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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON NOACH - 5764

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Parshas Noach 5763 [from last year]

By RABBI ELI SHULMAN
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Noach first had children when he was 500 years old. That was pretty old even in those days. And Rashi feels the need to explain that: Said R' Yudin, why did all these generations give birth at the age of one hundred, while [Noach] did so at 500? Because hakadosh baruch hu said [if he will have many children] I will have to trouble him to build many arks. And so he withheld his wellsprings until he was 500 years old.

This raises an obvious question. What would have been so difficult about building several arks? Noach could have hired contractors, he had 120 years, contractors we know are slow but in 120 years a lot can be done, and he could have built as many arks as he wanted!

It seems that the ark had to be built by Noach himself; no one else could do it for him. Why?

The Torah says: va'yimach es kol hayekum; everything - buildings, bridges etc. - was eradicated. The water, the Gemara in Sanhedrin tells us, was boiling hot, so nothing could stand up to it. So how did the ark itself remain intact?

The Megaleh Amukos answers that Hashem's name was built into the dimensions of the ark. The letters of the shem havaya have the values 10, 5, 6 & 5. The letters of the shem adnus have the values 1, 4, 50 & 10. Taking the first letter of the shem havaya and multiplying it by the first letter of the shem adnus we get $1 \times 10 = 10$. Doing the same with second letters gives $4 \times 5 = 20$. Third letters give $50 \times 6 = 300$. And fourth letters give $5 \times 10 = 50$. So we have 10, 20, 300 & 50. 10 and 20 together are 30, the height of the ????. 300 is its length. And 50 is its width.

These are not just numbers. We could build a boat with the same dimensions and it wouldn't have any such power. Rather, the ark was the physical embodiment of Noach's tremendous faith in Hashem. For 120 years he built it, despite the mockery of taunts of disbelief of all his friends and neighbors. Think of the courage that required; of the sacrifices that must have entailed. Remember that Noach had shown tremendous promise as a youth, which everyone had recognized: he had been named Noach when he invented agricultural tools, and everyone said: zeh yenachameinu, he's the hope of the future. He was looked up to and admired. And at the height of his powers he embarked on this seemingly wild, quixotic project to build a giant boat because the end of

the world was coming. What strength of character that must have taken! What unshakable faith! What courage!

And so the very dimensions of the ark reflected Hashem's Name, they were the outer reflection of the faith and trust in Hashem, even at the cost of great self-sacrifice, that had gone into every plank and every nail of the ark. And it was that which made it impervious to destruction.

And that is why Noach had to build the ark himself. It couldn't be contracted out. Because no contractor could built into it that faith and courage which alone would give it the power to stand up to the raging, boiling waters of the flood to come.

Noach's ark, of course, is long gone. And Hashem has promised to bring another flood, at least not of water.

But there are other types of flood. There are others floods that threaten to engulf us. There is the flood of assimilation, which has swept away so much of our people. There is the flood of hedonism, the non-stop bachanal which threatens our youth. And there is the flood of anti-Semitism, the feral hatred that boils around us, which the verse describes so strikingly with the words: and the wicked are like the churning sea, which is never still.

And so we need an ark of our own, to stand up to these floods.

And we have such an ark. It's no coincidence that in Hebrew the word for ark: teivah, means - not only an ark, but also - a word. Words are also teivos. Words of truth, of honesty, of faith, have tremendous power. And most powerful of all are words of Torah. Like Noach's teivah, every word of Torah is an embodiment of our faith in G-d, of our faith and trust in Him. And just as the dimensions of Noach's ark reflected the name of G-d, so too each word of Torah reflects His name; indeed, as the Ramban explains in his introduction to the Torah, each word of Torah is a name of G-d. And so, like Noach's ark, each word of Torah is a haven and a bulwark against the raging flood.

We saw before deep significance in the dimensions of the ark. There is another allusion in those dimensions, which is also pointed out by our seforim. The dimensions of the ark were $30 \times 50 \times 300$. 30 is lamed, 50 is nun, and 300 is hin. Together they spell lashon, the tongue, whose task it is to produce teivos, words of Torah, each word a teivah, an ark, floating serenely above the boiling sea.

The floodwaters are rising. We have to be sure that the teivos are ready. With every word of Torah that we learn, with every shiur in which we participate, with every effort that we expend to support talmidei chachamim and yeshivos, we add to that fleet of teivos. And in those? teivos, because of those teivos, we can hope to make it safely home to port, despite the floodwaters, as did Noach finally, when Yonah mazah bo manoch, he found rest at last, as shall we, bimheira b'yameinu amen.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: October 30, 2003 To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Noach "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Noach - These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 389, Abortion To Save A Baby?

A Treifah Olive Branch?

I saw an interesting insight in the sefer [book] Mikdash Mordechai. The Torah says that an olive branch was torn off in the mouth of the dove (taraf b'phee-ha) [Bereshis 8:11]. This is an interesting use of the verb 'taraf' [to tear]. Normally, 'taraf' is used in connection with something which has been killed, usually violently [as in Bereshis 37:33, by Yosef]. For example, the primary definition of 'treifah' is a living animal that was torn apart in the field.

It is peculiar to refer to an olive branch as being killed. The Torah is certainly not saying that ripping off an olive branch is murder.

The Mikdash Mordechai comments that when a person has seen the destruction that Noach witnessed -- all forms of life had been erased

from the world -- he attaches a new importance to even the smallest form of life.

Therefore, an olive branch that has been ripped off from its source is not just dismissed as a few leaves that fell off of a tree. It becomes something very precious. We know what happened to all forms of life. Human, animal and plant life had all been killed. A person who has seen total destruction gains a new appreciation for all forms of life.

As such, Noah viewed the olive branch as if it had been "killed" by the dove, ripping it off the tree.

Miracles Can Happen Slowly

Rav Shimon Schwab (in his sefer) makes the following assumption. If water covered the entire earth such that the highest mountains were totally submerged, we should expect that the time it would take for the water to recede or evaporate until the land became dry again would be far longer than the several week period that the Torah outlines in the narration in Parshas Noach [Bereshis 8:6-14].

By the rules of physics and nature, the length of time that it should take for that much water to recede should have been years, rather than days or weeks. The whole world was flooded and saturated with water. The only way the waters could have receded and the earth dried out in the short period described by the Torah is through a miracle.

But if we come to the conclusion that the removal of those many hundreds of millions of gallons of water happened miraculously, then why was it necessary for the miracle to "take so long"? Why did Noah need to send out the raven and the dove? Why did he need to wait one week then another week? Why was it necessary to stay in the Ark for so many more days after the dove did not fly back?

When G-d decided that the Flood should cease and the land should become dry, why did the flood not then cease and the land become dry instantaneously? If G-d is making a miracle anyhow, why didn't He make it a little more dramatic and spare Noah the waiting time?

Rav Schwab suggests that the Torah is teaching that it is often necessary to be patient when waiting for G-d's salvation in life. It is very difficult for modern day man to adjust to this idea. For us, everything must be instantaneous. When we want to warm something up, we stick it in the microwave oven for 25 seconds. When we want a hot cup of coffee, we go to the sink and turn on the "instant hot". Everything that we have today comes without waiting. "You want to see a document?" "Fax it or e-mail it." As a last resort, send it 'Overnight express.'"

G-d does not work like that. The salvation may be here already. G-d may have already decided to end the Flood. But the relief might not happen right away.

The Talmud states [Berachos 55a] that one who prays to G-d and then investigates to see whether his prayers have been immediately answered is destined to be disappointed (bah l'yedei k'ev lev).

A person may pray that he find a job or that he be accepted into a certain school. Then, he may run to the mail box to see if the acceptance letter arrived.

A person may have a disease or an illness. He may pray for a recovery. He may go to the doctor and receive treatment for his condition. He may be convinced that the treatment will cure him now.

It does not happen like that. We need an "And he waited seven more days..." and also "And he waited seven more days..." [Bereshis 8:10,12]. Sometimes patience is necessary. It does not happen instantly.

At the end of Parshas Shmos, Moshe complained to G-d "Why have you made matters worse for this nation? Why have you sent me? From the time that I came to Pharaoh, he has been worse to this nation and you have not yet saved your people." [Shmos 5:22-23].

