Most synagogues do not check whether you are a member or not

before you enter to daven. Entry to a shul is not based on membership. What, precisely, are the "membership benefits" to which you refer? There are usually no tangible benefits, unlike dues to a symphony society where you receive tickets to concerts. And if you do not receive tickets, and your dues merely support the symphony, I must disagree with your statement on the tax deductibility. I have been led to believe that membership in tax-deductible organizations is fully deductible as long as you get no

tangible benefits for your money (tickets, books, museum passes, etc.). Synagogue dues generally go to pay necessary expenses, which might answer Jonathan Robbins' question about why synagogues charge people to belong. Someone has to pay the rent, heating, electricity bills, etc. It might be nice to be idealistic and take the position that you shouldn't be charged to pray, and indeed, few shuls would ever try to keep out someone who was not a member, but the money to run the synagogues must come from somewhere.

Lisa Weiner ljweiner@pipeline.com

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 01:04:46 -0400  
From: MosheAdler@aol.com  
Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?

Praying IS free. But the siddurim have to be paid for, and the Rabbi and Cantor have to eat, and so do their families. If you have a secretary, she probably wants to get paid, and if you have a building, there's probably a mortgage, and certainly utility bills. Not to mention bulletins and announcements. It costs a lot of money to run a synagogue, and donations don't always add up to enough income. Dues are collected to at least have money for part of the bills. We always wish some wealthy member will

endow enough money for the expenses to be paid forever, but that is wishful thinking. Moshe Adler (former shul treasurer) MosheAdler@aol.com adler09801@medone.org

Date: Wed, 09 Oct 96 01:23:00 PDT  
From: "Scott, Tanya" <SCOTTT@ofc004b.sce.com>  
Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?

I haven't done as well as I should in the past about paying all of my dues in full because they can run high, especially if you're not part of a family paying. However, many Temples can't bring in sufficient funds any other way to pay the Rabbi, Cantor or in some cases, rent. At my shul, they will make arrangements for people to pay within their means. It isn't all or nothing. Perhaps the issue is how much should they squeeze members rather than should members not pay at all.

Tanya Scott

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 08:27:08 -0700  
From: ernest-t@ix.netcom.com (B.L.E.)  
Subject: Re: Are Synogogue Dues Charity?

This is a very machmir (strict) (and not completely accurate) reading of the tax code. Dues paid to a qualified tax-exempt organization are deductible to the extent that you receive no benefits or privileges from the organization for the dues, such as monthly bulletins or journals, use of a library, or the right to attend luncheons and lectures. Technically, if you receive benefits, the organization should tell you how much of your dues are deductible. In practice, however, I think everyone who itemizes deductions does deduct their dues to synogogue and I would be very interested to hear about a situation where the deduction was disallowed because the taxpayer received the normal benefits associated with shul membership.

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 11:48:40 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Ellen Payne Solomon <payne@yu1.yu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?

I don't know what halachot exist regarding dues, so I won't guess and make assumptions on that basis.

The idea of "counting one's charity" comes from the commandment of ma'aser, giving one tenth of one's income to the Temple in Jerusalem for operational costs. When the Temple was standing, this 10% was mandatory for everyone. Now many have the custom to give 10% of their income to charitable purposes. So contributing a mandatory amount to a synagogue is not so new.

> In this time of crisis in American Judaism, shouldn't synagogues be doing  
> all that is possible to bring people in? Does this jive with high  
> membership dues?

It's important to have an obligatory amount that every congregant pays so that they don't take things for granted. If a synagogue is spending more than the majority of its members think is reasonable, someone should try to reduce operating costs. In cases when members are financially unable to afford the regular dues, a "scale" should be in place so they can contribute and not feel like a charity case; my mother helped institute such a policy at her synagogue many years ago.

Judaism requires commitment. Letting someone have a free ride because they would rather buy season tickets to the opera than pay for a qualified Rabbi is another version of modifying Jewish law because someone doesn't want to keep it.

Ellen Solomon

Date: Wed, 09 Oct 1996 23:17:42 -0700

From: ron judenberg <rsjuden@atcom.net>

Subject: Re: Are synagogue dues charity?

This is only partially correct. The law says that you must deduct the benefit value from the cost of a donation ie. if you go to a charity dinner, the difference between the actual cost of the meal and what you paid is considered charity.

Strictly speaking, I think a case could be made that since you can pray in a shul without being a member, only those extra services which non-members don't get, such as free or discount tickets for High Holidays, are considered value received. The rest is charity.

Are there any accountants out there to clarify this?

