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Honoring A Father

**By: Rabbi Joshua Rapps
Rav Soloveitchik on Chumash**

Published: October 23rd, 2014

The articles in this column are transcriptions and adaptations of shiurim by Rav Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, z"l. The Rav's unique perspective on Chumash permeated many of the shiurim and lectures he presented at various venues over a 40-plus-year period. His words add an important perspective that makes the Chumash in particular, and our tradition in general, vibrant and relevant to our generation.

This week's d'var Torah is dedicated in memory of Mrs. Yetta Moritz, a"h.

The Torah tells us that Shem and Yefes took an article of clothing, placed it on their shoulders and covered their father. The Torah uses the singular, Vayikach, and he took, referring to Shem who took the initiative to act. Yefes merely followed Shem. Rabbi Yochanan said that because Shem took the initiative in this mitzvah and [this led] Yefes to join with him, Shem was rewarded with Tallis [and Techeles] while Yefes was rewarded with the toga (Midrash Rabbah 36:9).

Each of Noach's sons displayed a different attitude towards their father. Cham was always looking for the shortcomings of his father, Ervas Aviv. Cham disdained his father for drinking wine and becoming intoxicated. He did not allow his father the benefit of relaxing a bit after all he had been through, saving his family and all that was in the ark with them. He never saw eye to eye with his father.

Yefes was not concerned with what was right or wrong. He was more interested in conforming to the current convention. His motivation to act was not borne out of an internal desire to perform acts of kindness. Rather it was because at that moment it appeared to be the proper thing to do. [He might have acted differently if the situation arose at another time.]

Shem, on the other hand, had an ingrained sense of kindness and love towards his father. Shem realized that everything he is and has is because of his father. The Gemara uses Dama Ben Nesina as the example of extreme Kibbud Av, who was willing to forego a fortune rather than wake his father to retrieve the key hidden under his father's pillow. Why did the Gemara have to harp on the aspect of the key that was under his father's pillow? Why didn't the Gemara simply say that the key was unavailable? Dama Ben

Nesina rose to become a member of the Roman senate. Yet, he realized that whatever he became was because of his father. The "key" to his success was under his father's pillow, by respecting and honoring his father. True Kibbud Av is when a son, no matter how great he may become, respects his father and acknowledges that all he has is because of his father.

Shem realized that he owed his existence to his father who brought him into the world. He realized that he now had an even greater debt towards his father, the Tzaddik Tamim, who saved him from the flood. One must realize that he stands on the shoulders of his parents.

Ramban says that even though he argues with the Baal Halachos Gedolos (Behag), he does not claim to know more than the Behag. He compares himself to a midget who stands on the shoulders of a giant and who thus has a slightly better view than that which the giant himself enjoys. This is made possible because of the foundation that the giant has provided him.

One must feel the same towards his father. This is also the concept of Talmid Chaver. The student knows more because he has also benefited from the foundation his teacher [and all the previous generations of teachers] provided for him.

Shem was rewarded with the Tallis and Tzitzis. The Midrash says that Techeles is similar to the sea, the heavens and to the Kisei Hakavod, heavenly throne. Techeles tells the Jew that he is not all-knowing, that he is dependent on Hashem. The sea and the sky remind us that beyond that which we can perceive lies an unfathomable and impenetrable depth.

Ultimately, no matter how much man may believe he has accomplished and attained, it is still insignificant relative to Hashem. Fear of father [Mora Av] is equated with fear of heaven [Mora Shamayim] because the Jew must understand that just as he is dependent on Hashem, he must also recognize that he also owes everything to his father as well.

Yefes was rewarded with the toga. Yefes was the father of Greece and Greek culture, which valued action based on the expediency, and had high regard for superficial beauty. Ancient Greece was willing to accept abominable actions in the name of culture. [The Rav compared this to current acceptance of the full gamut of illicit sexual activity and the scorn that modern youth have for the older generation].

Yefes was rewarded with the external trappings, Klappei Chutz. Shem was rewarded with the inner beauty as symbolized by the Tallis and Techeles.

Another dimension to the difference between Shem and Yefes is that while both had Kavod, respect, for their father, only Shem displayed Yirah, fear, for his father. Kavod entails simple respect that one shows externally towards his father. This respect may come about only because the son would be ashamed of the societal scorn he would receive if he did not care for his father. Yirah, on the other hand, means listening to the advice of his father, looking up to him, overlooking his mistakes and holding him in the highest regard. As the Torah tells us, "She'al Avicha V'yagedcha, Z'keinecha V'yomru Lach," seek counsel from your father and your elders.

Shem displayed Yirah for his father. He was able to overlook the acts of his father by viewing them in the context of what he went through and the enormous responsibility he had in preserving the world. He could not stand to see his father degraded. Yefes showed only Kavod for his father. He was afraid that others might accuse him of being a lesser son than Shem. So, when Shem showed the initiative to act, Yefes was quick to participate in this good deed. Cham, on the other hand, showed scorn and disdain for his father and was always pointing out his father's shortcomings and those of the previous generations.

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Noach

Certain Things Noach Did Not Have To Worry About

There appears to be an apparent contradiction in the narrative of the animals' entry into the Teyva [Ark]. In one place, it appears that they (miraculously) came on their own, in other pasukim [verses], it appears that

they did not come on their own but rather Noah had to go catch them himself.

The Ramban explains that the pairs of animals that came "two by two" all approached the Teyva on their own. It was the species of kosher animals for which Noah was told to bring 7 pairs – so that he would have "extra" animals with which to offer sacrifices after the flood - that he needed to fetch on his own. The Ramban explains that those animals, which came to be saved to preserve their species for future generations, were given a Heavenly instinct of self-preservation that caused them to gravitate to the Teyva on their own. However, the animals, which would eventually be sacrificed as burnt offerings, were not given such an instinct as G-d would not place within an animal an instinct, which would lead to its future destruction. Therefore, their arrival on the Teyva was something, which required manual intervention on Noah's part.

The sefer Im Levovi Asicha explains this distinction based on an incident, which happened with Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik (the Brisker Rav).