Moshe complained that the magic words 'Let my people go' did not work. Not only did Pharaoh not let them go, it aggravated him and made matters worse for the people.

G-d responded to Moshe, "NOW you will see what I will do to Pharaoh and he will send out My people" [Shmos 6:1].

The Gemarah interprets "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, but you will not see what I will do to the 31 Kings when Israel enters the Land of Canaan" [Sanhedrin 111a]. This was an aspect of Moshe's punishment of not being permitted to enter Eretz Yisroel - as a result of not having patience and for "second guessing," as it were, the instructions of G-d.

What is the "measure for measure" justice of this punishment? It took 14 years to settle the Land of Israel. There were 7 years of conquest and 7 years of division. It did not come instantly. Moshe Rabbeinu - who, of course, because of his greatness he was held to a higher standard -- demanded something of G-d which was not in accordance with the way G-d conducts Himself. G-d does not provide instant results. It takes time. This is the lesson of "Noach waited." He did not say "the rains stopped, let us leave the Ark." Salvation takes time, it does not happen instantly.

Sometimes we leave the Yomim Noraim [High Holidays] and we expect instant changes from G-d. We prayed intently. This is a new year. There has been new judgment. All my problems should be solved now. We expect our troubles to have all dissipated by the day after Yom Kippur. "I davened well. I felt that You answered me. Nu?"

Noach had to wait. Noach had to anticipate. The flood was over, but it took time. This is how G-d works. Salvation does not always happen instantaneously. This is a lesson that modern day man needs to learn.

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From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] Sent: October 29, 2003 To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org Subject: daf-hashavua Noach 5764/2003
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UNITED SYNAGOGUE SHABBAT - SHABBAT NOACH, 5764

By CHIEF RABBI DR JONATHAN SACKS

It is highly appropriate that, this year, United Synagogue Shabbat falls on the week in which we read the Sidra of Noach - because the name Noach itself means "rest." The sages say that when G-d had made the universe He saw that it lacked one thing: rest. It was then that he blessed the seventh day and turned it into a day of rest.

Shabbat was a unique institution in the ancient world. No other civilization knew of a day made holy by not working. Eventually Christianity and Islam adopted the idea, but Shabbat remains unique in its power to refresh the spirit and renew ourselves.

It is astonishing how it spoke in different ways to different ages. At times of oppression, it was a day of freedom. When Jews suffered poverty, on Shabbat they celebrated. Today in an age of pressure, it is a blessed moment of relaxation. In an over-commercialised culture, it reminds us that there are other, deeper values.

We are more than what we earn and spend. Around the Shabbat table we take time for family and friends. In Shul we become part of a community, joining our prayers with those of the Jewish people across time and space. Listening to Torah we rededicate ourselves to the ideals of our ancestors who first heard the voice of G-d and transmitted it across the generations to us.

That is why Shabbat is Ora Ve Simcha, "light and joy" - the light we kindle in our homes, and the joy we feel when we stop making a living and simply enjoy being alive. I wish you all Shabbat Shalom.

Today, RABBI DR MICHAEL HARRIS commences a new series for the Daf on our foremost commentators who are often quoted in Divrei Torah.

RABBI SHLOMO YITZCHAKI (RASHI)

Rashi, the Prince of Jewish Bible commentators, is the obvious personality with whom to begin a series of this kind.

Born in Troyes, France, in 1040, Rashi died in the same place in 1105. Strikingly, he never accepted an official Rabbinic position. Instead, while teaching and writing, Rashi earned his living as a wine merchant. He is most famous for two works which remain almost overwhelmingly influential in the world of Torah study to this day. The first is his Torah commentary. A paradigm of lucidity and conciseness, Rashi's commentary often provides the peshat, the straightforward meaning of the Biblical text, in addition to selected Talmudic and Midrashic interpretations. It is the standard traditional commentary on the Torah, and more often than not is printed together with the text of the Chumash itself. Literally hundreds of supercommentaries (commentaries on commentaries) have been written on Rashi's commentary. Rashi penned a similar work on the remainder of Tanach. His Bible commentary was the first Hebrew book to be printed, in 1475.

The second celebrated work is Rashi's Talmud commentary. Like the Torah commentary, this composition is famous for its clarity. Rashi very often explains the Talmudic discussion line by line, sometimes phrase by phrase. Right up to our own day, traditional study of Talmud without Rashi's commentary is unthinkable.

The story is told that a heavenly voice informed Rashi's father, Rav Yitzchak, shortly before Rashi's birth: "You will be blessed with a son who will light up the eyes of the Jewish people".

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Date: 30 Oct 2003 From: "Rabbi Benjamin G. Kelsen, Esq." <bgkelsen@beisdin.org>

HaGaon HaRav Shlomo Elimelech Drillman, zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon

Editor's Note: The following is based upon HaRav Drillman's 5757 shiur on Parshas Noach which was delivered on 27 Tishrei 5757 (October 10, 1996). This week's D'var Torah is dedicated l'zeicher nishmas Azriel Aharon ben Eliyahu Tzvi HaLevi, my beloved grandfather, the Honorable Isadore A. Shrager, Esq. a person who cared about all people and dedicated his life to serving the community on all levels, from the holders of the highest office of the land to Prime Ministers of the State of Israel, to mayors and senators, Yeshivos, hospitals, and education in all of its forms. Yehi Zichro Baruch.

10:9 "...tamim hayoh b'dorosav": Rashi: In his generation. There are those among our Sages who infer from it to his praise. Certainly, had he lived in a righteous generation he would have been [even] more righteous. There are others who infer from it to his discredit. Relative to his generation he was righteous, but had he lived in the generation of Avraham he would not have been considered significant. (The Metzudah chumash) There is an interesting disagreement, found in Bereishis Rabbah 30:9 and cited by Rashi, amongst our sages regarding this passuk: should this passuk be interpreted in a positive or negative fashion. That is, should the passuk be interpreted to mean that Noach is to be considered a righteous man as compared to all the tzaddikim in history or, rather, only when compared to the people of his generation. This question is quite puzzling because we must wonder for what reason would Chazal even consider that this verse might not be a positive statement about Noach? When one examines a case that is similar to this scenario in Parshas Noach we see something interesting. Avraham Avinu, when was told by HKB"H that the city of Sodom is to be destroyed, attempts to bargain with Hashem for the lives of the city's inhabitants. However, in contrast, when Noach was informed that the entire world was to be wiped out we see Noach accept humanity's fate without argument. To add to the problem, we know there is a

general principle that the Torah was written by HKB"H before the creation of world. Furthermore, the Gemara in Zevachim 116a teaches us that Noach studied the Torah. However, if Noach learned Torah, he must have learned the concept of Areivus. If this is so then we must ask why did Noach accept Hashem's sentence against humanity without attempting to change His mind, k'vayachol. (An interesting corollary to this issue is the question of whether or not the concept of Areivus exists between Jew and Gentiles as well as between Jew and Jew. Reb Elchonon, zt"l, hy"d, discussed this question at a tisch in his home in Baranovich. He explained that Noach's learning of the Torah predated the creation of Klal Yisroel and, as such, the concept of Areivus existed between all people of the world. The subsequent creation of Klal Yisroel created a new category of peoples to be included within those upon whom this concept of Areivus applies. It did not, however, limit the obligation of one group of people to any other vis a vis this mitzvah. Reb Elchonon pointed out that it should be noted, however, that it is possible that there are people whose behavior may cause others to be exempt from the obligation towards them. An example of this may be the case of Amalek as seen from the story of Shaul HaMelech and Agag, king of the Amalakites.)

Another interesting question brought up by the story of Noach is the question of exactly who was learning Torah during the days of Noach. Was there a general obligation of talmud Torah on all of humanity? The Rav0, zt"l hk"m, said once that there was no such general obligation. Rather, the mesorah was passed down to only a select few in each generation.

