

B'S'D'
INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON Noach - 5761

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From: Midei Shabbos[SMTP:rachrysl@netmedia.net.il] Subject: Midei Shabbos by RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER

Pashas Noach

ITS WAYS ARE PLEASANT ...

The Gemoro in Yevomos (65b) exempts women from the mitzvah of having children, from a posuk in Bereishis. The Torah writes there (1:28) "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the land and conquer it". Chazal extrapolate from here that by juxtaposing the mitzvah of procreating to conquering the land, the Torah is indicating that whoever performs the one is obligated to perform the other; women, who tend not to fight, are therefore not commanded to procreate.

The above comparison also helps us understand (says the Torah Temimah) why, unlike all other mitzvos which begin already from the age of thirteen, this mitzvah begins only from the age of eighteen, and one transgresses only from twenty. This is because having children is compared to going to war, and the age of conscription, as the Torah states many times, is twenty. In spite of the exemption from the mitzvah of being fruitful and multiplying, there are those who say that women are still subject to the mitzvah mi'de'Rabbonon of 'populating the world', ("He did not create the world to remain desolate" - Yeshayah 45:18). In their opinion, it is an independent mitzvah. And there are others (above all the Ran), who explain that, even though women may not be intrinsically obligated to have children, they are however, obligated to help their husbands to perform the mitzvah, bearing in mind that without them, their husbands could not possibly fulfill it. The Torah Temimah disagrees with both of these opinions. It can hardly be denied though that, whether a woman is obligated to assist her husband in performing the mitzvah or not, when she does assist him, she will receive her due share of reward for 'mesa'yei'a li'yedei mitzvah' (assisting someone to perform a mitzvah). There can be no doubt that if a person is punished for assisting his friend in performing an aveirah ("lifnei iver ..." - do not place a stumbling-block before a blind man) then he will be amply rewarded for helping him perform a mitzvah.

As already mentioned, the Torah Temimah queries the Ran, who obligates women to perform the mitzvah of populating the world. Consequently, he also queries the Mogein Avrohom who extends the concession of selling a Seifer-Torah in order to marry off an orphan boy, to selling it in order to marry off an orphan girl.

The Gemoro in Chagigah (2b) however, ascribes the mitzvah of populating even to slaves, who are certainly not included in the mitzvah of "P'ru u'revu" any more than women are. This would seem to vindicate the opinion of the Ran that "P'ru u'revu" and the mitzvah mi'de'Rabbonon of populating, are two independent mitzvos, and that even those who are not included in the former, are included in the latter. In that case, the Mogein Avrohom's ruling is justified, too.

The Meshech Chochmah delves into the strange phenomenon of the Torah's exemption of women from a mitzvah in which they are indispensable partners.

The Torah is described as one "whose ways are pleasant", he explains by way of introduction, "and whose paths are all peace"

(Mishlei 3:17).

For example, he says, there is only one day in the year on which we are obligated to fast. And to offset the pain and discomfort, the Torah ordained that we eat on the day before. Similarly, the Torah, knowing that at the time of war when a man's body is hot with tension, permits him to live with a beautiful woman whom he encounters in the vicinity of the battlefield. And there are many other examples where the Torah makes concessions or restricts its requirements because "its ways are pleasant ...".

Based on Chazal's presumption that women in childbirth are to a certain degree, in mortal danger (perhaps more in earlier times than today), the Torah did not therefore place upon her a mitzvah to have children and to endanger her life in the process. In similar vein, Rabeinu Bachye (in this week's parshah) explains that, whereas all the non-kosher animals were commanded to come to No'ach under their own steam "to live", when it came to the kosher animals, who were saved in larger numbers to enable No'ach to slaughter them as Korbonos, they received no such command. Rather No'ach was commanded to fetch them himself; because it would not be fair to order them to present themselves to him - in order to die. And it is for the very same reason, the Meshech Chochmah adds, that Chazal in Yevomos (65b) even permit a woman, under certain circumstances, to take contraceptives in order to avoid becoming pregnant.

It is unclear however, as to why the Meshech Chochmah links this issue with the likelihood of death at childbirth, and not with the inevitable pains of childbirth. These are after all, part of Chavah's curse following the sin in Gan Eden, and it would be equally unfair for G-d to force her to bring the curse upon herself by means of a mitzvah. Indeed, the Gemoro in Yevomos is speaking about Yehudis, the wife of Rabbi Chiya, who had exceptionally harsh pains at childbirth. The issue of death is not discussed there.

And the Meshech Chochmah goes on to explain with this, why Rav Yosef (in Yevomos) learns the exemption of women from the mitzvah, from the posuk (written regarding Ya'akov Ovinu - Bereishis 35:11) "Ani Keil Shakai, prei u'revei" (in the singular), rather than from "P'ru u'revu" (in the plural), written regarding Odom ho'Rishon (Bereishis 1:28). It is because the b'rochoh of "P'ru u'revu" was given to Odom and Chavah before the sin, in which case the pain of childbirth and the death that accompanies it had not yet been decreed. Consequently, both Odom and Chavah were included in the mitzvah, whereas the command to Ya'akov, which was issued after the sin, precluded his wives, for the reason that we explained.

A How about No'ach, you may well ask, where the Torah writes (Bereishis 9:1) "P'ru u'revu" (in the plural) even though the command was issued after the sin?

No problem, the Meshech Chochmah replies; because there the Torah is speaking to No'ach and his sons - hence the use of the plural form.

And what will happen, you may also ask, if women, for fear of the problems resulting from childbirth, simply desist from marrying? What will happen to the men who will want to perform the mitzvah, but who, for lack of partners, will now be unable to do so?

The answer to that too, is straightforward. G-d offset the lack of the mitzvah with an inherent desire that a woman has to marry - a desire that is stronger than that of a man, as Chazal have said (quoting the woman) 'It is better to live two together than to live alone'(Yevomos 118b).

Alternatively, the Meshech Chochmah continues, the Torah's exemption of women from the mitzvah of 'P'ru u'revu' is based on the halachoh that requires a man who has been married for ten years without having had children to take another wife.

Now that presents no problem for the man, who may retain his first wife whilst marrying the second. But what would a woman do if she was also obligated to have children? She too, would be forced to marry

another husband - only she would have to demand a divorce from her first one! Hashem did not consider it proper to force a woman who loves her spouse, to be forced to demand a get to marry a man whom, in all likelihood, she will not love to the same degree. Here too, we can apply the posuk in Mishlei "Its ways are pleasant and all its paths are peace".

Parshah Pearls

No'ach Genuine or Relative "He was a perfect tzadik in his generations" (6:9). Some sages explain this positively - that if he would have lived in a generation of tzadikim, he would have been more righteous still. Others explain it derogatively - according to his generation, he was a tzadik, but had he lived in the generation of Avrohom, he would have been insignificant - Rashi.

The two opinions appear to be arguing over whether No'ach was a true tzadik who was not adversely influenced by his evil contemporaries, who would have grown to even greater heights had he lived in a more righteous generation, or whether he was no more than a moderate tzadik, who, on the one hand, could not lower himself to imitate the corrupt and immoral lifestyles of the society in which he lived, but who, on the other hand, would have been content to live as a decent, average citizen even in a generation of great tzadikim without the least interest in learning from their ways. And this is how the Torah Temimah interprets it.

The Chazon Ish disagrees with this explanation however. It goes without saying, he says, that a person is influenced by his environment. There is not the least doubt that Noach, whom the Torah already describes as a tzadik, would have been a greater tzadik still, had he lived in the generation of Avrohom Ovinu, for example, whom he would definitely have considered a role model and emulated his example.

The two opinions, he says, dispute No'ach's level at that moment. Whether he was a perfect tzadik, a jewel who shone in his generation, and who would have shone in whichever generation he had lived, or whether his righteousness was purely relative - by contrast to the pervert generation in which he lived, but not intrinsically so.

Light By Day, Light by Night "A light you shall make for the boat ..." (6:16). 'Go to the River Pishon', explains the Targum Yonoson, "and fetch from there a precious stone to provide light".