Shortly after the State of Israel was established, in the early 1950s, there was a great controversy whether to allow religious girls to do national service (Sheirut Le'umi) in lieu of military service in the army. The leading Rabbis from the Yeshiva world were concerned about the potential for spiritual corruption in a Sheirut Le'umi structure and they took the position that under no circumstances was this to be permitted. David Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of Israel, threatened to rescind the draft deferment given to male Yeshiva students if the Roshei Yeshiva would not cooperate with him in allowing girls to do national service.

The Roshei Yes hiva refused to budge and basically called Ben Gurion's bluff regarding his threat to close down the Yeshivos if he was not allowed to draft the girls into Sheirut Le'umi. The Brisker Rav said at that time: We have one responsibility and one responsibility only and that is to keep the Halacha. 'But what is going to be with Torah?' What is going to be with Klal Yisrael if the Yeshivos are shut down and there will not be any Yeshiva bochrin learning Torah? That is G-d's problem, not our problem. G-d promised us that the Torah will not be forgotten from the midst of our children [Devorim 31:21]. We can rely on G-d to fulfill his problem. We must focus on keeping the Halacha (which in that context, he felt was to refuse to permit the girls to do national service) and not attempt to compromise it out of strategic considerations "what is going to be with Torah?"

In this vein, the Sefer Im Levovi Asicha explains the Ramban's distinction. The "two by two" who came to preserve G-d's plan for the world that there should always be elephants and rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses -- that was G-d's issue to worry about and Noah did not need to get involved. However, if Noah wanted animals for his own voluntary sacrifices – that was something he needed to arrange on his own. But Noah does not need to worry about what is going to be with creation.

It Wasn't True Then and It Is Not True Now

I would like to share the following article from January 6, 2005, after the great Indian Ocean tsunami of December, 2004. Approximately 1900 Swedish people who were vacationing in the affected area vanished in the tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean that winter.

What does this have to do with Parshas Noah?

The building of the Tower of Bavel was an attempt by the people there to inoculate themselves from any type of disaster. "We are going to build this tower that will reach the heaven and this will protect us from any future flood. The Almighty will never again be able to destroy us! We don't have to worry about G-d anymore."

The article says, "In Sweden, for decades, this Scandinavian nation has grown in prosperity and peace, immunized by its policy of political neutrality. Like other Europeans, its people learned to abandon the chill of traditional winters for tropical lands brought closer by easy connections of global tourism. But cheap charter flight air fares do not include the cradle to

grave security that Scandinavians have woven around themselves and neutrality cannot guard against natural disaster...

The implication of this article is that the people of Sweden said, "We are going to protect ourselves. We are going to immunize ourselves from all the world's troubles. We are going to remain neutral so we are not going to have wars. We are going to provide socialism from cradle to grave. We are going to take care of you from the minute you are born until the minute you die. We are going to build ourselves a tower that reaches to heaven and protect ourselves from all the ravages that plague the world.

So what do they do? They get on a plane and go from cold Sweden in the middle of December to Thailand. They are living it up. They think they are safe. No. Someone can go to the other side of the world and still be affected. It is always something. Today, Ebola reminds us that there are some thin gs, which we cannot control. What can we do about Ebola? The article concludes "This will erode our confidence in our ability to be safe."

Since the Tower of Bavel, people have been thinking "We can protect ourselves; we can be safe; we do not need to depend on the Almighty." It was not true then and it is not true now. The only protection that human beings can ever count on is the protection of the Ribono shel Olam.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah series on the weekly Torah portion.

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by **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Noach(Genesis 6:9-11:32)

Beyond Nature

Are we naturally good or naturally bad? On this great minds have argued for centuries. Hobbes believed that we have naturally "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death." We are bad, but governments and police can help limit the harm we do. Rousseau to the contrary believed that naturally we are good. It is society and its institutions that make us bad.

The argument continues today among the neo-Darwinians. Some believe that natural selection and the struggle for survival make us, genetically, hawks not doves. As M. T. Ghiselin puts it, "Scratch an 'altruist' and watch a 'hypocrite' bleed." By contrast, naturalist Frans de Waal in a series of delightful books about primates, including his favourite, the bonobos, shows that they can be empathic, caring, even altruistic. So by nature are we.

T. E. Hulme called this the fundamental divide between Romantics and Classicists throughout history. Romantics believed that "man was by nature good, that it was only bad laws and customs that had suppressed him. Remove all these and the infinite possibilities of man would have a chance." Classicists believed the opposite, that "Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him."

In Judaism, according to the sages, this was the argument between the angels when God consulted them as to whether or not He should create humans. The angels were the "us" in "Let us make man ..." The angels of chessed and tzedek said "Let him be created because humans do acts of kindness and righteousness." The angels of shalom and emet said, "Let him not be created because he tells lies and fights wars." What did God do? He

created humans anyway and had faith that we would gradually become better and less destructive. That in secular terms is what Harvard neuroscientist Steven Pinker argues in *The Better Angels of our Nature*. Taken as a whole and with obvious exceptions we have become less violent over time.

The Torah suggests we are both good and bad, and evolutionary psychology tells us why. We are born to compete and co-operate. Life is a competitive struggle for scarce resources. So we fight and kill. But we survive only within groups. Without habits of co-operation and trust, we would have no groups and we would not survive. That is part of what the Torah means when it says, "It is not good for man to be alone." So we are both aggressive and altruistic: aggressive to strangers, altruistic toward members of our group.

But the Torah is far too profound to leave it at the level of the old joke of the rabbi who, hearing both sides of a domestic argument, tells the husband, "You are right," and the wife "You are right," and when his disciple says, "They can't both be right," replies, "You are also right." The Torah states the problem, but it also supplies a non-obvious answer. This is the clue that helps us decode a very subtle argument running through last week's parsha and this.

The basic structure of the story that begins with creation and ends with Noah is that in the beginning God created a universe of order. He then created human beings who created a universe of chaos: "the land was filled with violence." So God, as it were, deleted creation by bringing a flood, returning the earth to as it was at the very beginning when "the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters." He then began again with Noah and his family as the new Adam and Eve and their children.