**From:** "owner-torah-forum-digest@torah.org"

#### JUDAISM AND EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIFE

Date: Fri, 9 Aug 1996 12:10:44 -0400 (EDT) From: <jayg@wam.umd.edu>

Subject: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

I have a question about Judaism and extra-terrestrial life. I am writing 2 days after NASA announced finding possible life on Mars, not because I think I got kidnapped by aliens - but if I did I am sure they would be Jewish :) . What do our sages say about life elsewhere? Is it possible? Could it be intelligent? And do they have to have knowledge of Hebrew (the language of creation) for Judaism to hold water?

Shabbat Shalom Jason Goldstein

Date: Sun, 18 Aug 1996 00:14:50 -0400 From: Len613@aol.com Subject:

Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

In a message dated 96-08-16 16:43:35 EDT Jason Goldstein writes: >What do our sages say about life elsewhere? Is it possible? Could it be >intelligent? And do they have to have knowledge of Hebrew (the language >of creation) for Judaism to hold water?

There is an interesting 50-page essay, "The Religious Implications of Extraterrestrial Life," by Rabbi Norman Lamm, in his book, "Faith and Doubt" (Ktav paperback, 1986). Lamm, president of Yeshiva University, writes, "Already there has been established a new science, 'exobiology,' the study of forms of extraterrestrial life." He also references Walter Sullivan's volume, "We Are Not Alone." (McGraw Hill, 1964) Somr hold that man will be found to be relatively inconsequential compared to other forms; a conclusion that Rabbi Lamm challenges in his essay on "extheology," a religious conception of a universe in which man is not the only inhabitant. He also reviews and analyzes the conflicting evidence on the possibility of other inhabitants.

Rabbi Lamm writes, "Objectivity is obtained in science by recognizing that phenomena are without purpose. Modern thought, from scientism to existentialism, has banished teleology and reduced man to a purposeless and

insignificant blob of protoplasm. But whether all that is modern is necessarily true is, of course, an entirely different question. -- More than once in the past have the wisest men of a generation been caught up in ardor and passion for certain ideas which seemed most plausible and which later, upon further reflection and examination, turned out to be follies. In our present situation, similarly, we must beware of over-familiarity with the fantastic and an overzealous stretching of the limits of possibility."

Lamm, along with many scientists, considers the possibilities of significant extraterrestrial life remote, and reviews the evidence for his conclusion. Nevertheless, he discusses the religious challenges that would ensue should the speculations prove correct. He discusses the subject from the standpoints of the uniqueness of man, the uniqueness of the Creator, and the relation between Gd and man. If you are interested in the reconciliation of science and religion, you would also enjoy the 1990 Bantam paperback, "Genesis and the Big Bang," by Gerald L. Schroeder, an MIT PhD in nuclear physics. It is subtitled, "The Discovery of Harmony Between Modern Science and the Bible."

Leonard Mansky (Len613@aol.com)

Date: Thu, 12 Sep 1996 01:28:51 -0700 From: ayermish@netcom.com

(Aimee Yermish) Subject: Re: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

I'm a scientist, and I'm still not sure how to get people to understand that science doesn't have to be seen as diametrically opposed to religion. Science tells us about proximate cause and effect, and shows how one does not have to posit a will to explain behaviour. It makes no claims about ultimate cause.

Living beings are far from "purposeless and insignificant blobs of protoplasm." The purpose, if you insist upon one, is to live, and the significance is that we are here. The more science I learn, the more I find my faith deepened. I am far more impressed by a G-d who created such a complex universe that runs itself on such simple rules, a universe that constantly creates itself in infinite variety, than I would be with a G-d who just built a finished product. Anyone can build a machine. But to make a machine that assembles itself from nothing, if you just leave it alone long enough, now, \*that's\* an accomplishment! When I learn about a new scientific discovery, I frequently find myself moved to say the bracha about how the world was created for G-d's glory. If there is life on other planets, if that life is vastly different from us, isn't that yet more proof of the creativity of G-d and creation? Perhaps G-d is revealed in different ways to the different peoples of the universe. Doesn't that show G-d's wisdom in teaching each being according to its nature, just as we teach the four children in the Haggadah? If I have a plot of land for my garden, do I plant only a single flower in one place? Or do I spread the entire field with the same species? No, because the beauty of the garden is in its diversity and interrelatedness. Why must we suppose that G-d created a vast universe, only to leave it almost completely barren? There are a number of science fiction writers dealing with the question of how religion adapts as we meet other intelligent life -- I can pester my husband, who remembers names much better than I, if anyone is interested. Aimee

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 01:39:25 -0400

From: Michael Shapiro <mshapi@ibm.net>

Subject: Re: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

There could be life on other planets, but Torah was given only once to Jews on Mount Sinai. It was a singular event. The life on other planets would be without any, or much, free will. Even if we are the only ones, it's not a big deal. The whole universe was created for us.