Rashi comments that, according to others, it was a window that Hashem instructed No'ach to fix into the boat for light. That's fine in the daytime, but what did they do at night-time for light, one may well ask? The Kli Yokor, later in the parshah, therefore explains that the olive leaf which the dove brought back to No'ach was for the purpose of extracting from it oil to light at night. That explains why the Torah stresses that the dove brought back the olive-leaf in the evening (which would otherwise be of no significance).

It also explains why the Chizkuni translates "tzohar" as 'oil' (like the word 'yitzhor'). It now transpires that the window lit up the boat by day and an oil-lamp by night.

And it also explains why the Torah refers once to "tzohar" and once to "chalon".

The Kli Yokor uses this Chizkuni to explain another Medrash. The Medrash, commenting on the posuk in Shir ha'Shirim "Your eyes are doves", states that just as the dove brought light to the world, so should Yisroel (who are compared to a dove) bring olive-oil and kindle lamps before Hashem in the Beis ha'Mikdash.

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From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu
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Prologue: To think that man's purpose on this world is merely to keep and act upon the word of Hashem is a pretty straightforward task. The goals are clearly stated and should be relatively easier to follow than if we were supposed to figure out what our purpose here was all about.

Potentially, this is the Noachide dilemma. HaGaon Harav Zevulun Charlop Shlita (May he have a Refuah Shleima), pointed out that Noach, for better or for worse, stuck to the rules. If he was commanded to do it, Noach did it. However, if he was to go Lifnim MeeShuras Hadin, Noach seemed unable to rise to the task (See Sifse Chachamim and Sforno to beginning of Parsha among others). Maybe in that sense, he was a Tzaddik in his time...a question in a generation of Avraham Aveinu though.

Still, the Tziddkus of Noach cannot be debated. Twice, the Torah reminds us that Noach followed the word of Hashem (7:2). Rashi explains that the second reference refers to Noach's entrance into the Teiva. However, a few short Possukim later, the Torah itself tells us how Noach came to the Teiva. Why the need for the double reference to Noach's entrance?

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe II) ztl. explained that Noach acted as he was told. He built the Teiva with the hopes that Hashem wouldn't have to use it. Thus, he followed the letter of the law. However, until he was told to go inside, he wasn't going to hasten the destruction of the world. Until Hashem commanded him to go inside, Noach avoided the entrance. So, despite 150 years of preparation, Noach would not have entered that ark unless commanded to do so from Hashem. The Torah wanted to stress this attribute of Noach, namely his strict adherence to the word of Hashem L'Tov, that it reminded us that Noach did AS HASHEM COMMANDED and nothing more.

Sometimes we are compelled to do more. We might be concerned for our fellow man and over-riding circumstances might compel us to re-examine the law. This week's Chaburah examines one such possible exception to the letter of the law. It is entitled:

(Special Thanks to Rabbi Avi Pollak for clarification of many of the Inyanim in this week's Chaburah)

Melting the Mabul: SALTING SNOW ON SHABBOS

Many Shabbos issues abound as the weather gets colder and the difficulty of getting to Shul in the cold/ice/snow presents itself to many of us. Often, the best solution is to put salt out on the ice and allow it to melt. However, this could result in an Issur of Shabbos. Assuming that there is an Eruv, can one put salt out on the ice?

The question begins with the Gemara (Shabbos 51b) which notes that one cannot melt hail or snow on Shabbos in order to allow the water to flow. However, if the snow/hail is in a glass or a plate and happens to melt, it is not a problem. Rashi notes that the problem here is one of Molid (creating) and it is as if he is creating these waters on Shabbos. In explaining, Shulchan Atzei Shittim (Melech Dash) explains that this is a Gezaira lest you come to fix Keilim in the manner you "fixed" water. It would follow that placing ice on the salt wouldn't be a problem since it is the sun, and not the person that is going to possibly melt the ice on the driveway in absence of the salt.

The Rambam (Shabbos 21:13) quotes the Gemara and the Maggid Mishneh explains that the Rambam included the prohibition of melting ice in the prohibition of squeezing (Sicheeta) because that is the fear (see also Rashba Shabbos 51b who interprets the fear this way). Here too, putting out salt would not create a problem since the only possibility of Sicheeta would come if he were to melt the items by hand. Here the salt will do the melting preventing a possibility that he might come to do Sicheeta. (This is why the Michaber (O.C. 318:16) allows one to place a frozen lasagne on a fire even though the frozen oils will defrost and "be recreated."). Thus, according to this approach, one could put out the salt. It should be no different than putting snow near a fire, or the lasagne

near the fire. The water that is created will not be confused with Sicheeta since the person is not involved in the creation process directly.

The Rosh (Shabbos 51a) quotes the Sefer haTeruma who offers a third interpretation for the Issur. He notes that the Issur of Molied exists here even if the process happens on its own. The Rema cites this opinion, L'Halacha (318:16) in reference to the lasagne and the fire. He notes that NaHagoo L'Hachmir. He adds that one can rely on the opinion of the Shulchan Aruch if there is great need but otherwise one should not. Thus, even according to this strict interpretation of the Gemara, in a case of great fear that one might fall, it would be Mutar to put out the salt. It should be noted that the Pri Megadim (A.A. 118:40) and the Eglei Tal (Dash 36:3) maintain that there is no Issur if the person does not intend to derive benefit from the newly created water. Ergo, in our case, where the person does not touch the water once the ice is melted, the Sefer Haterumah would not hold that putting out salt would be Assur according to these opinions.

Of course, these Heterim assume that by melting the snow you are not strengthening the layers of ice elsewhere (should it refreeze)(Har Zvi vol. I: Kuntroos Tel Harim) and that there is an eruv. Some even insist upon the use of a Shinui even if the Heter should be employed.

L'Halacha, many seem to adopt the position of the Machmirim, allowing the placing of salt on ice on Shabbos only in the most extreme cases (i.e. those of Pikuach Nefesh) and then only with a Shinui in the placing. HaGaon Harav Mordechai Willig Shlita (Chaburos B'Hilchos Shabbos, 5761) has recommended that people be Machmir though the Meikilim have a solid ground upon which to stand (See also Oros Yimei HaShabbos p. 245).

Battala News Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuel Maybruch upon the birth of a baby boy. Condolences to Rebbitzin Shoshanna Schachter upon the loss of her mother Mrs. Rose Shapiro Aleiha HaShalom. HaMakom yinachem B'Soch Shaar Aveilei Zion V'Yirushalayim

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Parshat Noach

RABBI CHAIM BROVENDER

[Dean, Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Hamivtar- Orot Lev Rosh Yeshiva, Midreshet Lindenbaums]

For the time being we are posting Rabbi Brovenders' articles from last year "Introducing Noach"

The first two verses of the parsha introduce us to Noach, the man who will save creation.

Verse 1 (6: 9)

"These are the generations of Noach: Noach was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with G-d."

Verse 2 (6: 10)

"Noach begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Yefet."

However, we have already met Noach: he is mentioned twice in the parsha of Breshit and we should look at those verses to get a fuller picture of the man who will build the ark.

"LemechBhad a son" (5: 28).

Rashi says that the Hebrew ben ("son") is related to the Hebrew bana ("to build"), and the meaning of the verse is "Lemech had a son from whom the world was built (rebuilt?)." This verse deviates from the pattern, "Band he (had a son) named x." In this verse, the name of the son is missing and that in order to hint at the idea that the son will rebuild the world.

The next verse is especially important.

What's in the Name?

"He called him (named him) Noach," (5: 29).

The verse goes on to explain that that name is a play on another Hebrew word with similar sounds. Noach the name is similar to the Hebrew yinachemenu ("consolation"), and therefore the name means: "He will console us in our work and the toil of our hands," meaning that Noach will do something to make life easier for the laborers. And this is in turn related to "the ground which Hashem has cursed!" (end of verse).

Rashi explains that the people in the world did not have plows, and Noach

invented them. The earth would produce thorns and thistles instead of wheat, and this was the result of the curse directed against Adam. [Cf. above, (3: 17-19)]. Noach was able to mitigate the curse by producing implements which made farming more practical. This is the consolation referred to in the verse". Rashi concludes with a semantic argument: "If you do not explain the word as deriving from the verb n/o/h, which means "to rest," but insist that the root is n/h/m, which means "to console," then the connection to the name Noach is tenuous."