Genesis 8-9 is thus a kind of second version of Genesis 1-3, but with two differences. In both accounts a key word appears seven times, but it is a different word. In Genesis 1 the word is "good." In Genesis 9 it is "covenant."

The second is that in both, reference is made to the fact that humans are in the image of God, but the two sentences have different implications. In Genesis 1 we are told that "God created humanity in His own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female He created them." In Genesis 9 we read, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made mankind" (Gen. 9: 6).

The difference is striking. Genesis 1 tells me that "I" am in the image of God. Genesis 9 tells me that "You," my potential victim, are in the image of God. Genesis 1 tells us about human power. We are able, says the Torah, to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air." Genesis 9 tells us about the moral limits of power. We can kill but we may not. We have the power, but not the permission.

Reading the story closely, it seems that God created humans in the faith that they would naturally choose the right and the good. They would not need to eat the fruit of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," because instinct would lead them to behave as they should. Calculation, reflection, decision – all the things we associate with knowledge – would not be necessary. They would act as God wanted them to act, because they had been created in His image.

It did not turn out that way. Adam and Eve sinned, Cain committed murder, and within a few generations the world was reduced to chaos. That is when we read that "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart." Everything else in the universe was tov, "good." But humans are not naturally good. That is the problem. The answer, according to the Torah, is covenant.

Covenant introduces the idea of a moral law. A moral law is not the same as a scientific law. Scientific laws are observed regularities in nature: drop an object and it will fall. A moral law is a rule of conduct: do not rob or steal or deceive. Scientific laws describe, whereas moral laws prescribe.

When a natural event does not accord with the current state of science, when it "breaks" the law, that is a sign that there is something wrong with the law. That is why Newton's laws were replaced by those of Einstein. But when a human being breaks the law, when people rob or steal or deceive, the fault is not in the law but in the deed. So we must keep the law and condemn, and sometimes punish, the deed. Scientific laws allow us to predict. Moral laws help us to decide. Scientific laws apply to entities without freewill. Moral laws presuppose freewill. That is what makes humans qualitatively different from other forms of life.

So, according to the Torah, a new era began centred not on the idea of natural goodness but on the concept of covenant, that is, moral law. Civilization began in the move from what the Greeks called *physis*, nature, to *nomos*, law. That is what makes the concept of being "in the image of God" so different in Genesis 1 and Genesis 9. Genesis 1 is about nature and biology. We are in the image of God in the sense that we can think, speak, plan, choose and dominate. Genesis 9 is about law. Other people are also in God's image. Therefore we must respect them by banning murder and instituting justice. With this simple move, morality was born.

What is the Torah telling us about morality?

First, that it is universal. The Torah places God's covenant with Noah and through him all humanity prior to his particular covenant with Abraham, then later with his descendants at Mount Sinai. Our universal humanity precedes our religious differences. This is a truth we deeply need in the twenty-first century when so much violence has been given religious justification. Genesis tells us that our enemies are human too.

All societies have had some form of morality but usually they concern only relations within the group. Hostility to strangers is almost universal in both the animal and human kingdoms. Between strangers, power rules. As the Athenians said to the Melians, "The strong do what they want, while the weak do what they must."

The idea that even the people not like us have rights, and that we should "love the stranger," would have been considered utterly strange by most people at most times. It took the recognition that there is one God sovereign over all humanity ("Do we not all have one father? Did not one God create us?" Malachi 2: 10) to create the momentous breakthrough to the idea that there are moral universals, among them the sanctity of life, the pursuit of justice and the rule of law.

Second, God himself recognises that we are not naturally good. After the Flood, He said: "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, even though the inclination of their minds is evil from childhood on." The antidote to the *yetzer* (in rabbinic Hebrew, *yetzer hara*) the inclination to evil, is covenant.

This has a neuroscientific basis. We have a prefrontal cortex, evolved to allow humans to think and act reflectively, considering the consequences of their deeds. But this is slower and weaker than the amygdala (what Jewish mystics called the *nefesh habehamit*, the animal soul) which, even before we have had time to think, produces the fight-or-flight reactions without which humans before civilization would not have survived.

The problem is that these rapid reactions can be destructive. Often they lead to violence: not only the violence between species (predator and prey) that is part of nature, but also to the more gratuitous violence that is a feature of the life of most social animals. It is not that we only do evil. Empathy and compassion are as natural to us as are fear and aggression. The problem is that fear lies just beneath the surface of human interaction, and it can overwhelm all else.

Daniel Goleman calls this an amygdala hijack. "Emotions make us pay attention right now – this is urgent – and give us an immediate action plan without having to think twice. The emotional component evolved very early: Do I eat it, or does it eat me?" Impulsive action is often destructive because it is undertaken without thought of consequences. That is why Maimonides argued that many of the laws of the Torah constitute a training in virtue by making us think before we act.1

So the Torah tells us that naturally we are neither good nor bad but have the capacity for both. We have a natural inclination to empathy and sympathy, but we have an even stronger instinct for fear that leads to violence. That is why, in the move from Adam to Noah, the Torah shifts from nature to covenant, from tov to brit, from power to the moral limits of power. Genes are not enough. We also need the moral law.

1Hilkhot Temurah 4:13.

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Rabbi Benjamin Yudin

Mastery of the Yid Over the ID

The Kabalists answer the basic question of why Hashem created the world with the comforting response of "tevah hatov l'heitiv - the nature of the Good One is to bestow goodness." Rashi (Breishis 2:4) notes that this world was created with the letter hey which has an opening at the bottom, symbolizing man's descending into oblivion if he is not successful in leading a righteous life. Moreover, we are taught that the world to come is symbolized by the letter yud, the smallest letter, proclaiming that those privileged to go there are the minority of the population. If Hashem is good, and He breathes a living soul of His essence into man, literally a chip off the magnificent spiritual block, then why did He make the world so challenging that only a minority end up succeeding and reaching the world to come?

The high failure rate in this world is further emphasized by the Mishnah (Avos perek 5) which teaches that in the ten generations from Adam to Noach the great majority of the world population did not live a noble life. Similarly, from Noach to Avraham there were again ten generations and again man failed to live up to his potential, and Avraham received the reward that was initially allocated to all of them.