6:11 -13 "va'timolei ha'aretz chamas": The Alshich HaKadosh teaches us that this passuk means that gezel, robbery, was rampant throughout society, that it was accepted as the norm. Rashi cites for us the ma'amar Chazal from Bereishis Rabbah 26:5 that teaches that in a place where the sins of the majority of the community include avodah zarah and zenus then the tzaddikim of the community are punished along with the sinners. We see manifested in this parsha the mercy of HKB"H in that had Hashem decided to punish the generation of the flood due to their sins of illicit relationships and idol worship then Noach and his family would have been killed as well. By "prosecuting" humanity for the crime of gezel, HKB"H was able, so to speak, to exempt Noach and his family from the punishment enforced against the others.

6:19: From all living things, from all flesh, two of each shall you bring to the ark, to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. We are told here that Noach took the animals in the ark two by two, male and female. However, in perek 7, passuk 2 we see that Noach took seven of the "tavor" animals. It is quite well known that Rashi, again citing the Medresh (Ber. Rab. 34, 9), explains that Noach took seven of the "tavor" animals in order to be able to offer a korban to Hashem. However, there is a problem with this explanation. Even if Noach was planning on offering a korban why did he need to bring seven animals? Could he not just as easily have brought three or four, since as Rashi tells us, Noach wanted to bring a korban (singular) not korbanos (plural)? Additionally from where did Noach learn this concept of bringing an animal as an offering?

Regarding the second question, Noach learned the concept of sacrificing animals as an offering to HKB"H from Hevel ben Adam HaRishon. However, when asked why Noach needed seven animals and not a different number, The Rav, zt"l, did not have an answer other than that the number seven is one of significance and that perhaps Noach wanted to ensure that he would have a large number of the tavor animals. The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that the words "tikach lecha" "for yourself" teaches us that Hashem was telling Noach that he should take seven of the tavor animals so that he and his family would have a source of food. Though some might point out that the eating of meat was not at that time permissible, it seems apparent that the Ribbono Shel Olam intended for Noach to consume the meat only after the flood, at which time He would permit the eating of animals.

This permitting of the eating of meat by HKB"H raises an interesting halachic question: Is vegetarianism permissible according to halacha? While, as pointed out by Rav Lavi Greenspan, shlit"a, it is well known that HaGaon HaRav Avraham Yitzchok HaKohien Kook, zt"l, based on the Rambam in the Moreh Nevuchim, stated that a person need not necessarily eat meat on Yom Tov in order to fulfill the commandment of "V'samachta b'Chagecha", Rav Kook's student, the famous Rav Dovid HaNazir points out that Rav Kook did not explicitly state that one need not ever consume meat. It would seem, therefore, that Rav Kook's permitting a person who finds the eating of meat distressful or distasteful to abstain on Yom Tov is a bidieved rather than a l'chatchila. Furthermore, the are times, such as on Pesach when the Torah explicitly states that a person must partake of the meat of a korban. (It should be noted, that we do see in the halachos of aveilus that there are times when the consumption of meat is prohibited, such as when a person is sitting shiva.)

Additionally, while the Rambam in the Moreh does state that in the days of Moshiach korbanos will not be brought, in the Yad HaChazakah, Hilchos

Melochim, chapter 10 the Rambam states, just as clearly, that the service of worship in third Temple will be identical to the avodah in the first two Batei Mikdosh. Presumably this would include the bringing of sacrifices. Therefore, on the basis of this apparent contradiction in the works of Maimonides why would Rav Kook base his heter for vegetarianism on a passage in the Moreh Nevuchim, the Rambam's philosophical treatise, as opposed to the Rambam's halachic work? For this there is no answer. Even as one student suggested, that perhaps we can differentiate between the offering of sacrifices and simply the eating of meat is difficult because we have no source in the Torah that people can abstain from those things mandated by the Torah and even a nazir is required to bring a korban chatas. Perhaps we can gain insight from the following anecdotes: When Rebbetzin Drillman was a child she observed the slaughtering of a chicken and was so disturbed that she said she could no longer eat meat. Her father, the illustrious Chernobler Rebbe, told her that while she could refrain from eating meat during the week, on Shabbos and Yom Tov she was obligated to eat meat. Additionally, Reb Elchonon, zt"l, hy"d, once said that in all his time with the Chofetz Chaim he never heard that great tzaddik speak a negative word about anyone except when he was asked about those who had adopted a vegetarian lifestyle. The Chofetz Chaim felt that these people were acting inappropriately by prohibiting something which the Ribbono Shel Olam himself made permissible. Therefore, it would seem that though there are those who may wish to refrain from eating meat at certain times, there are times when all must consume at least some meat, such as the korban Pesach.

9:5 "V'ach es dimchem..." According to the Kli Yakar this passuk is the source of the prohibition against suicide. Yet if this so then how is it possible that Chanania, Azaryah and Mishael would voluntarily step into the burning furnace? Because the word "ach" acts as an exclusionary clause which in certain cases, such as that of kiddush Hashem, permits a person not to have to struggle against his persecutors. An example of this can be seen in the story of Avraham ben Avraham, the Ger Tzedek, born Count Valentin Potocki and descended from a long line of noble Christian rulers, who sacrificed wealth and power in order to convert from Christianity to Judaism after taking an interest in Yehadus while studying at the University of Paris. His family had conducted a massive search for him and when he was found he was turned over to the inquisitorial board of the church. Though his family and former colleagues begged him to renounce Yehadus and save his life, he refused. He was sentenced to the auto-de-fé death by fire. As a result of Christian "love," this Polish nobleman was forced to sacrifice his life in order to avoid converting back to Christianity. The Ger Tzedek chose to die as a martyr, with the Ribbono Shel Olam's name on his lips. In recognition of his great sacrifice he was buried in the Jewish cemetery of Vilna.

The preceding story was told by Reb Elchonon to those students who were hiding with him in 1941 at the home of Rab Chaim Ozer Grodzenski in Vilna as they were led to their deaths. When the Nazis finally found the Reb Elchonon after much searching, he put on his Shabbos bekeshe and streimel and calmly exited the house where he and the children with him were loaded into a cart or truck and driven into the forest and forced to disembark near a large empty pit. The Germans intentions became clear as a group of SS troops stood behind their prisoners and prepared their weapons. One of the boys, understandably frightened, began to cry.

"Do not be afraid, my son," said Reb Elchonon gently "we are about to take our place in the history of Klal Yisroel with Rabbi Akiva and the other harugei malchus and fulfill the mitzvah of dying "al kiddush Hashem". And when we reach the gates of Gan Eden the Avos themselves will hold open the gates for us and the Shivtei Koh will lead us to our seats in the Beis Medresh Shel Maloh where we will take our place among the gedolim of past generations and hear words of Torah from Moshe Rabbeinu himself. So fear not, mein kinder, this is not the end. Rather, it is just the beginning."

When the Nazis began to fire Reb Elchonon grabbed one of the boys next to him and threw him into the pit and landed on top of him. Later, when the Nazis had left, this boy was able to climb, unhurt, from the carnage around him and escape. He later became one of the great talmidei chachomim of the post war era.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] Sent: October 30, 2003 5 To: Peninim Parsha
PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
PARSHAS NOACH

The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with robbery through them; and behold, I am about to destroy them from the earth. (6:13) Rashi notes

that whenever you find promiscuity, catastrophe comes to the world. As a result, both good and evil people perish. Yet, the ultimate judgement of destruction was sealed as a result of robbery. The Gur Aryeh reconciles this apparent contradiction with the idea that although robbery catalyzed the destruction, once it occurred the good and the evil both died because promiscuity was also involved. We wonder why robbery has an effect only on the evil, while the consequence of promiscuity radiates to the good people as well. Horav Shmuel Walkin, zl, explains that like a physical disease, in which certain illnesses are highly contagious while others affect only the immediate victim, spiritual disease has similar characteristics. One of those sins that is contagious and spreads quickly throughout a group is promiscuity. The far-reaching effect of this sin is obvious throughout history. Contemporary society is plagued by this spiritual disease to the point that its greatest and most illustrious leaders have fallen prey to it. The slightest vestige of promiscuity arouses the yetzer hora, evil-inclination, granting it the power to bring us down spiritually. Yes, robbery sealed the sentence of destruction. Yet this sentence would have been executed only against the actual perpetrator. Once promiscuity entered the picture, both the sin and its consequence became more widespread. Rashi's statement that the "good" are also affected means that the good are no longer good. In other words, the yetzer hora of znus, promiscuity, is difficult to overcome. It has an effect on everyone, unless a person is stoic and maintains a strong footing against the blandishments of the yetzer hora. This is the reason that tznius, modesty/moral chastity, plays such an integral role in the weltenshauung of the Jewish People. Interestingly, as noted by Horav Eliyahu Munk, zl, the first time that the Torah refers to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov by the name, Yisrael, is in regard to morality. When Shechem violated Dinah, daughter of Yaakov Avinu, her brothers exclaimed their outrage with the words, Ki nevalah asah b'Yisrael, "He had committed a disgraceful act against Yisrael" (Bereishis 34:7). This occurred even before the name Yisrael had officially been proclaimed as exemplifying our strength and ability to overcome challenge. This name denotes the priestly people, who will "fight for G-d." To paraphrase Rav Munk, "What a lofty conception of duty, virtue, and moral nobility is already connected with this august name!" It is particularly significant that the first "struggle for G-d" with which the name, "Yisrael," is connected is in defense of the sacred ideal of moral purity. The primary mission of those who are Bnei Yisrael is to safeguard this ideal.