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 02:37:48 -0400

From: Len613@aol.com (Leonard Mansky)

Subject: Re: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

I may not disagree with Yossi's conclusion, but not for the reason he gives. With all due respect, his explanation disagrees with the Rambam who wrote: <<Know that the majority of the false imaginings that call forth perplexity in the quest for the ultimate objective of the existence of the world as a

whole, or the "objective" of every part of it, have as their root an error of man about himself and his imagining that all that exists exists because of himself alone ...>> (Moreh Nebukhim -- The Guide of the Perplexed, Pines edition, Vol. 2, Pages 505-506).

<< I read "Genesis and the Big Bang," by Gerald L. Schroeder, and I found

nothing of value in it. This book is "apologetic". It tries to mold the Torah into science. This is wrong. The Torah is absolute, just as Hashem is absolute. If science is not in accord with the Torah, it is not a shortcoming of the Torah. Science has not matured yet to the level of the Torah. >>

If the book deserves criticism it should not be for molding the Torah into science but, rather, for attempting to mold science to the Torah. Dr.

Schroeder includes a pertinent quote from Rambam in his excellent book: <<Conflicts between science and religion result from misinterpretations of the "Torah.">> (Pg. 27)

What is wrong with trying to reconcile (not mold) science and Torah?

Doesnt

the Talmud tell us, <<The seal of the Holy One is truth.>> (Hanina b. Hama, Shabbat, 55b). The Torah is not a science text any more than the laws of Kashrut are for medical purposes.

Hashem created us in His image and, for this reason, we seek to <<fill the earth and subdue it>> (Gen. 1:27-28). How can we subdue the earth without trying to understand it, as scientists do; especially if they are doing it le'shem shamayim (for the sake of Heaven), as Dr. Schroeder is doing.

Rambam wrote in a responsum that all forms of wisdom are <<perfumers and cooks and bakers>> for the Torah, which remains the superior mistress over all wisdom. (Torah Umadda, Norman Lamm, Jason Aronson, 1990, Pg. 157)

Rabbi Lamm also presents the words of the Vilna Gaon as cited by his disciple, R. Baruch of Shklov: <<To the degree that one lacks in his knowledge of other "branches" of wisdom, he lacks a hundredfold in the wisdom of Torah, for wisdom and Torah are intertwined.>> (ibid., Pg. 156)

The Talmud also teaches that whoever maintains that he possesses "only" Torah, possesses not even Torah (Yevamot 109b).

Shalom u-v'rakha, Len Mansky

Date: Wed, 9 Oct 1996 17:24:31 -0400

From: Yaakov Menken <menken@torah.org>

Subject: Re: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

I have read a portion of the book, as well as attended a lecture by the author on this topic (and spoken with Dr. Schroeder afterwards). While I do understand Joseph's perspective concerning the nature of Torah vs. science and the "apologetic" nature of the work, I disagree strongly with the conclusion that therefore the book offers nothing of value.

First of all, recognize that modern science has reached conclusions about the nature of the universe that are completely in accordance with Torah - and also realize how revolutionary this is. The Greek philosophers believed that the world was "Kadmon," without beginning, having existed for all eternity. The "Big Bang Theory," on the other hand, could practically have been lifted from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis - an enormous explosion of pure energy (light) burst into a universe which was previously just space, utterly devoid of matter. No known laws of physics can explain this phenomenon; it just "happened." Can you say, "Hand of G-d?" Sure. I knew you could.

The Jewish approach to G-d and Torah is based on evidence - "know" that G-d

exists, based on facts you can see, study and understand. A Jewish citizen of an earlier era could dismiss the philosophers who said the world was eternal, just as many of us dismiss the theory of evolution (but that is another topic). Not so the age of the universe, which has been verified using a number of different means. There is currently little reason to disbelieve the evidence that the universe has a physical age of some 15 billion years.

Dr. Schroeder offers an analysis which demonstrates how this apparent age

of the universe might not contradict the seven-day Week of Creation. It is possible to accept both the scientific evidence and the Torah as completely true. In other words, to accept the Torah does "not" involve rejecting what scientists appear to believe is solid evidence. Why does this have no value to one with a "scientific mind?"

Dr. Schroeder's book offers far from the only theory which reconciles the age of the universe with Creation - actually, it's not even my personal favorite. But his contribution to the available literature is hardly without value, and may be very helpful to a person grappling with the very nature of Torah as the blueprint for our universe.

Yaakov Menken

Date: Sat, 12 Oct 1996 11:24:37 +0200 (IST)

From: Robert Klein <hamoreh@netvision.net.il>

Subject: Re: Judaism and extra-terrestrial life

To quote from Maimonides' Guide 3:13:

"Study the book which leads all who want to be led to the truth, and is therefore called 'Torah', from the beginning of the account of the Creation to its end, and you will comprehend the opinion which we attempt to expound.