For Rashi this verse means that Noach was able to return a modicum of "rest" to the created world. Adam was intended to live in the Garden of Eden where his "work" would be prayer and developing his relationship with Hashem. The curse of Man was that he would be involved intensely with existence and would not be able to develop the relationship with G-d as originally intended. Noach returned to man a measure of the "rest" that existed in the world as originally conceived.

The point Rashi makes is not simply what the correct dictionary entry is. For Rashi, consolation does not necessarily mean change. Consolation can also mean that the future will be different than the present. "Rest" is about the present and the change that Noach was able to produce in the living conditions of the populace. Conceptually, Noach is leading the world back to its original purpose by enabling mankind to spend more time developing their spiritual concerns. Rashi does not make this specific point, but it is hard to ignore the connection between n/o/h and menucha, "rest," and Shabbat. Noach is the proof that the curse can be overcome and that we can move the world in the direction of the original Shabbat.

Rashi introduces Noach to us as the man who changed the course of world history and started to move us back in the direction of the first Shabbat. He brought more than a small measure of optimism into the world, insisting that the curse, which was the result of Man's inability to accept the command of Hashem was not ultimately unchangeable. In some way Noach had begun to lead humanity back to Hashem and to reproducing the world that existed before the curse. However, as the parsha will teach us, he was not successful. People continued to act as if the curse dominated their relationship with Hashem (a form of hopelessness), and concluded that a serious improvement was impossible. They accepted the gift of the plows but were not able to accept the implication of that gift.

Introducing our parsha, Hashem saw "that man was evilB" (6: 5)." Every thought of Man is called "evil always". The Hebrew is kol hayyom, "every day." "Day," of course, is the basic unit of creation and the verse is saying that man was totally disconnected, was not able to find G-d in any of the days of man's existence.

"Vayyinachem" (6: 6), G-d reconsidered the creation of man. A quick look at the word and we find the letters of Noach's name, n/h. Noach was able to produce a respite (yinachemenu) but this was not sufficient. The people continued to distance themselves until Hashem reconsidered (vayyinachem) the existence of creation. The name Noach remains a constant reminder for this tense time in human history. The plow that gave hope and might have caused the people to reconsider their relationship with the creator and with the evil which overwhelmed them and precipitated the decision to destroy the world. Both of these moments are contained in the name Noach.

The resolution of the contradiction between a creation that is designated as "evil" and Noach who represents the possibilities in the future is found in the last two verses of the first parsha of the Torah.

It is reported that Hashem decided to destroy man: "for I have reconsidered having made them" (6: 7), but a verse later we learn, "Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem" (6: 8). This favor must refer to the worthiness of the enterprise of the creation itself. Noach was one person, but he made it all worth while. Alternatively, it indicated that man could rise to the level expected of him and that the world would continue in spite of the obvious problems.

Noach carried the message that G-d did not have disdain for humanity; his farming implements were meant to prove that people could still thrive in the created world. But Noach's strange inability to convince a serious number of his neighbors that they should save themselves from the upcoming cataclysm haunts us.

Against this background of great expectations and foreshadowing disappointments, the second parsha of the Torah begins!

Of the Sainly, Mention Their Name; Mention Their Praise

"The offspring of NoachB" (6: 9). Rashi explains why the verse does not list his offspring directly but continues with the praise of Noach, "Brighteous man, perfect in his time." Rashi's insight: "since the Torah mentioned Noach, it spoke of him and praised him. This accords with the verse in Mishle, "Mention of the righteous is for blessingB" (10: 7). Rashi understands this as meaning: "when you mention the righteous, then you should bless him!" According to Rashi, the Torah is following the directive summarized in the verse in Mishle. The "righteousness" of Noach is not really part of the story but is mandated by a certain directive summarized in Mishle.

The Gr" explains as follows (in his commentary to Mishle): "even after the zaddik dies and there is only the "memory" to relate to, that is enough to augment bracha "blessing" in this world."

Rashi is not only showing us that the Torah acted according to its own principles or that the Torah, in this case, explains to us how the principle works. There is a deeper meaning here. We are about to study the parsha of Noach, in which wickedness reigns supreme. The world is literally destroyed, and though Noach is saved and in turn saves his family, we are never perfectly sure of why that happens.

Here the Torah begins by explaining that the righteousness of Noach was exemplary and deserving mention. Beyond the simple mention of Noach and his special qualities, the Gr" shows us that when remembering the wickedness of the generation of the flood, we have to emphasize that we are also involved in the memory of the zaddik of the generation. This being the case, the story becomes the story of the salvation of the world through the "righteousness" of Noach, and not the story of the punishment of the wickedness of the world.

In the opening statement in Rashi changes the story completely. There is a hero, a zaddik, who is involved in saving the world. And though this aspect of his personality does not seem to dominate the narrative in the parsha of Noach, this may be the story that is actually being told.

Alternatively, Rashi continues, "this verse may be instructing us that the true descendants (those who follow his way) are good deeds." Though it may seem that Noach didn't have a particular legacy to leave the world, he certainly left the "good deeds" of a lifetime. For those who understand the ways of the world, this is the determining legacy and the true "offspring" of this righteous man.

According to the second interpretation, the Torah is mentioning the "offspring of the continuing generations" of Noach. His biological offspring may not have left an impression, but his "good deeds" affected the world in a dramatic manner, clearly beyond that which offspring are able to do.

Though presented as two different interpretations in Rashi, it is not difficult to combine them into one dominant idea.

Noach was not able to save his generation from destruction, but he was able to give humanity another chance and refashion it to some extent. It was clear that a world bereft of good deeds could not endure. This is the legacy of Noach, the one whose good deeds could not save the world in which he lived but were able to save the world of G-d's creation. Noach set a standard for the ongoing history of the world. Therefore, the "mention of the righteous person is a blessing." The blessing is existence itself. When we mention Noach we remember why the world that we are part of was saved, and we are encouraged in following in his footsteps.

In His Generation

The verse says that Noach was "perfect in his generation." The Hebrew 'bedorosov' is troublesome, and the subject of a difference of opinion among our Sages.

Rashi presents the issue as follows: "There are those who understand it as being a word of praise, and those who feel that it is insulting to Noach. If praise then is the intention, had he lived in a generation of zaddikim he would have been still more righteous. As an insult, it means that in his generation he might have been called righteous, but in other generations, the generation of Avraham for example, he would not have been considered of any significance."

When I learned this Rashi as a little boy I was told that there were two possibilities and that each regarding the other is mutually exclusive. In other words, Noach was either a great zaddik and that praise is not relative: in any generation, at any time, he would be a zaddik. Or, his righteousness is relative and not as impressive as the purity evidenced by Avraham our father.

Today, I feel that the more insightful interpretation is that Rashi insists on viewing Noach as a mystery. Rashi is not asking us to decide which of the positions he cites is more correct. Rashi is saying that there is a fundamental difficulty in assessing the personality and the place of Noach in our pantheon of religious personalities.

Why didn't Noach become the father of the chosen people? Why did the world wait ten generations until the birth of Avraham? If Noach saved the world and became, the new "first man." Why wasn't this enough to enable him to father the people that would receive the Torah?

From the Spola Zeida: In our History there have been many zaddikim who have suffered from opposition, and have had their righteousness questioned.. They have been accused of being charlatans even though they were true zaddikim. One has only to recall the opposition to Moshe our great teacher. There were even those who thought that Moshe had sinned with a married woman. The people had to learn the lesson that even the most righteous of men has opponents and that they try to blacken his name. The Torah taught us this lesson in its presentation of Noach. Even the great zaddik is not perfectly understood and has detractors. A lesson to

remember. There will apparently never be a person whose righteousness will be so clear that everyone will have the same opinion of him.

This helps us to understand the point of the two opinions quoted by Rashi. Though the Torah itself says remarkable things about Noach and calls him "perfect" we are still unable to decide if the perfection was absolute or relative. Since such a determination is almost never possible, the flaw in deciding the nature of Noach's righteousness is endemic to our situation. For the Spola Zeida the meaning of Rashi's interpretation is that we are learning to recognize the limits of human analysis. We are not able to deal perfectly with the question of Noach's righteousness. Even the information offered by the Torah is not enough. Noach is "perfect" and "righteous," but Noach does not assume heroic proportions. That is reserved for Avraham "our father."