For it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation. (7:1) What did Noah do during the year that he and his family spent on the Teivah, Ark? Chazal teach us that Noah immersed himself in chesed, as he saw to the needs of the thousands of creatures that were in his care. The Midrash Tanchuma tells us that the Torah refers to Noah as a tzaddik due to his extraordinary care of the animals. Indeed, Noah was unable to sleep because the schedules for feeding the various animals did not coincide. Noah's devotion to performing chesed was a kaparah, atonement, for the selfishness and depravity of the members of his generation. They lived for themselves. Noah lived for others. They preached cruelty, injustice and apathy. Noah exemplified love, sensitivity and hope. Feeding the hungry is a form of chesed that many of us ignore, because we do not know what it means to be hungry. Sensitivity towards others can often be expressed once the beneficiary has himself experienced the "other side of the coin," once he has been sick or hungry or poor and in need. We live in a country where people do not usually experience the hunger that is commonplace in Third World countries. Yet, there are people among us who, although they do not starve, do not have the money to put meat and chicken on the table - even on Shabbos! There are people who do not have enough to eat. They might not go to bed hungry, but how do we measure hunger? Noah taught us the significance of caring for the simple material needs of all creatures. Surely what he did is a lesson for us all in our concern for our fellow man. I would like to share with the reader an analogy, a story that pertains to this subject: A man had two distinctly different dreams. In the first dream, he saw hundreds of sad, expressionless people, sitting at a large banquet table that was filled with large platters of the most delectable foods. Regrettably, not a morsel of food had been touched. The people simply stared at the tables. He wondered, "Why are these people not eating? They appear to be hungry. The food is there for the taking. What is preventing them from availing themselves of this feast?" His guide told him, "They cannot feed themselves. If you will look, you will notice that the people have no joints in their arms. They can hold their arms straight out, but they cannot bend them. No matter how hard they try, they cannot bend their arms to bring the food to their mouths." In his second dream, the man saw a similar vision: same room, same table, same people with no joints in their arms. Everything was the same, except in this vision the people all appeared to be well-fed and happy. "How could this be?" he wondered. "How could these people appear to be well fed if they could not feed themselves?" The guide gave a quick response, "Look again, carefully, and tell me what you see." He looked again and

saw an astonishing sight. While each person could not feed himself, he could grasp the food in his outstretched hand and place it in to his neighbor's mouth. They could not feed themselves, but they could feed one another! What a powerful analogy! To the extent that we do for others, we do for ourselves. When we feed only ourselves, we all starve. When we think of others, we are all satiated. A wise man once said, "This world is comprised of two kinds of people: the givers and the takers. The takers eat well, but the givers sleep well. The following story occurred with Fiorella LaGuardia in 1933: The future legendary mayor of New York was then a presiding judge in police court. A trembling old man was brought before him. The charge: stealing a loaf of bread. The man broke down and conceded his guilt, adding, "What can I do? My family is starving." LaGuardia turned to the man and said, "I have no recourse but to fine you ten dollars for your crime." He then reached into his pocket and said, "Well, here is the ten dollars to pay for your fine." He proceeded to place the ten-dollar bill on the table. "Furthermore," he declared, "I am going to fine everybody in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a town where a man has to steal bread in order to eat. Will the bailiff please collect the fines and give them to the defendant!" The bailiff went around the room collecting the fines and gave the defendant the money. The shocked old man, who was originally brought to the judge for stealing a loaf of bread, left with tears in his eyes and forty-seven dollars and fifty cents to help feed his starving family. This story teaches us the value of human compassion; the importance of caring about others; and the extent of our responsibility towards our fellow man.

And Cham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and related it to his brothers outside. (9:22) Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, observes that Cham should have remained respectfully outside, as his brothers did. Entering the tent with the intent to look already identified him as the degenerate that he was. Cham should have known better. After all, he was also a father. No - not Cham. He went in and saw what he wanted to see. When he came out to his brothers he did not simply tell them, he related in detail what he had seen. Vayaged, he painted the story in words to get the most out of it. He gloated on the shocking effect of his words. Cham fathered Canaan and Mitzrayim, two nations that descended to the nadir of depravity. The social degeneration that characterized Egypt and the moral decadence that personified Canaan had their source in Cham's behavior towards his father. The whole world of humanity is built on the relationship of children to their parents. Veritably, parents are there for their children: the mother, as the condition for their existence; the father as the one whose life should be given up for the well-being of his children. Children must see in their parents the repository of Hashem's mission in this world. If respect for a parent is absent, then the stem that connects the sapling to the tree is severed. The younger generation then considers itself only a yoreish, inheritor, of the previous generation. The more vital supplants the older, weaker generation and steps into its place. We are taught differently. The Jew's relationship to the previous generation is one of nachalah, a form of inheritance, a word derived from nachal, stream, a flow. Thus, the older generation hands over its strength and powers, material and spiritual treasures, to the younger generation. While others seek to divorce themselves from the past, we see our parents as a source of strength, power and experience. As a stream flows from above, the spiritual mission of the Jew is transmitted from one generation to the next. Cham denigrated the pivotal mitzvah of Kibbud Av, honor for a parent. The degeneration that followed was the consequence of his iniquity. The ensuing moral disintegration of his descendants was a direct outgrowth of that first act of disrespect towards a father. Cham set the standard of behavior for his children throughout the following generations.

Come, let us descend and there confuse their language, that they should not understand one another's language. (11:7) Rashi tells us how their failure to communicate in a common language resulted in confusion and discord. One person would ask for a brick. The other one, as a result of a lack of comprehension, returned with plaster. The first one would rise up and kill the other person for not bringing him the brick. We wonder why Rashi has to go so far as to say that the lack of communication resulted in murder? The original purpose of confusing the language was to undermine their building project. If they could not communicate, they would not be able to build. Why did they resort to murder? The Brisker Rav, zl, explains that unity can have a negative as well as a positive effect. Furthermore, when the wicked unite with a common objective, they find an avenue to succeed. The drawback of the d'or haflagah, generation of the dispersal, was the harmony that existed between them. If their goal was to build a tower, they would find a way to see their goal reach fruition. Nothing would stand in the way of their collective efforts. This is why it was essential that the confusion brought about by the language problem had to be so great that it resulted in a complete breakdown of society, even murder. The greatest proof is the fact that even after they killed one of

their own, they continued building the tower. It was only when they were dispersed that the Torah writes that work on the tower came to a halt.