The Ohr Ha-Chaim Hakadosh (Breishis 3:4), in beginning to analyze Adam's sin of eating from the eitz ha-daas, similarly asks why Hashem did not diminish the power and attraction of the yetzer harah thus making man's mastery over it easier and more manageable? His answer is that in accordance with the challenge and effort to defeat the yetzer harah is the reward and benefit for both this world and the world to come. He cites the Mishnah (Avos 5:26) which states, "in accordance with the exertion is the reward."

The Ramchal (Da'as Tvunos 18) teaches that the good which Hashem extends to man is the opportunity to connect with and benefit from the Shechina - the Divine. To capitalize on this opportunity one must fulfill the six hundred and eleventh commandment (Devorim 28:9) of "v'holachto biderachav - walking in His ways." Man is to emulate Hashem who is all giving and perform acts of kindness and spirituality.

Were man to receive a reward without performing and accomplishing to earn it, the reward would be "Na'amah d'kisufah - bread of shame", i.e. degrading and debasing. Perhaps this is what our Rabbis are teaching when they state (Shabbos 127a), "receiving guests is greater than greeting the Divine Presence", for it is better to have a relationship with Hashem in a manner of giving, and thereby emulating His exalted character, than to encounter Him by simply being the recipient.

What emerges is the realization that meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in this world are, as stated by the introductory words of Mesilas Yesharim, comprised of overcoming the obstacles and challenges of the evil inclination. Freud taught that man is inherently bad and possesses an ID which yearns for negativity; Judaism says man possesses a yid - a holy Divine image that enables him to overcome his desire for bad. Man is to emulate Hashem, and as His nature is to do good so too must man use his free will to overcome the desire to do bad and do good instead.

Our initial question assumed that tests and challenges are not really good for man. However, the Ramban in his commentary on the akeida (Breishis

22:1) teaches that Hashem only tests those that can pass the test. Avraham became the great father of our nation because he was tested with ten tests through which he became elevated and actualized his potential. Each individual as well is to be cognizant of the fact that they possess a unique mission and potential and a unique array of challenges. Our challenges are Hashem's way of offering us His l'heitiv - His ultimate goodness, which is the opportunity to grow and earn the best of this world and the next. Indeed, the Ohr Ha-chaim cited earlier ends his treatment of this most important concept with the words "praiseworthy is the people for whom this is so". It is all a matter of perspective.

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The end of all flesh has come before Me. (6:13)

Simply, this means that the immorality of this generation had exceeded all boundaries. A people that behave so immorally, who are filled with such corruption, have forfeited their right to existence. Their end must come. Hashem told Noach to build an Ark and take his time doing it, so that maybe the people would repent, thereby averting the decree issued against them. The Kli Yakar interprets this statement with a homiletic twist. "The end of all flesh has come before Me": When is there an end to all flesh? This refers to the yom ha'missah, day of death, when the immortal soul severs its relationship with its temporary residence, the body, and the person (as we know him) dies. Hashem said to Noach, "The yom ha'missah has come before Me with a complaint. It laments the fact that people no longer either remember or care about the meaning of death. They have lost all sight of the fact that life is temporal. No one lives forever. I countered, 'How do you know that people have forgotten about You?' The yom ha'missah replied, 'For the land is filled with corruption. Is it possible that someone who is acutely aware that he is going to die (and answer for his way of life) would be so corrupt? Apparently, they have lost sight of reality.'"

Remembering that he is mortal is the last frontier for salvation for the individual. Realizing that one is not here forever is considered by Chazal the last and most potent argument for preventing him from abdicating and falling prey to the wiles of the yetzer hora, evil-inclination. Chazal teach that when an individual senses the yetzer hora taking the leading edge over him, he should study Torah. If this is not successful in overpowering the cunning of the evil-inclination, he should recite Shema Yisrael.

If this, too, does not resolve his dilemma, he should remind himself of his own mortality. The realization that he will die and have to answer for his behavior should be sufficient deterrent from sin. If it is not - then he is at the same point of no return reached by the dor hamabul, generation of the Flood.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, was wont to give greater meaning to the concept of yazkir lo yom ha'missah, "Let him bring to mind the day of death," with the following incident: The Maggid was visiting America on one of his many trips. At the time, he was the guest of a wealthy family that supported many Torah causes. He was taking a "tour" of the house when he came to a room which surprisingly, did not have a mezuzah on its doorpost. (Perhaps the owner thought that since the room served a secular purpose, it did not require a mezuzah). Lying on the table situated in the middle of the room was a large coffee table size book, which was more like an album, dedicated to the life of President John F. Kennedy, one of America's most beloved leaders, who was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. He was a young man with a wonderful future, whose life had been cut short by an assassin's bullet.

In the first picture, one saw a smiling President Kennedy getting into his open presidential limousine. He seemed like he did not have a care in the world. The whole world seemed to be smiling with him. The second picture showed the crowds of well-wishers and spectators lining the route that his car was taking. The third picture showed the President and the First Lady in the car, surrounded by his secret service. The fourth picture showed the President falling over, the victim of a shot to the head. The next few pictures depicted the scene of the tragedy: the ambulance rushing to the hospital; the doctors meeting the ambulance; the doctors rushing to surgery; the sad-faced surgeon leaving the operating room; and then, the last picture: his grave.

As Rav Sholom stared at the pictures, Chazal's statement, yazkir lo yom ha'missah, came to mind. A person must realize and internalize the thought that at any moment his life could change, and even worse - it could, chas v'shalom, Heaven forbid, end. It is all in the pictures. A few snapshots depict the ultimate prestige, the epitome of happiness, and just a few pictures later, one sees the bitter end. From the limousine to the grave in a few snapshots; a few hours that changed the life of a young president on top of the world, and, incidentally, also changed the course of the world.

Rav Sholom now adds his observation. If a person would sense that he could very well die the very next day, that tonight would be his last Maariv, evening prayer; would he daven in the same manner that he has during the past years? Do we ever think that tonight could be our last Maariv, our last Krias Shema?