How Do Saints Walk?

The last part of the verse reads: "Noach walked with G-d." Rashi immediately makes the comparison to Avraham. The verse referring to Avraham reads "walk before meB" (Chap 17:1).

Noach, we are told, needed support and walked with G-d, while Avraham could walk alone in his righteousness. The comparison is not perfectly clear, but there is no doubt that Noach comes out second best. On this point there is no difference of opinion to be quoted.

Rashi changes what seems to be the ultimate compliment, that Noach "walked with G-d" into a statement of importance but one that points to Noach's limitations when compared again to Avraham.

Note: Rashi here explains the verse, "Walk before meB" (17: 1) in a very literal way. This literalness indicates the superiority of Avraham over Noach who "walked with G-d." However, in his commentary to the verse itself (ad loc) Rashi says that it should be understood as Onkelos translated: "worship before me" a directive from Hashem and not a description of Avraham's personality. Hashem speaks to Avraham and directs him to "cleave to me through worship/service". Though Rashi is committed to the literal, pshat interpretation, he does not feel inhibited from quoting a different interpretation here, to explain the difference between Noach and Avraham.

In the first part of his comment, Rashi explains the words "hithalech lefanei, walk before meB" (17: 1) in a seemingly contradictory way. Rashi writes, "Avraham walk before me and I will be a G-d and a patron for you." This sounds like Hashem is suggesting to Avraham that by walking "before Him." G-d would support him and act as patron. This interpretation is almost the same as the one used by Rashi to explain what was the weak about the personality of Noach: that Noach needed divine support.

This again represents a mystery. Every person, even a zaddik, needs divine support. However, there are still differences. For Noach, the best thing that can be said about him was that he walked with G-d's support. For Avraham, the suggestion that he accept the support of Heaven, was the first of many comments about his spiritual nature, and does not represent a summarizing statement. Therefore again both interpretations are correct. However, their emphases seem to be different. For Noach, walking with G-d's support seems to say everything. For Avraham, it was only one aspect of his complex personality and not what ultimately set him apart from the rest of the created world.

Whither the Praise?

One more verse, chapter 7:1.

"Bfor it is you that I have seen as righteous in this generation."

Rashi remarks (based on the medrsh and gemara Eruvin 18b), this verse does not say that Noach was righteous and perfect." The lesson is that we only say part of a person's praise in his or her presence, but may say all the praise when he or she is not present." In this verse, Hashem is speaking to Noach directly. The praise is dimmed. In the first verse of the parsha, a statement is being made about Noach, who is not present. At that time, all the praise is said.

This verse in the Torah seems to emphasize again that Noach was a zaddik. However, the emphasis is on "this generation." In direct speech, there is no relativistic aspect to the adjective: "I have seen you to be righteous" says Hashem. The question that Rashi addresses is "why the compliments to Noach seem to have diminished?"

In the first verse he was righteous and perfect, here is only righteous. The lesson presented by Rashi is of a general nature and does not refer specifically to the case of Hashem speaking to Noach. In Eruvin (18b) Rashi explains that the reason for this rule is that if such restraint is not exercised, it may appear that the words are insincere.

This is not a concern with regard to direct speech between Hashem and Noach. Nevertheless, chazal, and Rashi following chazal, felt that this conversation between Hashem and Noach did not actually limit the praise of Noach, but rather comes to teach a lesson about conversation between men. Don't compliment too

much when speaking face to face for, as Rashi explains, this might be taken as a sign of insincerity.

Summary

In the first verse of the parsha the Torah compliments Noah excessively, but Rashi says that the nature of his righteousness is unclear. Clearly, righteous, but unclear as to his position in the pantheon of the zaddikim. Later, Noah's praise is more limited (7: 1), but we should not take this as a sign that the Torah has changed its position about Noah and his righteousness; rather, there is an incidental lesson to be learned. Namely, in direct speech one should limit praise, and while this rule does not apply to Hashem or to the Torah itself, it was important enough that the Torah itself follows the rule for our benefit.

Zaddik: Concluding Remarks

There is another use of the word zaddik which should be mentioned.

In Shmot, the Torah teaches, "...do not kill one who is innocent or one who is righteous" (23: 7). Why would anyone want to kill a zaddik? Rashi explains that his is a person who has been vindicated by a court and has the status of zaddik. Clearly, the word is used in a particular sense. At the moment or in terms of this particular judgement, he is considered a zaddik. There is no general implication about his character. He may or may not be a good person. Certainly, in the case Rashi refers to, where after one is acquitted, they do not return him to the court and retry him. In that case, the fact that someone is willing to bring new evidence clearly does not indicate that he is a zaddik. Nevertheless, the Torah instructs us to treat him as though he was a zaddik and not accept the new evidence.

We see that the word zaddik in the Hebrew of the Torah does not clarify questions about a person's character. He might be so called within a strictly limited context, the judgement of a court or only in comparison to the generation within which he lives. Still, he might be a zaddik according to some more objective standard that the Torah invokes (Avraham, for example, who "walked before G-d").

Perhaps the words of Rav Zadok Hacoen in the Takkant Hashavim will shed some light on this matter. In the beginning of the seventh section (p. 93, in the new Bet El edition), Rav Zadok says, "I conclude that even a person who does tshuva with all his heart cannot fix everything in the world, unless all of the other people do tshuva as well. For if even one person does not repent the entire structure is weakened. This is similar to having pain in the nail of a toe, you feel the pain in you entire body. Such a structural fault is not limited to one place but affects the entire person. Similarly, with the tshuva process. Therefore it is clear that "there is no person in the world who is completely righteous and does not sin". Even if he were able to act purely and to do complete tshuva, he would not be "clean" unless the entire generation acted accordingly. Any defect in the generation or in any person living at that time is also felt in him. It is not so much that the evil of the generation affects him directly, but he actually shares some measure of this deficiency, and this because all the people of the generation are related and form a complete structure.

It seems to me that Rav Zadok is describing the "righteousness" of Noah. Noah was alone in perfection. He was practically unaffected by the situation of his generation. That is precisely what was unacceptable. He had no affect on them, but they most certainly had an affect on him. The fact that the generation was not improving; that they did not see Noah as their teacher; that they were not able to see the point of any sort of tshuva, affected the summation of the personality of Noah. He did not affect them, but this fact in turn did affect him.

Rav Zadok points out that there are no zaddikim who exist independently of their kehilla, their community. They are judged not only by their singular achievements, but by the effect that they have on the generation. By this judgement, the Torah teaches that Noah was not successful.

Rav Zadok in the Takkant Hashavim explains the gemara (Yoma 86 a-b) that speaks about "how great is tshuva." There the gemara lists seven statements about the essence of tshuva. The seventh level mentioned is "an individual who does tshuva atones and the entire world atones with him." For Rav Zadok this is not a magic potion meaning that we have only to wait until someone, some great zaddik, does tshuva on behalf of us all. Rather this describes the very essence on tshuva.

Tshuva has a potential, as a feature of the personality, so powerful that it can draw the entire world in its wake. This was not the case with the hero of our parsha. Noah was not able to impress the world with his righteousness, and this was his fault, addressed by the difference of opinion in chazal, as recorded by Rashi.

Rashi himself makes this point in his comment to the verse, "Make an ark of gopher wood" (6: 14). Why was Noah commanded to construct the ark alone? Answer: So that people would ask him, "What use is this to you?" Noah would then answer that Hashem would bring the flood in the future and perhaps the people would repent." Clearly, the job Noah accepted was not only to save himself, but also to try to save the world in which he lived. In this mission he was

not successful.

For Rashi, this inability to impress the generation reflected an even deeper flaw in Noah's personality.

"Noah and his sons went into the ark because of the Flood" (7: 6).

Rashi explains, "Noah too had some defect in faith. He believed but did not believe fully that the flood would come and did not enter the ark until compelled to by the water."

If Rashi's analysis is correct then we understand even better why Noah was unable to convince the people around him of the urgency of their situation. They did not do tshuva nor did they help to build the ark. To those people, Noah made no sense at all, and there was no reason to join with him.

Could it be that they sensed the lack of faith in his attitude?

Shabbat Shalom.