For no part of the creation is described as being in existence for the sake of another part, but each part is declared to be the product of G-d's will, and to satisfy by its existence [His] intention...You must not be mistaken and think that the spheres and the angels were created for our sake. Our position has already been pointed out to us, 'Behold, the nations are as a drop from a bucket,' (Isaiah 40:15). Now compare your own essence with that

of the spheres, the stars, and the Intelligences, and you will comprehend the truth, and understand that man is superior to everything formed of earthly matter, but not to other beings; he is found exceedingly inferior when his existence is compared with that of the spheres, and a fortiori when compared with that of the Intelligences."

One could argue that aliens would be made of 'earthly matter', and thus inferior to humanity, but that is clearly not in the spirit of what Maimonides is saying here. On Earth, man is clearly the pinnacle of creation. But in terms of the overall Creation, he is not. Therefore, we cannot say, based on the Torah, that Hashem did not create other intelligent life forms elsewhere in the universe.

>So if you do find an alien that is smart, chances are that it is supposed to >be your servant!

This is based on the premise that everything which is animate but not human is animal. But there are other intelligences acknowledged by the Torah, so the premise is false. Additionally, it is also possible that humans were created in other parts of the universe.

>>If you are interested in the reconciliation of science and religion, you >>would also enjoy the 1990 Bantam paperback Genesis and the Big Bang, by

>>Gerald L. Schroeder, an MIT PhD in nuclear physics. It is subtitled, "The >>Discovery of Harmony Between Modern Science and the Bible."

>>I read this book, and I found nothing of value in it. This book is >"apologetic". It tries to mold the Torah into science. This is wrong.

>The Torah is absolute, just as Hashem is absolute. If science is not in >accord with the Torah, it is not a shortcoming of the Torah. Science has >not matured yet to the level of the Torah.

Here Mr. Ceasar's premise is that interpretation of the Torah is made without reference to prior knowledge, but that is simply not the case. The sages constantly refer to outside knowledge of morality, history, mathematics and science when debating the literal and deeper meanings of the Torah. We need to be as open to the possibility that science is showing us the correct interpretation of the Torah just as much as we are open to the possibility that the Torah is showing us the correct interpretation of scientific data.

Robert Klein Jerusalem

---

From: "100016.1167@CompuServe.COM" (Rabbi Zalman Kossowsky)

In celebration of the birth of the two new grandchildren  
Refoel Yitzchak Yoel ben Yehuda Leib  
and Chiena Nechama Devora bat Yosef

-----  
I find in the Rainbow a number of fascinating messages.

First there is the simple peshat message that Hashem gave to Noah and his children, [ which is also applicable to all of us today ]. Think about the way a Rainbow is formed. It requires both rain and sunlight at the same time.

Usually there is a background of dark stormy clouds on the one side of the horizon and the sun shining on the other side. For me the symbolism is very clear. A flood that can destroy the world can only come from a storm where the clouds stretched from one horizon to the other. The rainbow is thus the perfect symbol through which G-d promises that He will never bring such a horror back into the world. No. He will always bring some sunshine back.

There will always be rainbows -- somewhere.

That is the first and most important lesson that we need to learn. To believe that even the worst of storms will come to an end and that the sun will again shine. Without this faith we would not be able to survive when the storms do come.

Then there are two messages in the shape and nature of this phenomenon.

1. When you mix all the colours of the rainbow you get two completely different results, depending upon the medium.

The sum of all the colours - in rays of light - is a white light;

the sum of all the colours - in inks or paints - is the colour black .

Therefore, in ruchniyos - variety - for example as in shivim panim latorah will result in or - light;

while in gashmiyut such a mixture will result in choshech - darkness.

2. In a somewhat similar vein, an arc of 180 degrees [ as in the complete Keshet upon which we make the beracha ] also acts so as to enclose everything that lies within the arc.

For me the moral is clear. Spiritual variety does not mean disunity - in fact, it means just the opposite. And achdus will only come when we learn to accept

these two features of the Keshet.

Now perhaps we can also understand why Hashem needed to create the Keshet in the last moments of Yom Hashishi. According to the Midrash, not only had mankind been expelled from Gan Eden, but Kayin had already killed Hevel. Pilug [division] had already begun - the Keshet was one of the antidotes.

-----  
A final thought about the new young Kossowsky lady -

the gematria for Chiena Nechama Devora bat Yosef is 951.

There is only ONE pasuk in all of Tanach with the same value -- it is the third pasuk of Eshet Chayil -- gemalatu tov v'lo rah kol yemei chayeha -- the nimshal of that you can make for yourself.

The value for Refoel Yitzchak Yoel ben Yehuda Leib is 700

and here again - only 1 pasuk Divrei Hayamim 1 [Chronicles 1] Chap 16 v. 27

"Hod vehadar lefanav - oz v'ched'va vim'komo [see the various mefarshim]

---