Terach took his son Avram... And they departed with them from Ur Kasdim to go to the land of Canaan; they arrived at Charan and they settled there. (11:31) Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, notes that the Torah reveals to us that Terach originally had set a destination to reach Canaan. In the end, he did not reach his goal; he settled midway in Charan. He cites the Arugas Habosem that explains this occurrence in the following manner. Terach set a goal to reach Canaan. Like so many other weak people, Terach did not achieve his goal. The yetzer hora, evil inclination, challenges us midway, seeking a way of preventing us from bringing our goal to fruition. This is what happens to the wicked: they undertake glorious endeavors; they make grandiose plans, all with good intentions. Yet, along the way, they fall prey to their yetzer hora which misleads them. Tzaddikim, the righteous, are not like that. They set sail on a mission, and nothing obstructs their way. They triumph over the challenges and obstacles that lie in their path, because they are focused on their objective. Regardless of the difficulties, once they have accepted a task upon themselves, they complete it. The Chassidic Seforim distinguish between angels and man in that angels manifest the virtue that they cannot deteriorate. Their concomitant flaw is that they cannot improve. They cannot go forward and grow. Man, regrettably, can deteriorate, but he also demonstrates the virtue that he can improve. Man can set goals for himself which he can drive himself to achieve. A wise man once said, "Humanity cannot be measured by what it is; only by what it is trying to become." When people set a goal before themselves, and they adhere to the path towards achieving that goal, their success is determined by their achievement. They can only achieve their goal, however, if they feel a sense of mission. One of our most common human failings is a lack of persistence. We set before ourselves lofty goals, which we initially attack with great enthusiasm, but we do not persevere. When we lose the will to go forward, we have lost the most significant line of defense against failure - persistence. And a lack of persistence is the natural consequence of losing our sense of mission. How often do we throw up our hands in defeat at a time when - with just a bit more effort, a bit more patience - we would have succeeded? With a little more perseverance and a little more effort, what previously might have seemed hopeless, may yet turn into a glorious success. The greatest failure is in no longer trying. Defeat except that from within. There is no barrier more insurmountable than our own lack of purpose, our own lack of mission. Hasmadah, diligence, in Torah study produces Torah leaders. One does not have to be a genius to achieve this status. Indeed, many talented geniuses have not achieved this zenith in Torah. It is those who plug away every day, all the time, who are undiscouraged and indefatigable, who achieve the mark of success. A person who is on a mission works at achieving his goal on a constant basis. He looks for every way to enhance his work and grow in his endeavor. He does not slack off and take the easy way out. Nothing stands in his way. He is on a constant mission. The story is told about a firm that sought to hire a man for a top executive position. The firm had bypassed the man next in line and chosen an outsider for the position. The individual who had seniority and had been ignored was upset, so he decided to take his case to the company's CEO. In very hurt tones he said, "But I had fifteen years of experience with this firm." The CEO replied, "That is not so. You had one year of experience fifteen times." In every endeavor, in every field, especially in the field of Torah chinuch, education, one must be creative, innovative vitality and fresh. The success of a teacher is determined by his excitement, his viridity and his sense of mission. Horav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, zl, the legendary menahel of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and primary architect of Torah in America, instilled this sense of mission in his talmidim, students. He understood that the transformation of American Jewry was dependent on the creation of a cadre of teachers who had a passion for their work, a burning sense of mission. He imbued them with a love for each Jew, with a sensitivity to their physical and spiritual needs, by having them identify personally with each one. Rav Shraga Feivel once sent one of his close students to a distant community for the Yamim Noraim, High Holy Days. When the student returned, he asked him, "How many shomer Shabbos did you find there?" The talmid responded, "I highly doubt if there is even one shomer Shabbos in the community." quickly asked in amazement, "Did you not cry bitterly because of this?" He felt that only those capable of weeping over the sorry spiritual state of American Jewry were capable of changing it. The situation required sensitivity, determination, diligence and a sense of mission.

Va'ani Tefillah Adon Olam - Master of the Universe Our entire day is governed by the tefillah of Adon Olam. We go to bed with the words, Biyado afkid nuchi b'eis ishon v'airah, "I entrust my spirit into His hand when I go to sleep and when I am awake." We go to sleep entrusting our lives in His hand, secure that He will see

over us. Who knows if we will arise - when we will arise - in what condition we will arise? We can only place our trust in Hashem. He is our personal Adon, Master. Therefore, when we close our eyes at night, we can say, "Ado-noy li lo ira, "Hashem is with me, I shall not fear." This idea precedes our day, as we say Adon Olam, affirming our faith in the Almighty and His protection of our body and soul b'terem kol yetzer nivra, "Who reigned before any form was created." How can one have a kingdom without a nation? How does one reign supreme without a creation over which He reigns? Horav Baruch Halevi Epstein, zl, in his Baruch Sh'Amar explains that the following sentence, l'eis naasah b'cheftzo kol, "Then when everything was done according to His will," responds to this query. At the time when there was yet no creation, Hashem's Sovereignty was proclaimed in that He had the ability to create Heaven and Earth. This ability and its concomitant result, the creation of the world is referred to as meluchah, kingdom, which means molich u'meivi, He brings back and forth. The ability to create, to render life and power, to bring into being all that exists - this represents monarchy and mastery at its zenith.

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From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2003 9:00 PM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas Noach

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav

COOKING CHOLENT FOR SHABBOS

Of all of the thirty-nine forbidden melachos of Shabbos, the Torah mentions only one explicitly: You should not kindle fire. This prohibition is singled out to disabuse us of the notion that cooking may be permitted on Shabbos since, after all, Shabbos is a day of oney, pleasure(1). In fact, as we know, regular cooking is a forbidden melachah, and anything akin to cooking which is permitted on Shabbos is governed by complex halachos, with modern technology only increasing their complexity. As cholent is the classic example of a food which is partially cooked on Shabbos, we will outline the relevant halachos:

There are three possible methods of preparing cholent for Shabbos: on top of the stove, inside the oven and in a crock-pot(2), and all three are susceptible to the following Shabbos violations:

1.The Biblical prohibition of cooking on Shabbos; 2.The Rabbinical prohibition of putting food on a heat source before Shabbos and leaving it on during Shabbos. The reason for this prohibition is to prevent one from inadvertently "stoking the coals," whose modern equivalent is adjusting the knobs to raise the temperature; 3.The Rabbinical prohibition of returning [on Shabbos] food to a heat source, since then, too, one would be inclined to adjust the temperature. In addition, this is prohibited because it appears to be "cooking." To avoid these potential violations, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

ON THE RANGE

ON FRIDAY:

Although not halachically mandated, it has become customary that the fire be covered by a blech, even if the cholent is already cooked completely before sunset(3). If the cholent is less than half-cooked [or under extenuating circumstances, only a third cooked], a blech is halachically required. In addition to covering the fire with a blech, some poskim recommend covering the stove knobs as well(4), while some insist that they be covered(5).

ON SHABBOS

To remove a cholent pot from the fire with the intention of putting it right back on, e.g., to add water to it or to serve it at a kiddush before a meal, the following conditions must be met [these conditions are known as the "conditions for returning"]:

1.The fire [and knobs(6)] must be covered with a blech [a blech may be placed over the fire on Shabbos(7)];

2.The cholent must be completely cooked and still warm when returned to the flame;

3.The cholent pot should not be put down on any surface(8). B'dieved, if the cholent pot was put down on a surface, it may still be returned to the blech(9).

INSIDE THE OVEN

ON FRIDAY:

It is advisable that the cholent be completely cooked before Shabbos begins. If it was not, or b'dieved, as long as the cholent is half cooked [or under extenuating circumstances, a third cooked], it may be left in the oven. If the cholent is not cooked to even this extent, then the cholent may not be left inside the oven - unless an oven insert is placed inside it.

ON SHABBOS

In the opinion of many poskim, if the cholent was removed from inside the oven it may not be returned to the oven - unless there is an oven insert inside(10). A minority opinion maintains that if the stove knobs are covered or removed, the cholent may be returned to the oven even without an insert, if the "conditions for returning" listed above are met(11).

CROCK POT

ON FRIDAY:

It is advisable that the cholent be completely cooked before Shabbos begins. If it was not, or b'dieved, as long as the cholent is half cooked [or under extenuating circumstances, a third cooked], the cholent may remain in the crock-pot and continue cooking. If the cholent is not cooked to even this extent, then the cholent may be left in the crock-pot only if heavy-duty aluminum foil covers the heating element (base) of the crock-pot(12) and the control knobs are covered(13).

ON SHABBOS:

The cholent may be taken off the heating element and returned to the crock-pot later on Shabbos provided that the "conditions for returning" are met. The heating element of the crock-pot must be covered with aluminum foil(14).