RCB

<http://www.kby.org/torah/parsha/noach.html>

Parshat Noah

An Ark of Chesed

Maran Rosh Hayeshiva, RAV GOLDBICHT, ZT"L

(from Asufat Maarachot, Bereishit vol. I)

The midrash (Tehillim #37) relates a fascinating dialogue between Avraham and Shem (Noah's son):

Avraham asked Malki-Zedek (=Shem): How did you leave the ark? He said to him: Through the [merit of] tzedaka that we did. Avraham asked him: Was there tzedaka for you to do? Were there poor people there? Only Noah and his children were there, so with whom did you do tzedaka? Shem responded: To the wild animals, the beasts and the birds. We did not sleep the entire night, but rather we were feeding this one and that one. One time we were late [feeding the lion], and my father left injured. Avraham's question, "How did you LEAVE the ark?" requires explanation? Did they need a merit to leave the ark and go out to a ruined and desolate world? Once they were saved from the wrath of the flood, obviously they would leave the confines of the ark! Chazal were alluding here to a deep and fundamental concept. "Leaving the ark" signifies the first step in building a renewed world after the flood. This was the meaning of Avraham's question to Shem, with what merit did you leave TO ESTABLISH A NEW WORLD? Moreover, whereas even Adam did not succeed in building an enduring world, Noah and his children merited to establish a world which was granted a covenant of permanence, "I will confirm my covenant with you ... never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." (Bereishit 9:11) Certainly, to build a world requires great merit, all-the-more-so a world of enduring nature! What gave this world a covenant of enduring existence, unlike the previous world that was destroyed?

Malki-Zedek's answer, "We performed chesed with the animals and birds," gave Avraham a new insight into the degree of dedication to chesed which is necessary for the creation to endure. For a full year Noah stood on-call to the various needs and demands of his many "guests." This was a year of total giving and self-sacrifice, which required absolute diligence and perfection, "ONE TIME we were late ..."

Noah and his children learned from this that G-d does not desire their existence alone, but only when it serves as a means to uphold and to elevate the creation in its entirety.

In this way, the ark served as a "Beit Midrash" for the study of chesed. In it they learned to share their confined space with others. In it they were trained consistently to dedicate themselves, with all their might, to others. In it they learned and were brought to understand that their lives are dependent on complete dedication to the mission of an enduring world, chesed. This is what Chazal taught: "Planted in the house of Hashem" (Tehillim 92:14) ... This refers to Noah, who G-d planted in the ark. (Bereishit Rabbah 26:2) The ark was not merely a means of salvation alone, but rather a "House of G-d," a Beit Midrash of

chesed. This lesson of chesed is what served to save him.

R. Shmuel b. Nachmani said, "Fortunate are the righteous who turn the attribute of justice into the attribute of mercy. Wherever it says "Elokim," it refers to the attribute of justice ... [but here] it says, "Elokim remembered Noah" (Bereishit 8:1). What did he remember about him? That he fed and sustained the animals all twelve months in the ark. (Bereishit Rabbah 33:3) The chesed that Noah performed with the animals in the ark is what turned the attribute of justice that was aimed towards him into an attribute of mercy and grace. It was this lesson of chesed that inspired Avraham to embrace this trait, as the Midrash Tehillim concludes: Avraham said [to himself]: These [people], had they not done chesed with the beasts, wild animals and birds would not have left from there, and because he delayed himself a little he received his "reward" and was injured. I, if I do chesed with people who are in the image and likeness of angels, certainly will be saved from harm. Immediately, "He planted an eshel [in Beer-sheva]" (Bereishit 21:33) -- eating, sleeping and lodging. In the ark the spiritual character of Noah and his children was shaped and stamped with the seal of chesed, and in this way they became qualified to be the seed of a renewed world. Even Avraham's renown trait of chesed found its roots and sprung forth from this "Beit Midrash" of chesed!

From: Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh[SMTP:feedback@kby.org] To: kby-parsha@kby.org Subject: Parshat Noah
Parshat Noah The Significance of Noah's Offering
RAV MOSHE STAV

After Noah exited the ark and offered sacrifices, it says: Hashem smelled the pleasing aroma, and Hashem said in his heart, "I will not continue to curse again the ground because of man, since the imagery of man's heart is evil from his youth, nor will I again continue to smite every living being, as I have done." (Bereishit 8:21)

In this pasuk, the Torah explains that the world should not be punished on account of man's sins, since man is prone to sin and thus the world is always under threat of destruction. Therefore, G-d swears that He will never again bring a flood to destroy the earth. This reasoning, however, was true even before the flood, so why wasn't it raised before the flood to prevent it? Furthermore, it appears that this claim is linked to Noah's sacrifice. What is the connection?

In the beginning of the parsha, G-d's command to Noah to build the ark and bring the animals into it is repeated twice (in ch. 6 and ch.7), and there are a number of differences between the two commands:

1. In the first one, Noah is told to bring two each of the animals, whereas in the second he is told to bring seven pairs of kosher animals.
2. In the first there is no mention of Noah's praise that he is righteous, whereas in the second he is told that he is righteous.
3. In the first the command is said in the name of Elokim, whereas in the second in the name of Hashem.

Chazal comment that initially, G-d intended to create the world with the attribute of justice, and when He saw that it would not survive he joined the attribute of mercy with it. Clearly, there is not regret or change of mind before G-d, but rather this midrash expresses the two manners of Divine Guidance that are revealed in the world. On the surface -- the laws of nature appear, which are the established rules with which the world was created and operates, and they are called "din" (justice). This manner of Guidance is revealed through the name Elokim, which means "Master of all forces." Because of this, even the nations of the world recognize this manner of guidance, as stated in numerous places in Chazal and the Rishonim.

However, there is a manner of direct Guidance in which G-d directs the world willfully and with special attention, and when man is not worthy to exist according the standard rules of creation and he requires special Guidance, Hashem arouses His desire in the continuation of the

world and he has mercy on His creation and creatures.

However, for a person to merit this kind of guidance, he must recognize it. The people of the generation of the flood sinned because of the good that they had, as the Torah describes the "bnei elohim," who allowed themselves to do as they wished, and the long lives of that time. After the flood, the nature of the world changed, as explained in the Rishonim, and weakness descended upon the world. This causes man to recognize his insignificance and imperfection, and forces him to recognize his dependence on the Creator of the world, and to turn to Him and pray to Him. This is why G-d turned to Noah twice. The first time announces the destruction of the world and its reestablishment. However, the second calling teaches that in the new world that will be built he will be dependent entirely on direct Guidance, and this idea is expressed in the sacrifice, in which man recognizes that everything returns to G-d, the Source of existence, and through this recognition he merits eternal existence.

Therefore, in the first command, he is commanded to bring only that which is necessary for natural existence, whereas in the second the need for sacrifice is also mentioned. Similarly, the first time does not mention Noah's merit to be saved, since in the natural manner of Guidance signified by the name Elokim there is no special, clearly apparent Providence on the righteous person. This is expressed in the discrepancy between the names of G-d used, as explained.

This also answers the initial two questions. Since the whole sin of the generation of the flood was that they did not want to recognize G-d's goodness to them, at the moment that Noah offered a sacrifice, the attribute of mercy was aroused to rectify the creation in a manner that sin should never again develop to the extent that it will cause people to forget G-d entirely.

Shabbat Shalom

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From: shabbat-zomet@lists.virtualjerusalem.com To: Shabbat Newsletter from Machon Zomet Subject: [shabbat-zomet] Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Noah 5761

Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Noah SHABBAT-ZOMET is an extract from SHABBAT-B'SHABBATO, a weekly bulletin distributed free of charge in hundreds of synagogues in Israel. It is published by the Zomet Institute of Alon Shevut, Israel, under the auspices of the National Religious Party. Translated by: Moshe Goldberg

THE IMPORTANCE OF A NAME

by MRS. SHOSHANA TRAGIN, Midreshet Lindenbaum, Matan, and Nishmat

The background of the story of the flood appears at the end of the portion of Bereishit. This includes the birth of the sons of Noah, including Shem (which means "name"), and the sins of those who gave birth to men of fame, literally, "people of the name" [Bereishit 6:4]. At that point G-d decreed, "My spirit will not be forever concerned with man" [6:3], who is always trying to make a name for himself. This is similar to the people of the Tower of Babel, who said, "We will make a

name for ourselves" [11:4]. In verses 1-9 of chapter 11, the word "shem" appears as a key, no less than seven times. The result was that "G-d scattered them on the face of the earth" [11:9]. Unity is a worthy goal, but not if the objective is to build an independent "name" for humanity. Confusing the language of men creates a situation of division, which can lead to controversy, and this decreases the importance of the different names of mankind.