How many spouses have bemoaned not saying "goodbye" with more feeling when their husbands/wives left for the day - not to return? How many of us "planned" on settling disputes, only to discover that it is too late, the Malach HaMaves, Angel of Death, settled it for us? We read this and say, "Tomorrow, I will change," but what if there is no tomorrow?

All of the foolishness that man wrought throughout life can be directly attributed to a lack of awareness conveying the yom ha'missah. This does not suggest that one be morbid and walk around depressed all day, thinking that he might die at any moment - but he should have a balanced approach.

Haran died in the lifetime of Terach his father. (11:28)

Haran was the brother of Avraham Avinu. Very little is written about him, because he did not live very long, and, for all intents and purposes, he did not seem to have achieved very much. This is the first mistake. When we judge a person's life accomplishments, we must do it with a lens that sees far beyond our first impression.

Also, we must take into consideration that Hashem rewards every person in accordance with his own personal barometer of values. Thus, if a person devotes his life to material pursuits, the chances are that his reward will be material in nature. A person whose overriding concern has been his spiritual dimension will be rewarded in kind. He might be poor and have very little material bounty to speak of, but his spiritual satisfaction and pleasure are immense; thus, it is all worth the effort amid what seem to be deprivations.

This idea may be noted from the life of Haran. Indeed, Haran went down in history as the first person to die Al Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify Hashem's Name. His brother, Avraham, was teaching the world about monotheism, and Haran became a believer - indeed, originally, one of the very few who took Avraham's rhetoric to heart. We all know the story. Avraham battered all of the idols of his father, Terach, and placed the hammer in the hand of the largest idol. When Terach saw the destruction, he asked his son what had occurred. Avraham explained that a dispute had broken out among the idols and the biggest one settled it in the way that he knew best. Terach knew that his son was making jest, since how can an idol made by man have power? On the other hand, such talk could hurt the idol business. Avraham might have been his son, but business was business!

Terach proceeded to King Nimrod, who immediately decided to put Avraham to a test. He was going to throw Avraham into a fiery cauldron. If his G-d would protect him, then he would emerge unscathed. Otherwise, he would receive his just punishment for shattering the idols. As we all know, our Patriarch materialized from the flames unharmed. His brother, Haran, was a spectator to this sanctification of Hashem's Name. When he saw his brother's miraculous deliverance from certain death, he became spiritually energized and declared that he, too, believed in Hashem. Nimrod said, "Fine, you can also take the fire test." Haran was not so lucky. His faith was superficial and not worthy of a miracle. Nonetheless, he died as a result of his declaration of faith in Hashem. He is, therefore, the first person to give up his life to sanctify the Name of the Almighty.

Clearly, this is an impressive distinction, an item to be listed on his spiritual resume, but did he receive any reward for this act of faith (superficial faith, but faith, no less)? The Chasam Sofer, zl, explains that Haran, indeed, received a unique reward. He was the progenitor of all our nation's Matriarchs! His daughter, Yiskah, was actually Sarah Imeinu. His daughter, Milkah, married Nachor, who together were the grandparents of Rivkah Imeinu. Rivkah had an older brother, named Lavan, who had four daughters, two of whom were Rachel Imeinu and Leah Imeinu, and the other two were Bilhah and Zilpah, the mothers of some of the Shevatim. Haran had a son, named Lot, who, in a manner which left much to be desired, was the progenitor of Rus, who married Boaz and became the progenitress of Malchus Bais David, the Davidic dynasty; and Naamah, who married Shlomo Hamelech, and was the mother of his son and successor, Rechavam.

The lesson to be derived from here is that Hashem rewards those who sanctify His Name. The reward is such that one sees the value of his dedication through even greater sanctification of Hashem's Name. Haran gave his life. In return, he received a reward of generations of countless committed Jews whose *raison d'etre* is the sanctification of Hashem's Name.

Horav Shlomo Levenstein, Shlita, relates that he was menachem avel, visited the mourner's home, of a family whose father had passed away leaving over sons who were distinguished Torah scholars and leaders in various communities. The deceased had been a simple Jew, deeply committed to Torah observance. Indeed, his commitment to Torah and mitzvos was paramount in his life. Clearly, this was indicative by the education which his sons received and the choices that they made for their vocations.

Nonetheless, Rav Levenstein felt that for a man to have had such Torah nachas, satisfaction, from his offspring, he must have had exceedingly great merit. He asked his sons about their father's life. Perhaps he could garner some clue to the source of this nachas.

"Our father was from Haifa. In his early years, he had stock in the company which was the forerunner of Egged Bus Company. The economic situation in the country was extremely challenging. People did not have enough to eat. He was fortunate to have an income from his stock. This went on until someone raised the question concerning the appropriateness of having stock in a Jewish cooperative company that was actively being mechalleh Shabbos, desecrating Shabbos. He presented the question to Rav Klein who was Rav in Haifa. The Rav instructed him to go to Bnei Brak and ask the Chazon Ish.

"Father spent a good part of the day traveling to Bnei Brak, and he was finally allowed into the room of the Chazon Ish. The sage was in bed due to his poor health. Our father asked the question; the Chazon Ish replied: 'Assur, prohibited,' and that was it. Our father immediately returned home, sold his stock and began job hunting.

"Six months elapsed with no luck. We no longer had any money in the bank. His father-in-law helped whenever he could. This, too, did not last. He had various odd jobs that came along, but never for very long. Finally, our father found steady work as a soap salesman. He walked around all day with a sack filled with soap slung over his shoulder, as he went door to door, climbing long flights of stairs, to sell his soap. It was difficult work- and humiliating - to boot, but it kept food on the table.

"One day, Father was walking down the street carrying the heavy sack on his shoulder, when he met Horav Menachem Tzvi Berlin, Shlita, Rosh Yeshivah Rabbeinu Chaim Ozer, who commented to him, "You are not carrying a sack of soap on your shoulder. You are carrying Shabbos on your shoulder!" This gave our father tremendous chizuk, encouragement (as it should inspire the readers as well).