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FOOTNOTES:

1 Ramban 35:3. 2 For a general discussion about using a crock pot on Shabbos, see The Weekly Halachah Discussion, vol. 1, pgs. 214-216. 3 The custom is based on the ruling of the Rama 253:1 according to the explanation of the Be'ur Halachah. See Chazon Ish O.C. 37:3 who disagrees and holds that a blech is not required when the cholent is completely cooked nor does it help when the cholent is not cooked. Most poskim do not agree with his view - see Kaf ha-Chayim 253:11; Eidus l'Yisrael, pg. 119; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:93; Harav Y.Y. Weiss (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 42, pg. 14); Tzitz Eliezer 7:15. 4 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:93; Be'er Moshe 7:3-4. 5 Harav A. Kotler (quoted in Sefer Hilchos Shabbos, pg. 338); Harav Y.Y. Weiss (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 42, pg. 14); Shevet ha-Levi 1:93. 6 According to the various views quoted earlier. 7 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:93; 4:74-29; Minchas Shelomo 46; Shevet ha-Levi 1:91. 8 See further for the definition of "rest on a surface." 9 Mishnah Berurah 253:56; Igros Moshe O.C. 2:69. 10 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-26; Minchas Yitzchak 3:28; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 89). 11 Harav A. Kotler (quoted in Sefer Hilchos Shabbos, pg. 354); Shevet ha-Levi 3:48. 12 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 96; Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 404). 13 According to the various views quoted earlier. 14 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 96; Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 404).

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From: Rav Kook List [RavKookList@hotmail.com] Sent: October 29, 2003
Subject: Rav Kook Dvar Torah List - Noah: Balancing the Universe
Noah: Balancing the Universe

The tremendous impact of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, the Midrash states, was felt throughout the world:

"When the Torah was given to Israel, the sound reverberated from one end of the world to the other. All of the non-Jewish kings were seized with fear. They gathered around the evil prophet Balaam and asked, 'What is this tremendous sound that we hear? Perhaps a flood is coming to the world!' Balaam answered them, 'No, G-d has already sworn not to bring another flood'. - 'Maybe not a deluge of water, but destruction by fire?' - 'No, He already promised never to destroy all flesh.' - 'So what is this tremendous sound that we hear?' - 'G-d has a precious gift in His treasury (the Torah) that He wishes to bestow to His children.'" [Zevachim 116a]

How can the Midrash compare this extreme act of mass destruction - the Great Flood - to the most significant event in history, the Revelation of the Torah? Why did the voices from Sinai bring back fearful memories of the Flood?

G-d created the universe with a precise balance between its physical and spiritual aspects. According to the Midrash [Chagiga 12a], Adam's height stretched from the earth all the way to the heavens. What does this mean? Was he really that tall? This description of Adam comes to express the exact equilibrium between the physical (earthy) and spiritual (heavenly) components of the first man.

With the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, however, the delicate balance was disrupted. Adam's action, contrary to G-d's command, diminished mankind's spiritual stature. His physical qualities, however, remained as powerful as before. Thus, the people from that era lived remarkably long lives.

The imbalance between the physical and the spiritual led to a situation in which physical drives overpowered spiritual aspirations. "All flesh had perverted its way on the earth". [Gen. 6:11] To correct this imbalance, G-d brought the Great Flood. This catastrophic event severely weakened the material realm, and limited man's physical powers. Mankind after the Flood was greatly altered. His lifespan became shorter. His stature was diminished, both physically and spiritually.

This explanation sheds light on the Covenant of the Rainbow. Did not rainbows exist before the Flood? How did the rainbow suddenly become a symbol of protection from Divine retribution after the Flood?

In truth, the rainbow was created immediately before the Sabbath of Creation. [Avot 5:6] Before the Flood, however, the rainbow could not be seen. "Keshet Be'Anan" - the thickness and opacity of the cloud obscured the rainbow. Only after the Flood, in a diluted material world, did the rainbow become visible.

The rainbow symbolizes weakness. Physical weakness, that the cloud can no longer conceal it. And spiritual weakness, that only a Divine promise prevents world destruction as punishment for its corruption. Only a few generations merited such holy "tzaddikim" that, due to their spiritual and physical strength, no rainbow could be seen in their days. [Ketubot 77b]

In addition to weakening the material universe, the aftermath of the Flood produced a bolstering of the spiritual side of the world, with the framework of the seven commandments of the Noahide Code. The Flood annulled all previous obligations, and initiated a new era of repairing the world, via the seven mitzvot of "Bnei-Noah".

In a future generation, a second, superior path would become available to maintain the delicate balance of the universe. The Torah provided a new way to correct and purify the world. Therefore, the Midrash compares the Flood to the Revelation of the Torah. Both events served to protect the universe's inner equilibrium between materialism and spirituality.

The Midrash has Balaam quoting to the kings from the book of Psalms: "G-d sat enthroned at the Flood ... G-d will give strength (Torah) to His people." [Ps. 29:10-11] The verse compares the effect of the Flood to that of the Torah. Yet the path of Torah is superior; instead of destroying and weakening the physical world, the Torah builds and strengthens. As the verse concludes, "G-d will bless his people with peace" - with a path of serenity and perfection.

[Shemuot HaRiyyah 8, Noah 5690 (1929)]

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http://www.geocities.com/m_yericho/ravkook - Rav A.I. Kook on the Weekly Parasha http://www.geocities.com/m_yericho/ravkook/thisweek.htm - This week's Dvar Torah

From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ [jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu] Sent: October 30, 2003 To: internetchaburah@yahoo.com Subject: [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah -- Noah 5764

Prologue: The clearest connection between the Torah reading and the Haftora is the promise of the prophet Isaiah that G-d's attribute of Chesed will guarantee a Geulah. He notes Kee Mei Noach Lee (54:9) as a reason for guaranteeing this promise. Redak notes that there are 2 ways of reading (and thus interpreting) these words. One style sees three words Kee Mei Noach loosely translated as for these are like the waters of Noach. The other style sees the words Kee and Mei as one word Keemei referring to the times of Noach (See Targum Yonasan). The two styles also beg the question as to whether we blame Noach for the Mabul (Mei Noach) or merely utilize his life as a marker in history for the period of the Mabul (Keiyimei). If this is the case, how could one blame Noach for a flood that was not his fault?

HaRav Avraham Rivlin Shlita (MeiInvei HaKerem) noted that the two opinions within the Haftora might be based on the two opinions of Noach in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 108a) where Rav Yochanan looked onto Noach as a Tzaddik in his generation alone and Reish Lakish saw him as a Tzaddik in all seasons and generations. Rav Rivlin suggested that Rav Yochanan might read the Possuk in Isaiah as Mei Noach while Reishg Lakish might see it only as a marker in time. Yet, one is still left asking why Noach (who was after all, saved from the flood) was blamed from the flood at least according to Rav Yochanan?

Rav Rivlin answered by citing a known Zohar that noted the difference between Moshe and Noach. Moshe heard G-d call to him to leave the people after the sin of the Golden calf. He refused. He asked how he could forsake his people for personal gain. Noach, on the other hand, never asked G-d to save the people. As a result, they died. Thus, concludes the Zohar, the Mabul is called Noachs (even in literature it is called Noyes Floode) for he didn't attempt to stop it.

As great a person is, even if he is called an Ish Tzaddik Tamim, if he does not demonstrate the Chesed to pray on behalf of his people and feel their pain, he is not to be considered as anything other than Klum and the waters that destroy his world, his fault.

Sheva Mitzvot: But do we force the issue??

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 56a) lists the Sheva Mitzvot Bnei Noach and asks how we know that they must keep them. The Talmud cites two possibilities, both of which result from the verse stating the command to Adam not to eat from the Eitz HaDaas.