On the other hand, the sons of Noach, especially Shem, sanctified the name of G-d. "And the sons of Noach ... were Shem, Cham, and Yefet ... And Shem and Yefet took the cloak ... And he said, blessed is the G-d of Shem ... Let [Yefet] dwell in the tents of Shem." [9:18-27]. As opposed to Cham, Shem does not glorify himself at his father's expense but instead joins Yefet to restore their father's lost honor. Shem and his descendants stand up against the prominent "people of the name." The activities of Shem and his descendants are discussed in the Torah both before and after the events of the Tower of Babel. This is in sharp contrast to those who wanted to "make a name" for themselves.

Knowing the proper names and publicizing them are an intimate part of creation. The Almighty gave names to his creatures (see chapter 1) and then brought them to Adam "to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called a living creature remains its name." [2:19]. Man strives to be like the Almighty in creation by giving appropriate names. But this process achieves its worthy purpose only if man follows the lead of Enosh, who appeared at the end of the summary of the events of heaven and earth (see 2:4), when "calling out in the name of G-d began" [4:26].

Shem continues the recognition of G-d's name, and in this way he is a link between Enosh and Avraham, who responds to the blessing, "I will make your name great" [12:2] by calling out in G-d's name (12:8). As opposed to the generations of the flood and the Tower, who united for the purpose of making a name for themselves, Avraham strives to unify the entire world in recognizing the name of G-d.

These days we are witness to divisions which are the result of pursuing honor, even leading to desecration of the name of G-d (an example is what happened at Yosef's Tomb). We must answer the call and remember the goal of our life - why we were chosen - in order to repair the failures of earlier generations. We are duty bound to establish a society which strives to call out in the name of G-d. As we prayed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: "You chose us from all the nations ... And you called us by your great name ... Let them all be formed into one community to do your will with a full heart ... And your great name, ruling over all you created."

....

A TALE TO BE TOLD: "Tzohar - a Precious Jewel Providing Light" [Rashi, Bereishit 6:16]

by Yeshayahu Gantz, as told by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

The heavens were used to fulfilling the demands of the Seer of Lublin, since, as is well known, a righteous person commands and the Almighty acts. However, in this case it was necessary to fulfill the wishes of the rabbi's wife. And here is what happened:

Our story begins after the hour of noon on Friday, and the rabbi's wife had finished almost all of her preparations for Shabbat. In fact, there was not much to do, since the home of the Seer was poor and did not have many resources, but they had enough for them to enjoy the Shabbat meals. The only thing that was missing was candles for Shabbat. There was not a single remnant of a candle, and it goes without saying that there was no money to be had. In her anguish, the rabbi's wife went outside to look for a solution to her problem.

And what she saw was a splendid wagon riding by. The driver was dressed in the finest livery, and looking out the window was the owner, clearly Jewish from his appearance. Suddenly, the carriage stopped. Since nighttime was approaching, the driver went to the front of the carriage in order to prepare the headlights (in those days, candles

enclosed in a glass container served as headlights). And the rabbi's wife noted to herself sadly, "This means that the carriage will continue its journey, in spite of Shabbat."

However, when she saw the driver removing the old candles to make room for new ones she lost no time in asking him to give her the remains of the old ones. At this point, the owner of the carriage looked out from his window to inquire about the delay. When the driver repeated the woman's request, the owner agreed, and the remains of the candles were given to the rabbi's wife. "I pray that the light of Shabbat will shine for you," she called out as the wagon continued on its way.

And this started a great tumult in the heavens. Fulfilling the demand of the rabbi's wife was not a simple matter. The owner of the carriage was the second generation of people who had abandoned religion. Just like a person captured by Gentiles as a baby, he knew nothing about the mitzvot, Shabbat in particular. How could the light of Shabbat shine for him?

The sun was about to set. In the Beit Midrash, the Seer of Lublin stood, concentrating on his prayers. Suddenly, his students saw a tiny smile cross his lips. Evidently, heaven had found a way to fulfill his wife's wishes. And indeed, before the sun set, a stranger entered the Beit Midrash. He told the curious townspeople that his carriage had sunk into mud not far from their town, and that he had been forced to retrace his steps. The only place where he saw activity, giving him hope of being helped, was the Beit Midrash. You will not be surprised to hear that the Chassidim did not allow him to return that night to his carriage. And that day, the stranger was treated for the first time in his life to the light of Shabbat.

<http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2000/11/02/Columns/Columns.14773.html>

Fri. Nov. 3, 2000

SHABBAT SHALOM: Saving faith from the ruins

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(November 2) "And Noah, the man of the earth, began and planted a vineyard." (Gen. 9:20)

Soon after Noah emerges from the ark, G-d makes a covenant with him (symbolized by a rainbow), promising that such a destructive deluge will never again descend on humanity.

Then Noah plants a vineyard.

Until I heard the story of Joseph Kushner, I had always been troubled by these two seemingly unrelated events. I was exhausted, having just flown in from Israel to perform a wedding in New York, and what I encountered was one of the largest (and longest) wedding processions I had ever attended: children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, and cousins. There seemed to be no end in sight.

The matriarch must have noticed my discomfiture, and after the ceremony, told me a little about the Kushner family history.

When World War II broke out, she and others from her town fled from the Germans. Among the refugees was a young man whom she had known quite well before the war. He surprised her by informing her that he wanted to marry her.

Now?!

Yes, he said, producing a bottle of wine that he had saved from his home for this very purpose.

Confused but thrilled, she agreed to the proposal, and right then and there an improvised wedding was arranged, with not much more than a few fleeing friends and the glass of wine over which the blessings were made.

Miraculously, the couple survived the war, and afterward prospered materially and spiritually in the US, becoming productive members of their community. Mrs. Kushner understood that it was her husband's

faith in the future that had made all the difference; it was this same faith which had inspired him to save some wine.

As their family grew, the couple inked the names of their children with those of loved ones who had perished in Europe. "When we are blessed with a simha," she said, "it's a simha for all those we left behind. We don't leave anybody out; every single member of the family marches up the aisle."

Mrs. Kushner's story moved me, and one particular detail resonated: the bottle of wine that her husband had snatched from the jaws of the Holocaust. Different people would try to save different things; a musician might take his violin, a shoemaker his tools, a lover, the photo of his beloved. But what Mr. Kushner took encapsulated his faith in the future, his optimistic desire for love, hope, and new beginnings.

In a flash, a difficult Rashi concerning that odd act of Noah's provided me with new insight. From the very start, the biblical attitude toward Noah is stained with ambivalence. Although the description seems rather laudatory - "Noah was a righteous man, wholehearted in his generation" - Rashi picks up on what may be a subtle critique: "some of our Sages explain it to his [Noah's] credit: It follows that had he lived in a generation of righteous people, he would have been even more righteous.

"Others explain it to his discredit; Only in comparison with his own generation was he deemed righteous." (Rashi, on BT Sanhedrin 108a)

After all, compared to Abraham, who pleaded for the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah's benign compliance with G-d's commands, without arguing on behalf of the doomed world, makes him play second or third fiddle to the first Jew.

I believe that this talmudic debate continues to play itself out after the Flood. Rashi, quoting the Midrash, comments that the word *vayachel* (began) may be connected with a root meaning profane (*chulin*), so that the verse may well read: "He [Noah] profaned, for he should have occupied himself first with planting something different." (Rashi, Gen. 9:20)

From this perspective, Noah was weak; indeed the Torah goes on to record a tragic tale of degradation when Noah becomes drunk on his new wine.