"Father purchased an old Egged bus, which he converted into a delivery truck for hauling paper. His next venture was a small store where he sold frozen vegetables. This business lasted until the Shemittah, Sabbatical year (when one abstains from working his field, allowing the produce of the land to be considered ownerless), which raised numerous halachic questions concerning the origin of the produce he was purchasing. He sold that business, and he went to work for a yeshivah as its handyman.

"Father worked hard his entire life. Well into his eighties he would work from early morning until evening. He was extremely proud of the many endeavors he had given up in order to remain a committed Jew. Once, he met a friend from his old days as an Egged bus driver. The friend was surprised that our father was still putting in a whole day's work. 'Imagine, if you would not have left your position, you could be like the rest of us, with a comfortable pension, a government apartment, a car. Instead, you are working day and night - when you should be relaxing.'

"Father heard this, he immediately made an about-face and returned to the yeshivah where he worked. He went over to the first student that he saw, and, in an excited voice, said to him, 'What does he (pointing to his friend outside) have? A car? A pension? An apartment? Does any of that compare to what I have? I established an entire generation! I made a firm commitment to the future of our People! That is what I have!'"

This was all the result of his overarching commitment to sanctifying Hashem's Name, relinquishing wealth and opportunity for Torah and mitzvos. Hashem reimbursed him in kind. He indicated that there was more to life than a few dollars, a car, and an apartment. He wanted to be immortalized by generations of Torah observant progeny. Hashem granted him his wish.

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Rulings of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

One of our most revered and venerable Torah sages of this last century was Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zatzal, of Jerusalem, Israel. Members of the Torah community in Eretz Yisroel did not make a move without consulting his prodigious Torah knowledge and sagacious advice. He was recognized as a leading sage in both the Chareidi and Chardal Torah communities. Rav Shlomo Zalman zt"l passed away on February 20, 1995 and the loss of such a Gadol was immeasurable. The loss to American Jewry, however, is perhaps more profound, in that we were not even fortunate enough, due to the language barrier, to have had access to his rulings and statements. The following is a short compilation of some of the rulings that were issued by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman zatzal, a few years before his passing. These rulings only comprise the actual halachic rulings that were issued. The text of the rulings do not include the extraordinarily profound halachic thought processes that characterized Rav

Shlomo Zalman's method of halacha. To glimpse a taste of that, the reader is referred to the Hebrew responsa Sefer entitled "Minchas Shlomo." The rulings found below were culled from the prestigious Torah journal "Mevakshai Torah" printed in Jerusalem, Israel [POB 41170, Jerusalem, Israel]. The rulings (in the original Hebrew) were reviewed by Rav Shlomo Zalman's son. Between each section of rulings, a brief overview of that particular section was included by this author to provide a frame of reference for the reader.

THE LAWS OF WAKING UP IN THE MORNING

The Shulchan Aruch begins with the statement that we must arise like a lion to serve our Creator. This statement serves as a call to arms of sorts, imbuing the observant Jew with the motivation to face his evil inclination head on. For man's ultimate purpose is to serve G-D in every way possible – with all our "heart, might, and soul." This can be realized in a number of ways, whether it be by developing our personal sensitivities to where we should pray, and what we should avoid doing before we pray, or by heightening our sense of the immeasurable loss incurred by the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash by not even being awakened by music. The laws below deal with the halachos that apply when we first awaken in the morning. 1] One should not daven next to Netilas Yadayim water (See Shaarei Teshuvah 4:8) [On account of the impurity]. 2] One should not be awakened with music [A tape or radio on a timer] nor a musical alarm clock [See Ramah 560:3 - the reason is on account of the destruction of the Temple we should avoid all music not associated with a Mitzvah]. 3] If no one else makes his bed he may do so before davening. If however, someone else will make his bed for him he may not do so before davening. 4] If one did not sleep during the night, and he needs to wash his hands there is no need to do it at the exact point of dawn. Rather, before he leaves to daven – he should wash his hands. 5] It is prohibited to wash one's body with soap before davening, even if it will cause him Bittul Torah. The reason is so that others will not learn from his actions. 6] Since, in our times everyone drinks tea with sugar, it is permitted to drink tea with sugar before davening and there is no problem of Yuhra (haughtiness in taking care of our needs before we thank G-D). II. THE LAWS OF INTENT WHEN PRONOUNCING HASHEM'S NAMES There is a little known halacha that is found in the Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chaim Siman 5) that we are required to have certain ideas in mind when we pronounce the names of G-D. When we pronounce the name "Ado-shem" we must think that He is Master of all and that He was, is and always will be. When we pronounce the word "Elokainu" we must have in mind that He is our G-D and that He is All-Powerful, or Omnipotent. Rabbi Auerbach zt"l explains the exact details of this Halacha.

7] One may rely on the opinion of the Aishel Avrohom who writes that a person should state in the morning that the intention he has for all Divine Names that he recites that day is like it is found in the Siddurim. The whole issue of the intentions when pronouncing the Divine Names is not found in the Gemorah, and therefore one may be lenient. It is enough to have in mind that this is the name of the Master of the world and it is known that Rabbi S MiKinson had the practice of davening like a one day old child. The meaning of this is that he prayed, but prayed to the Master of the World. Even though it is not recommended to argue with the Shulchan Aruch, the Vilna Gaon has already written that one does not have to have the intentions that the Shulchan Aruch writes. 8] This statement in the beginning of the day [that the Aishel Avrohom writes] is ineffective for the first verse in Shma, nor does it work for the first bracha in Shmoneh Esreh.

III. THE LAWS OF BIRCHAS HATORAH The concept of reciting a blessing has three aspects to it. The first is the active recognition of G-D's presence in every facet of our life cycle, both the holy and the mundane. The expression of gratitude for what Hashem has given us is a second aspect that is achieved through the rubric of blessings. The third aspect, however, of reciting blessings is the qualitative changes that it brings about within ourselves. Expressing gratitude to Hashem transforms us into people that appreciate what has been done for us, even by others. It imbues us with G-dly qualities of goodness which we are commanded to develop. The majority of blessings are of rabbinic origin. The Rabbis took their cue from the two areas of blessings that are of divine origin – grace after meals and the laws of Birchas HaTorah – the blessings that we recite before we study Torah. The laws of this blessing are somewhat intricate. Below we find some of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's rulings on the details of this blessing. 9] If one is in doubt as to whether he had recited Birchas Ha Torah, he may learn even before he finds someone else who can be Motzi him. 10] Those that are careful in Mitzvos recite Birchas HaTorah whenever they sleep three hours in the daytime. 11] One that went to sleep before sunset and woke up after the stars came out does not need to recite Birchas HaTorah again, because when he said it in the morning he had in mind until the next day.