The Rambam (Hil. Melachim 9:14) notes a responsibility of non-Jews to set up a system of Judges to enforce the other six Mitzvot. Rambam adds that in this manner we can understand why the rest of the city of Shechem was liable for Shechem's kidnapping of Dinah, they saw but didn't do anything to stop or punish Shechem. Ramban (Berashis 34:13) disagrees. He asks how Yaakov could have gotten upset with Shimon and Levi for destroying the city of Shechem. The Ramban concludes that the Mitzva of setting up courts is a Mitzva not only to punish evildoers but to teach the people right from wrong. (However, if the courts are not set up, it is a Bittul Aseh for which death is not an acceptable punishment.) Accordingly, the courts have a right to introduce business law and principles like Onaah and price gouging and these principles too, are to be adhered to by the Bnei Noach in order to keep the Mitzva of Dinim. According to Rema (Shut Rema, 10), the Ramban understands Dinim as a non-Jews requirement to create laws similar to the Torah (See Shut Chasam Sofer Choshen Mishpat, 91). Others (Nachalat Yitzchak, C.M. 91; Chazon Ish, Bava Kama 10:3; Shut Yichaveh Daas IV:65) seem to understand that whatever legal system needs to be introduced by the court, irrespective of its connection to Torah law, this is the responsibility of Dinim.

This Machlokes should have important ramifications in regard to whether Jews must educate and encourage non-Jews to fulfill the Seven Mitzvot. According to the Rambam, the obligation of Dinim applies to Jews and non-Jews equally. This position is maintained by most contemporary Poskim (See Igros Moshe Y.D. I:6; Teshuva from Rav Shlomo Zalman in Moriah XI:Tet/Yud, 64). The Ohr Sameach (Issurei Biah 3:5) actually obligates a boy who understands right and wrong but is not a Bar Mitzva, to fulfill the 7 Mitzvot. In this regard, Jews join non-Jews in some way, in the obligations of the 7 Mitzvot.

But do we have an obligation to pay for educating the Ben Noach?

From the Rambam (Hil. Melachim 8:10) it sounds as if the Jewish nation, or at least the Jewish courts, should educate the non-Jews to honor their Mitzvot. Maharitz Chayos (Shut Maharitz Chayos II) vehemently disagrees. He writes that perhaps Moshe had such a requirement but that after Maamad Har Sinai, no Jew could have an obligation to force compliance and certainly not in the Galut where Jews are not in charge. Indeed, the author of the Sefer HaChinuch (192) notes that our obligations are active only when they are under our hands.

Shut Machane Chaim (II: O.C. 22) argues. Rav Chaim Sanzer felt that the Mitzvah of Dinim had two components to it. The first was to set up courts with judges who know the law. The second was to educate the populace in order to make sure that

people who violate the law know why they are being punished. According to his approach, we must educate (and perhaps even pay to educate) Bnei Noach about their laws and the need to keep them.

The late Lubavitcher Rebbe had another interesting approach as to why Jews might be obligated to educate non-Jews about 7 Mitzvot Bnei Noach. In an article written for Hapardes (59:lx, 10), The Rebbe contends that since the Rambam noted that there is an obligation to educate non-Jews, we must do so. As to the claim that none of the other Poskim seem to discuss this obligation, he feels this is due to the fear of intermixing and the potential for assimilation that might have happened if it occurred. However, today, with changing times, one can safely educate non-Jews about the Noachide code and have them comply. This opinion has been challenged extensively (See Dinei Yisroel, XIX, 108). And at best seems to be accepted as a Heter to teach not as an obligation (See Yabia Omer I: Y.D. 17; Sridei Eish II:92; Contemporary Halachic Problems II: 215:316).

From: RABBI RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM LIST [parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Shabbat Shalom Parshat Noach by RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN (Genesis 6:9-11:32)

Efrat, Israel - Our Torah portion of Noah opens with the flood (Hebrew, mabul) and symmetrically concludes with the Tower of Babel (Migdal Babel – two Hebrew words which seem to be able to be contracted into MaBel), two world disasters which bear striking resemblance to the major catastrophes which mark our civilization during these past eight decades and up until this very day. After the advent of Adam, the first human being, “who was created in the image of G-d” (Genesis 1:27), there were ten generations until the birth of Noah.

During this period we are told that “the multitudes of humanity acted in a secular and profane manner (‘he’hel’ from ‘hullin’)... and the sons of the powerful men (or of the demigods) seized whichever women they chose.... The giants (nefilim) roamed the earth at that time, and G-d saw that the evil of humanity was great on earth, and that the creation of the thoughts of their hearts was only bad all day. And G-d regretted that he had made the human being on earth..., and G-d said, ‘I shall wipe out the humans I have created from off the face of the earth’...” (Genesis 6:2-7). And a few verses into the opening portion of Noah, the text continues along the same theme: “And the earth was corrupt before G-d, and the earth was filled with violence (hamas – Genesis 6:11).

The picture which emerges is that of godlessness (“corrupt before G-d”) which leads to lawlessness (“violence”), and anarchy which breeds giants, children of “the lords” or the “demi-gods,” who seize whatever goods or good-looking people they wish, a situation of “whoever is more powerful, triumphs” (Kol d’alim gevar), a society of “might makes right.” The giants and demi-gods are reminiscent of the Aryan ubermenschen, the Nazi “supermen” who believed it was their right to rule the world. The ancient society evoked by the Biblical text is remarkably similar to the society of Nazi Germany which – as a fascist, totalitarian state – enslaved and murdered those non-Aryans they considered inferior, especially the Jews. Fortunately, Nazi Fascism was swept away by the mabul – flood of the Second World War.

The Torah portion of Bereishit concludes, “And Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). The hope appears to be that Noah will establish a new post –flood society. Tragically, however, the following ten generations are characterized by a further degeneration, descending to its nadir with the Tower of Babel – but this time a different form of depravity than we have seen previously.

“And the entire earth was of one language and of one word” (Genesis 11:1) – with the Midrash Rabbah explaining the Hebrew phrase “d’varim a’hadim” to mean “they spoke sharp words (e’had means one, and ‘had means sharp) against ‘the Lord our G-d (s) the Lord is one.’” I would submit that our watchword of faith, “Hear Oh Israel, the Lord our G-d (s) the Lord is one” is a ringing declaration in favor of religious pluralism. Y-H-W-H is the unique, Jewish concept of one G-d, and E-lohim is a plural noun standing for the sum total of all the different names by which the one G-d is called. The prophet Micah expresses his vision of the end

of the days, when all the nations will rush to the Holy Temple “to learn (from Jacob’s ways and walk (in Jacob’s) paths ... to beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, nation will not lift up sword against nation and humanity will not learn war anymore; all the nations will walk, each individual in the name of his god (Elohav), and we will walk in the name of the Lord our G-d forever” (Micah 4:1-5).

Micah is saying that while the Jewish mission is to teach ethical monotheism to the world, - that our G-d is a G-d of justice, compassion and peace – it is not necessary for everyone to accept the 613 commands of the Torah; such a commitment is for Israel alone. The other nations must only accept the seven Noahide laws of morality, the absolute prohibition against murder, sexual immorality, theft and the cruel and licentious activities associated with idolatry (see Maimonides, Laws of Kings, 8,10). Once they accept these fundamental ethical teachings, it does not matter by what name they call their god or which particular rituals they may choose to perform. As long as the Gentile is moral, any name he refers to for G-d is a manifestation of the one true and absolute Lord of the Universe. “Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord our G-d (gods) the Lord is one.”

This depraved generation speaks out against such an open-minded religious position, teaches the midrash: “And they said, ‘Let us build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, so that we can make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered over the face of the entire earth” (Genesis 11:4) Here again the Midrash Rabba teaches: “Who rules in the heavenly spheres is not up for individual choice.” We down below must establish the only acceptable god, whose rule will extend from heaven to earth, and who will bestow His exclusive name upon the centralized totalitarian regime which will enforce not only unity but also uniformity of fanatical religious observance over world citizenry.

This is a striking parallel to Islamic Fundamentalism, which has turned Allah into Satan and seeks to enforce the Moslem religion over the entire world through the sword of Jihad. The symbol of this philosophy is a zigurrat tower, a grandiose building; as the midrash emphasizes, human life meant nothing, the bricks and mortars meant everything. These fanatics have no compunctions about sending out their youth as suicidal homicide bombers targeting innocent women and children as long as it is for the greater glory of Allah-Satan!