However, Rashi then comments on the closing words of this verse, "planted a vineyard," apparently questioning where he found the vine branches to plant: "When he went into the ark, he had taken with him vine branches and shoots of fig trees." (*ibid.*)

Now, the deluge was like a world-wide holocaust. What did Noah think of saving from his previous life, aside from the animals which G-d had told him to save? Could it be that he saved vine branches because he believed in the future of humanity, despite the perversity which triggered the Flood? Could it be that he was demonstrating his faith that there would be future weddings and joyous occasions, Sabbaths and festivals, when wine would be necessary to sanctify the events?

In addition to vine branches, Noah also saved shoots of fig trees. Now grapes and figs are the indigenous fruits for which the Holy Land is praised. We also know from the subsequent biblical accounts that Israel was the one place where the tradition of ethical monotheism was never forgotten, despite the corruption which enveloped the world. (Gen.14:18-20)

Rashi may therefore be suggesting that Noah saved these fruits hoping to re-establish a bridge between heaven and earth.

The marvelous story of Joseph Kushner illumined for me Noah's act of faith in the future of our people and our land; a faith crucial for us in these difficult times.

Shabbat Shalom

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5761

SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS
BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

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

EATING BEFORE DAVENING

It is strictly forbidden to eat before reciting *Kerias Shema* and davening *Shacharis*, both on weekdays and on Shabbos and Yom Tov. There are two separate reasons for this prohibition:

Eating before reciting *Kerias Shema* is considered "haughty behavior". By tending to one's physical well-being before discharging one's daily obligation to declare *malachus shamayim*, Hashem's sovereignty, it is as if one is Hashem's sovereignty over the world is a matter of secondary importance.

Even if one recited *Kerias Shema*, it is still strictly forbidden to eat before davening. While this is no longer considered "haughty behavior"(1), it is still prohibited based on the verse in Parashas *Kedoshim* 19:26 which states, "You shall not eat over the blood" which is expounded upon at length in the Talmud(2). One of the interpretations given is that it is forbidden to eat before one davens "for his blood"(3).

It is, therefore, strictly forbidden to eat anything at all, even a morsel of food(4), before davening(5). Drinking, however, is not considered "haughty behavior" nor does it transgress the prohibition of "eating" before davening. Accordingly, it is permitted to drink(6) coffee, tea [with sugar and a drop of milk] or soda before davening(7). It is prohibited, however, to drink beer or any other intoxicating beverage before davening(8).

The prohibition of eating before davening begins at *alos amud ha-shachar*, which is generally accepted to be 72 minutes before sunrise(9). But even if one began eating before then, he must stop eating as soon as *alos ha-shachar* arrives(10). [Note that according to the *Zohar*(11), one who wakes up at any time during the night [after midnight] may not eat before davening ??even if the time for davening is several hours off. Although there are certain individuals who abide by the *Zohar*(12), the basic halachah is as stated above(13).]

QUESTION: Under what circumstances is it permitted to eat before davening?

A ill, weak or elderly person who needs to eat immediately upon rising and cannot daven unless he eats first, may eat before davening(14). Included in this category is a person who is neither weak nor ill but finds himself so hungry that he cannot properly focus on davening. The following rules apply(15):

If he can daven immediately at home without a minyan, he should do so and then eat, even though this will cause him to miss *tefillah b'tzibbur*. After he has eaten, he should go to *shul* to listen to *kadish*, *kedushah* and *kerias ha-Torah*, etc(16).

If he cannot wait to eat even if he will daven at home, he may eat before davening but should first recite *Birchos ha-Torah* and *Kerias Shema*(17). He should limit his intake of food to as little as he needs in order to be able to daven; the rest of his meal should be eaten after davening(18).

Taking vitamins or medications, even for a minor ailment, is permitted before davening. Even if the medication itself is a good-tasting food, it is permitted. Taking medication before davening is permitted even if the medication or vitamin can just as easily be taken after davening(19).

Women, also, may not eat before davening. But many women eat after reciting *Birchos ha-shachar* since some *poskim* rule that they fulfill their minimum obligation of davening by reciting any supplication(20). They may rely on this leniency even though they are planning to daven the entire davening later on(21).

Children, even those who have reached the age of *chinuch*, are allowed to eat before davening(22).

From: Jeffrey Gross[SMTP:jgross@torah.org]

Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas Noah - Eating Before Davening

There is another issue, similar but unrelated, that has a bearing on the prohibition against eating before davening. There is a general ruling concerning all positive commandments, such as shaking the lulav on Sukkos and reading the megilah on Purim, that one may not partake of a meal within a half hour of the time at which the mitzvah can be performed. This rabbinical edict was enacted since it was feared that one might become distracted while eating and forget about performing the mitzvah. Kerias Shema and davening Shacharis are no different from any other mitzvah; it is, therefore, prohibited to eat a meal starting one half hour before alos amud ha-shachar(23).

One who began to eat a meal before the half hour point may continue eating until alos amud ha-shachar. But one who did not begin to eat until he was within half an hour of alos amud ha-shachar must do one of the following: Limit his food intake: Eat fruit (any amount)(24), eat any shehakol type of food but without being kovei'a seudah (eating a regular, scheduled meal)(25), or eat less than a k'beitzah (estimated to be anywhere between 2.2 and 3.5 fl. oz.) of bread, cake, cereal, etc.(26) All drinks, except intoxicating beverages, are permitted in any amount(27). Eat any kind and any amount of food, but appoint another person(28) who is not eating or sleeping(29) to remind him to recite Kerias Shema and Shemoneh Esrei(30). It is also permitted to set a timer that will ring at the proper time to remind him to stop eating(31).

In summary, it is important to realize that prior to permitting eating in the morning before davening one must deal with at least two separate possible prohibitions: 1) The general prohibition against eating before fulfilling any mitzvah; 2) The specific prohibition against eating in the morning before davening. As explained earlier, each one of these prohibitions has its own sets of rules, and both must be satisfied before a clear leniency to eat is granted.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Beur Halachah 89:3 (s.v. v'lo); Torah Temimah, Kedoshim 19:26.
- 2 Berachos 10a; Sanhedrin 63a.
- 3 Most poskim maintain that while this prohibition is derived from a verse in the Torah, it is still a Rabbinical prohibition; see Bais Yosef O.C. 89:3 and Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos 4. A minority view holds that eating before davening is Biblically forbidden; see Minchas Chinuch, 248:5, Mor u'Ketzi'ah O.C. 89. See also Yabia Omer 4:11.
- 4 O.C. 89:3 and Mishnah Berurah 21. [Chewing, however, may be permitted; see Mishnah Berurah 90:45.]
- 5 It makes no difference whether or not one is planning to daven immediately upon rising or to delay his davening till later; either way it is prohibited to eat before davening. Even one who was unable to daven Shacharis and is going to daven Minchah twice may not eat before davening; Tehilah l'Dovid 108:2.
- 6 Privately, not with a group of friends; Mishnah Berurah 89:22.
- 7 Aruch ha-Shulchan 89:23; Da'as Torah 89:3; K'tzos ha-Shulchan 11:2; Orchos Rabbeinu 1, pg. 57 quoting Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky; Hilchos Shelomo 2:2 quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach; Tefillah K'hilchasah 10:13 quoting Harav Y.S. Elyashiv; Az Nidberu 12:27. While several poskim, including the Mishnah Berurah, hold that one should not add milk or sugar to the beverage, all of the poskim quoted above agree that nowadays, when adding sugar and milk is standard practice, it is no longer considered "haughty" to do so and is permitted. This is the prevailing custom.
- 8 Mishnah Berurah 89:22. Drinking a cup of milk should be avoided since milk nourish the body like food; Kaf ha-Chayim 89:30.
- 9 Beur Halachah 89:1 (s.v. v'im). According to some opinions, amud ha-shachar is when the center of the sun is 16.1 degrees below the horizon.
- 10 Mishnah Berurah 89:29.
- 11 Quoted by the Magen Avraham 89:14 and by all of the latter poskim.
- 12 Aruch ha-Shulchan 89:26.
- 13 Consensus of all the poskim; see Mishnah Berurah 89:28; Aruch ha-Shulchan 89:26; Yalkut Yosef, pg. 147.
- 14 O.C. 89:4. But if he could daven sitting down without eating and needs to eat only in order to be able to stand up during Shemoneh Esrei, it is better that he daven sitting down and not eat before davening; Harav Y. Kamenetsky, Emes L'Yaakov O.C. 89:4.
- 15 On Shabbos, when there is an additional requirement of Kiddush, there is a separate set of rules which will be discussed in the following column.
- 16 Be'air Heitev 89:11 quoted by Beur Halachah 89:3 (s.v. v'chein). This applies most often on Shabbos, when the davening in shul is long; ibid.
- 17 Beur Halachah 89:3 (s.v. v'lo). [Birchos ha-Torah are recited since it is correct to recite them before Kerias Shema.] It is advisable to have specific intent not to be yotzei the obligation of Kerias Shema with this recitation, since it is being said without Birchos Kerias Shema and without Tefilin; Siyach Halachah 89:20; Beis Baruch 16:24.
- 18 Harav S.Z. Auerbach, quoted in Nishmas Avraham, vol. 4, pg. 74 and Siyach Halachah 89:23.
- 19 Mishnah Berurah 89:24; Beur Halachah 89:3 (s.v. v'chein); Aruch ha-Shulchan 89:24.