IV. THE LAWS OF PUTTING ON TEFILLIN THE TEFILLIN ARE AN ETERNAL SIGN GIVEN TO US BY G-D HIMSELF. Consequently, the Mitzvah of putting on Tefillin is a very precious one. Indeed the Rav Shulchan Aruch (37:1) writes that there is no greater Mitzvah in the Torah, as it is equated with the fulfillment of all

the other Mitzvos in the Torah combined. The exact details of this Mitzvah were handed down by Moses at Mount Sinai and were transmitted mouth to mouth down the generations. Below we find Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's answers to questions on the intricate laws of Tefillin.

12] An ambidextrous person who puts on Tefillin on both hands should not do it (i.e. have them both on) at the same time because it appears as if he is adding to the Torah.

13] The covering for the Tefillin Shel Yad is not considered a covering for the purpose of fulfilling "For you a sign but not for others a sign."

14] Even though there are those that wrote that the cover on the Tefillin Shel Yad is like an addition to the Tefillin and it is proper to remove it, this is not an obligation. The rubber band that attaches the yud to the Tefillin, however, is not considered an addition. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zatzal's minhag was to remove the cover of the Tefillin Shel Yad before the Brocha and to return it after he donned the Tefillin Shel Yad. 15] One who touches his arm while putting on Tefillin does not need to wash his hands. [Rabbi Auerbach is arguing with a ruling issued by Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch in a published responsa.] 16] If someone's hair is wet this is not considered a Chatzitz for the Tefillin Shel Rosh. 17] One may place Parprin oil on the Tefillin Shel Rosh to ward off moisture and sweat. This is not considered a Chatzitz because it gets absorbed into the Tefillin leather. 18] The Mishna Brura 27:14 cites an argument of the Achronim whether one should be careful regarding whether the Tefillin strap can be chotzetz between the Tefillin box and the flesh. The opinion of the Revid HaZahav is that is not considered a Chatzitz, because it is considered Min BeMino, of the same type; while the Levushai Sarad's opinion is that one should be stringent. Even though it should be considered Min BeMino, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zatzal explained that since the holiness of the Tefillin Box is greater than that of the straps it is not to be considered Min BeMino. 19] It is permitted to sit down on a bench that has tefillin straps laying on it.

V. THE LAWS OF DAVENING VASIKIN

In the times of the Mishna there were a group of people who observed Mitzvos most meticulously. These people were known as "the Vasikin" and performed every Mitzvah at the first opportunity. Those that daven Vasikin begin their Shmoneh Esreh at the crack of dawn. It is said that if one davens Vasikin properly on a particular day, no harm can befall the person on that day. In our times as well there are many people (particularly in Eretz Yisroel) that pray Vasikin.

20] It is preferable for a Yeshiva student to pray in Yeshiva rather than to pray Vasikin, even though Vasikin is a great thing as its name attests to. The reason is that the Yeshiva student must be careful with the Sedorim, learning and prayer schedules, of the Yeshiva. 21] If one has a custom to pray Vasikin every day and he wishes to stop this custom, he must make a special hataras nedarim in front of three people – the hataras nedarim he makes on erev Rosh HaShana is not sufficient. 22] However, one who has a custom to pray Vasikin just one day a week and wishes to stop this custom, may rely upon the Hataras Nedarim of Erev Rosh HaShana. 23] One who davens each day at a set Minyan and it happens that he was awake at sunrise, does not have to recite Shma then, rather he reads it with the brachos in his regular manner.

VI. THE LAWS OF PSUKEI DEZIMRA The Talmud (Brachos 32a) tells us that one should not approach G-D for personal requests without first having sung praises to the Creator of the World. Psukei DeZimra, or literally, "Verses of Praise" composed by King David himself, was placed in the morning service in order to address this issue. Psukei DeZimra, however, is an entity separate and apart from the Shacharis service, which technically begins with the blessing of Yotzer Ohr. According to the Kabbalists it is filled with wonderful mystical significance. How its unique identity correlates to Shacharis and other aspects of davening is of paramount significance and is the subject of the next few responsas. 24] One whose custom in Baruch SheAmar is to say the word "Pi" should continue in his custom. 25] If one is davening Psukei DeZimra and if he does not recite it quickly he will miss Tefillah BeTzibbur, it is preferable to skip some and say fewer of them with greater Kavanah, because few with kavanah are better than many without Kavanah. 26] One who is reciting Psukei DeZimra and he hears a Kaddish or a Kedusha from another Minyan should preferably not stop to respond since this distracts him from having the necessary intent for Psukei DeZimrah. This is preferable, however, he does have the option of answering if he wants to. 28] One who is reciting Psukei DeZimra and the Shliach Tzibbur has already reached Kaddish and Borchu should have in mind that he does not wish to be Yotze with this Borchu. Since Borchu is the beginning of the bracha "Yotzeh Ohr" he can no longer continue saying Psukai DeZimrah. 29] It is prohibited to omit from Psukei DeZimra if it is possible to daven properly afterward in a different Minyan, unless he feels he can daven better in this minyan. Similarly, if he is rushing for purposes of his parnassa, daily occupation, he may omit. VII. THE LAWS OF KADDISH There is perhaps no other prayer in the Jewish siddur which better encapsulates Israel's mission and ultimate purpose – the sanctification of G-D's name. It is this prayer when recited by a relative of a deceased which gives the greatest benefit to the soul of the

deceased. It is thus most appropriate and no wonder, that we treat the Kaddish with the greatest respect possible.

30] One who davens in a large place where one cannot hear the Kaddish from where he is standing is nonetheless forbidden to speak, as this is considered a bizayon, disrespectful to speak in the middle of the recitation of Kaddish.