Between the scourge of fascist secularism and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism – between the flood and the tower – is the prohibition against murder: “One who sheds human blood will have his blood shed by humans, since in the image of G-d did He make the human being” (Genesis 9:10). And the sign (or criterion) by which G-d will preserve the world is the rainbow: seven magnificent and variegated colors which are all refractions of white, perhaps symbolizing the different names and rituals which are all expressions of the one Lord. This is the most fundamental teaching of Judaism: “G-d created the human being as a single Adam to teach that he who destroys a single life destroys an entire world....; and it is a testimony to the greatness of G-d that when a human king mints many coins from one model, all the coins are identical, whereas the Holy One Blessed be He minted many people from one Adam and not one of them is similar to his counterpart” (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4,3). Our Torah is the very antithesis of Moslem fundamentalism, preaching peace and unity rather than war and uniformity.

Shabbat Shalom.

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From: RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com Subject: RABBI WEIN's Weekly Columns Parsha Archive October 31, 2003 NOACH

Noach is a very difficult person to assess. The Rabbis of the Midrash themselves were of different minds regarding Noach. The truth is that the righteous, perfect, G-d-pursuing Noach is a very complicated person. Therefore, tragedy comes forth from his behavior after the flood, just as his behavior and influence before the flood apparently was unable to arrest the world's dive into disaster. Noach certainly had the opportunity after the flood to fashion the world in his image, so to speak. But it was not to be. The majority of Noach's descendants reverted back to the evil behavior of society before the flood. It is almost as though the flood and all of its tragedy was a waste. And I cannot think of a greater waste than a wasted tragedy.

This is perhaps the greatest point of criticism that the Rabbis leveled at Noach - that the flood and its lessons were never exploited to improve human society afterward. And this is the strongest point of comparison and difference between Noach and Avraham. Avraham also lived in a generation of tragedy and disaster. Believers were thrown into the furnace, morality was scoffed at, the project of the great Tower of Babel was abandoned after countless lives were lost in the attempt and Avraham was an isolated figure of G-dliness in a world of paganism and evil. Yet, Avraham himself had assimilated the lessons of his generation within his being. He saw the emptiness and lawlessness that surrounded him and resolved to create a counter-force of goodness and faith that would eventually (according to the opinion of Rabbi Menachem HaMeiri in the introduction of his commentary to the book of Avot) win over half of his generation to the concepts of human goodness and monotheism. Avraham, who always lived with danger and on the brink of tragedy and disaster, never flinched nor fled, He did not withdraw into himself and abandon his role of human leadership. He learned the lessons of the generations that preceded him and did not allow himself to be traumatized and to waste the experience of those terrible events.

The Jewish people, the children of Avraham, have reeled from tragedy to greater tragedy in our long and difficult history and exile. In our time, the Holocaust and the vicious pogroms of the first third (pre-Holocaust) of the century have decimated our people. They have not only destroyed us physically but they have also crippled us emotionally and spiritually. It would have been perfectly understandable had the Jewish people just curled up and withered away, turning the experience of the Holocaust into a wasted historical event. The grandeur of our times is that even though many Jews have given up on themselves, have intermarried, assimilated, secularized, and disappeared, the Jewish people as an entity has followed the path of Avraham and not Noach.

Not only is the State of Israel an example of Jewish determination and constancy, but the strong development of a Torah life-style amongst large numbers of Jewish communities the world over, is a testimony to dealing with and defeating tragedy. Our Rabbis said that Avraham reaped the rewards of all of the ten generations after the flood. He saw their disasters, experienced the flames of his own potential destruction, and yet rose to proclaim a G-dly world of human good and compassion. He reaped the reward of those previous generations. He learned their lessons, corrected their shortcomings, and moved on to create a new world that would justify his faith. Our generation is faced with this very same challenge. Let us build Avraham's world and reap the rewards of the countless generations of human failure and misery that have preceded us.

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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Aish Hatorah Literacy Series
Crash Course in Jewish History Part 3
The World of Abraham
by Rabbi Ken Spiro

Jewish history doesn't happen in a vacuum. No people's history happens in a vacuum. So first we have to zoom out and get a little understanding of where Abraham fits in the world of his time.

Abraham appears at a period of time called the Middle Bronze period, around the 18th century BCE. (Early civilization is characterized by the metals they predominantly used and the Middle Bronze period includes the period of time from 2200 BCE until 1550 BCE.)

Whereas most anthropologists believe that hominids, forerunners of human beings physically, originated in Africa, human civilization begins in the Middle East in the Fertile Crescent, which is where Abraham was born.

Human civilization begins in the Middle East in the Fertile Crescent, which is where Abraham was born. When we say civilization, we are talking about sophisticated arrangements of people living together, not just simple agrarian settlements, not just a few people living in a few huts. About 5,500 years ago in the Middle East, there occurred an evolution of humanity from hunter/gatherers -- people who spend their whole day looking for food -- to people who were able to domesticate livestock. This meant they could raise animals to eat them or to use them for their milk and their hides, and to plow the land to grow crops.

Once this occurred, there was a surplus of food, which led to population growth and people started specializing in types of labor -- you had craftsmen, scholars, priests and warriors. That, in turn, led to the growth of cities.

The earliest civilizations in the world, according to most opinions, began in the area called the Fertile Crescent.

THE FERTILE CRESCENT

The Fertile Crescent encompasses the area flowed by the Nile in Egypt, the Levant (the middle section where Israel is located), and the area flowed by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

The three great rivers contribute mightily to the fertility, and consequent desirability, of this area. The Nile is an incredible river, the largest river in the world. Without the Nile, Egypt would be a desert. In ancient times, 3% of Egypt was arable land, 97% was desert. Also the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers are two tremendous rivers; they run through what is today basically Iraq and into Turkey, but what historians have dubbed Mesopotamia, which is Greek for "in the middle of two rivers."

There is some debate whether the first civilization sprang up in Egypt or in Mesopotamia (specifically in the section of Mesopotamia called Sumer) but we can be fairly sure that the first hallmark of civilization -- writing -- originated in the Fertile Crescent.

The first hallmark of civilization -- writing -- originated in the Fertile Crescent. Writing was a tremendous invention though we take it for granted today. It began with pictographs. You drew a stick figure and that stood for "man." Later those pictures evolved into more abstract symbols which stood for phonetic sounds, until eventually there came about a system of three "letters," each representing a sound and combining together to make a word that conveyed an idea. (To this day, Hebrew is based on a three-consonant root system.)

Writing was the single greatest human invention. All the technology of today depends on the collective accumulation of accurately transmitted information, which now comes so fast we can't keep up with it.

"A SPEAKING SOUL"

From the Jewish perspective the ability to express oneself -- whether through writing or speech -- personifies what human beings are all about. We learn that when G-d created the first human being -- Adam -- He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) The Hebrew phrase 'nefesh chayah, "living soul," can also be translated as "a speaking soul." (Targum Onkelos)

Of the two earliest civilizations that developed, Egypt is unusual because it's surrounded by desert and so it is virtually unapproachable. Egypt as a civilization survived for close to 3,000 years. This is an incredibly long period of time for civilization to survive. Why did Egypt survive for so long? Because no-one could invade it. It took the Greeks -- specifically Alexander, the Great -- to finish Egypt off, and then it becomes a Greek colony.

Mesopotamia had no such natural defenses. It was a giant flood plain sitting in the middle of the great migration pattern of all ancient peoples. Whatever conqueror came out of Asia or out of Europe set foot here. It had no natural defenses -- no mountains, no deserts -- and it was a very desirable fertile land.

We see the land changing hands many times and a huge number of civilizations in this part of the world -- Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and then, of course, the Islamic invaders.

AT THE CROSSROADS

In this tumultuous place is where Jewish history begins -- at the bottom of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in the cradle of civilization. This was the logical place for civilization to begin in terms of the development of agriculture and culture. And it's also a logical place for Abraham to appear, because if Abraham is going to affect the world, he has to be at the crossroads of the ancient migration pathways. If he were born an Eskimo or an American Indian, all of human history would have been different.

Abraham was born in Mesopotamia, in a bustling place called Ur Kasdim, located in today's Iraq. But Abraham was born in Mesopotamia, in particular in a

bustling place called Ur Kasdim, or Ur of the Chaldees, which has been excavated by archeologists in today's Iraq.

This was then the center of earliest human civilization, a cosmopolitan center. And it is from here that Abraham's journey begins.

NEXT: ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

Published: Sunday, November 19, 2000

#3 of 73 in the Aish.com Jewish History Series

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