[When taking medication before davening, there is no need to first recite Kerias Shema; Siyach Halachah 89:21.]

- 20 See The Weekly Halachah Discussion, vol. 1, pg. 116 for an elaboration.
 - 21 Based on Igros Moshe O.C. 4:104-4, Minchas Yitzchak 4:28-3 and ruling of Harav S.Z. Auerbach (written responsum quoted in Halichos Bas Yisrael 2, note 3.)
 - 22 Mishnah Berurah 106:5. See Kaf ha-Chayim 11 who disagrees.
 - 23 Mishnah Berurah 89:27. This prohibition does not apply to women; Harav S.Z. Auerbach, written responsum published in Lev Avraham, vol. 2, pg. 20.
 - 24 Based on Mishnah Berurah 232:34 and 286:9.
 - 25 Based on Mishnah Berurah 639:15.
 - 26 Mishnah Berurah 89:27. If it is a type of a cereal upon which one is not kovei'a seudah, it is permitted to eat without a limit; see Mishnah Berurah 232:34.
 - 27 Based on Mishnah Berurah 232:35.
 - 28 Even a responsible minor; Harav C. Kanievsky (Ishei Yisrael 27:19).
 - 29 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei, Tefillah, 11:16) based on Mishnah Berurah 235:17.
 - 30 Based on Mishnah Berurah 89:34 and 235:18.
 - 31 Harav Y. Kamenetsky (oral ruling published in Emes L'Yaakov O.C. 232:2, note 242); Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo 2:12).
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Parashah Talk Parshas Noach

Noah went in, with his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him to the ark, because of the waters of the Flood (Genesis 7:7).

Rashi remarks that Noah did not fully believe in the coming of the Flood, and did not enter the ark until forced to do so by the rising water.

When we study the Midrash, the opinions about Noah appear to be contradictory. At one point the Midrash states that Noah convinced himself with construction of the ark for one hundred and twenty years, and when he told the sinful people that G-d had instructed him to build the ark because of the impending Flood, they ridiculed him and turned a deaf ear to his warnings. On the other hand, we are told that Noah was at fault for failing to reprimand his wayward generation. Which way was it?

The solution to this apparent contradiction lies in the comment by Rashi. Noah did indeed warn the people of the punishment that G-d intended to inflict upon them. The reason that Noah's words were ineffective was that Noah himself was not fully convinced of the inevitability of the punitive decree, as evidenced by the fact that he did not enter the ark until forced to do so by the rising water.

We may think that when we teach or guide, whether it be our children, our students, or people who look to us for leadership, we fulfill our obligation when we merely convey the message. The Midrashic comments on Noah indicate that this is not enough. Unless we are firmly convinced of the truth of the message, our words will have a hollow ring.

Noah may have been a tzaddik, but he was not a leader. When the Talmud holds him accountable for the loss of his generation, it is not because he did not preach, and not because of any duplicity in being a man whose behavior did not conform to his words, but because he did not fully believe his own message.

Excerpt from Living Each Week, by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D.

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MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF

If one hears another Jew make a vow to be a nazir in the event that a son is born to him and he declares "Me too," there is a question raised as to his intention. On the one hand we can interpret his statement as a vow that he too will be a nazir

if a son is born to himself. Alternatively, there is the possibility that what he really meant was that he too will be a nazir if a son is born to his friend, and the "me too" was a declaration that he will love that son as much as his father does and therefore will express his gratitude to Heaven in the same manner by assuming nezirut.

This unresolved question is presented in our gemara by a sage names Ben Rachumi whose name appears nowhere else in the Talmud. An interesting observation is made by Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chayot about sages who made such solo appearances. These sages became so identified with their single statement that they were called by a name referring to it.

One example is Rabbi Yitzchak Migdalah who explains the mishna (Mesechta Bava Metzia 25a) which rules that if one finds three coins placed one upon the other he must assume that they did not fall from their owner in such fashion and were abandoned, but rather were placed there and forgotten, a situation requiring the finder to announce his find. This is only true, says this sage, if the coins are found in the pyramid pattern of a tower, with each coin lying on one broader than itself. Since he used the model of a "migdal," Hebrew for tower, to make his point, he was subsequently referred to as Rabbi Yitzchak Migdalah.

Another example is Rabbi Zuhamoi (Mesechta Berachot 53b), who made a solo statement that one whose hands are greasy from eating is ineligible to say the birkat hamazon after a meal. Since he used the term "mezuham," Hebrew for greasy, he was thereafter known as Rabbi Zuhamoi.

In the same manner, our gemara's question regarding a vow for nezirut which might be interpreted as "love for the son," the sage who presented this question was called Ben Rachumi which means a "son who is loved." * Nazir 13a

THE SIN OF SELF-DENIAL

Self-denial can sometimes be spiritually counterproductive. Rabbi Elazar Hakapar derives this from the fact that the Torah refers to the nazir as a "sinner." The only sin we can find in regard to the nazir is the fact that he denied himself the pleasure of wine. If one who abstains from wine alone is called a sinner, he concludes, how much more so is one who denies himself everything and indulges in fasting considered a sinner!

The only problem with this sage's deduction is that the Torah calls a nazir a sinner only in the case where he defiled himself through contact with the dead and must bring sacrifices of atonement and start his nezirut period from the beginning. There is no mention of sin in the Torah regarding the nazir who successfully completes his nezirut period without becoming impure.

Rabbi Elazar Hakapar responds to this challenge by pointing out that every nazir is really a sinner because of his self-denial but the Torah explicitly applied this appellation to the nazir who became impure because he magnified his sin.

This statement seems to run counter to a previous gemara (Nazir 3a). The first mishna in our Mesechta teaches us that one who declares "I shall beautify myself" is considered as having taken a vow of nezirut. The Sage Shmuel explains that since he was holding on to his hair when he made this declaration it is understood that his intention was to beautify himself before Hashem through the nezirut mitzvah of abstaining from cutting his hair. How can nezirut be considered beautiful before Hashem, asks the gemara, if the nazir is called a sinner? The answer given is that Rabbi Elazar Hakapar was referring only to a nazir who became impure and not to a regular nazir.

Tosefot (Nazir 2b and Bava Kama 91b) resolves this contradiction as follows: Every nazir is called a sinner because of his self-denial. There is, however, a positive aspect of nezirut when it is utilized to control illicit passion. Nezirut can therefore be considered beautiful before Hashem because the positive element outweighs the negative one. A parallel to this is the case of one who is commanded to fast on Shabbat because of a bad dream. Even though fasting on Shabbat is wrong, the positive aspect of counteracting the evil portent of the dream outweighs this and he must go ahead with it, and later he must atone for his sin of fasting on Shabbat by fasting on another day in the week. When it comes to the nazir who becomes impure, the negative aspect is dominant because he magnified his sin and the Torah therefore calls him a sinner.

There are several explanations in the commentaries of what is meant by magnifying his sin. One is that by having to start all over again he has added days to his period of self-denial. Another is that in addition to self-denial he has violated, even if only through negligence, the Torah ban on a nazir coming into contact with the dead. A third approach is that because he has to start all over again he may have regrets that he ever took upon himself such a vow and thus lose credit for the positive element in nezirut. * Nazir 14a

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