VIII. THE LAWS OF RECITING THE SHMAH

The Shma, is the formulation in which we articulate twice daily our expression of the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. In its essence, it also expresses the creed of a Jew. In the first statement, we express G- D's Oneness and Unity. "Hear oh Israel, Hashem is our G-d. Hashem is One. In these six Hebrew words lies the kernel of Judaism's entire philosophical oeuvre. G-D is One. This has implications. What are they and what does this Oneness imply? The implications are in the paragraphs that follow. The first paragraph tells us how exactly to serve Him – with heart, might and soul. The Oneness implies that He is the only source of goodness, and that we should strive to be like Him. The Halachic interaction of this prayer with other sections of davening is the topic of the next few rulings by Rabbi Auerbach zatzal.

31] If one remembered in the middle of Yotzer Ohr that he did not say Yishtabach, he lost out on the bracha and cannot go back and recite it. 32] If one generally recites the Krias Shmah slowly and carefully and cannot reach the Shmoneh Esreh with the congregation, one should read the Shmah before Davening slowly and carefully and when reciting the Shmah during davening he may do so quickly. One should not, however, just say the blessings of the Shmah during the actual davening and leave out the Shmah itself.

33] One who begins Krias Shmah after the Shliach Tzibbur has already recited "Hashem Elokaichem Emes" does not have to say "Kel Melech Neeman" before the first posuk, as this is not considered BeYachid.

34] If someone awoke on Tisha BeAv at a late hour, even though the time for saying Krias Shmah has passed, he is permitted to recite the Shmah without its blessings even though it is considered as if he is merely reading in the Torah.

IX. THE LAWS OF TEFILLAH BETZIBBUR

The Talmud tells us that one should always attempt to pray with the community. The benefits are manifold- the prayers are more efficacious, it shows community-mindedness, and indeed, the bundling of prayers together allows the prayers of the not-so-righteous to enter before G-D as well. When we pray alone, the prayers are presented to G-D through an intermediary, when we pray together, G-D Himself accepts it.

Indeed, the Shulchan Aruch rules that if one has a synagogue in his town and he does not enter it, he is labelled a Rasha, an evildoer. The exact details of Tefillah BeTzibbur are what lie in the next few rulings by Rabbi Auerbach zatzal. 35] The parameters of Tefillah BeTzibbur are: to begin exactly at the same time as the Shliach Tzibbur when he recites the blessing of Avos. However, if he began after this it is still considered Tefillah BeTzibbur. 36] One who prays in a different room (such as the women's section) is considered as if he is davening with the congregation. However, it is not considered 100% with the congregation and the Tefillah BeTzibbur is somewhat deficient. 37] Even according to the Rashba (who holds that in the first blessing of Shmoneh Esreh it is forbidden to have a hefsek in thought even in between the words) if one is still in the middle of this first brocha and the Shliach Tzibbur has reached the recitation of Kedusha, one remains silent and remains attentive to the Kedusha with the Shliach Tzibbur. 38] If one is reciting Shmoneh Esreh and the Shliach Tzibbur begins the recitation of Kedusha there is no need for the person to finish up to Atta Kadosh, rather, he remains silent until the Shliach Tzibbur finishes Kedushah. 39] If one is davening together with the Shliach Tzibbur, even though some have written that he says Atta Kadosh, he should rather say Ledor VaDor and follow what the Shliach Tzibbur is saying. 40] If one is not davening in a minyan, it is preferable to daven at the time that the Minyan is davening rather than in the Shul when there is no Minyan.

X. VARIOUS LAWS IN SHMONEH ESREH

The Shmoneh Esreh, of which the text and its themes were formulated by the Anshei Knesses Gedolah, is the climax of the morning service. Everything until now led up to this where we stand before G-D and list off our needs. We extol, we thank, and we request. In this section there is protocol; where we can walk, what we can wear, and what we do when we forget crucial sections. In the next few rulings we find numerous insights into the halachic protocols. 41] A Shtender is not considered a separation regarding the law that one cannot walk next to someone who is davening. The reason is that it does not have the area of 4 by 4. 42] One is permitted to daven while wearing a scarf and this is not considered a lack of kavod, respect, in davening. 43] It is not proper to pray with ones jacket placed over his shoulders (i.e. with his arms not in the sleeves of the jacket), for if he were to stand before a nobleman he would not stand thus. 44] When Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zatzal was asked about the Rashba (who holds that in the first bracha of Shmoneh Esreh it is forbidden to have a hefsek in thought at all even in between the words), he responded, "Who can possibly follow this?" 45] One who is in the middle of the Bracha of Barech Alainu and forgot to

mention Vesain tal umatar but already said Baruch Atta Hashem, should complete the bracha and say vetain tal umattar in between the brachos. He should not say "Lamdaini Chukecha" and begin again from the beginning of the bracha. 46] In the bracha of Shmah Koleinu it is forbidden to answer "Amein Yehe shmai Rabbah" [as some would have it] because this is not an individual request but rather a request for the honor of heaven. 47] One who forgot Yaaleh Veyavoh and returns to daven again does not have to daven with the congregation since he has already fulfilled this requirement with his first Tefillah. Similarly, on Shabbos when he forgets Retzai in Birkas HaMazon his first brachos count toward the required hundred brachos of the day. 48] On Shmini Atzeres, if one is in doubt as to whether he said "BeYom Shmini Atzeres" or "BeChag HaSukkos" in yaaleh veyavah, he does not have to repeat it again. The reason is that even though he has been saying BeChag HaSukkas for the past 7 days, it has not been for 30 days and he is not considered accustomed to saying it that way. 49] One whose custom is to say Sim Shalom during the Mincha Shmaneh Esreh cannot change to the shorter Shalom Rav in order to hear kedusha, since this is the nusach of his Tefillah. 50] If one forgot to say the word "Shalom" in the conclusion of the bracha of Sim Shalom he must go back to "Retzai" as the last three brachos of Shmaneh Esreh are considered as one. 51] One who forgot to say Yaaleh VeYavah but remembered it in Elokai Netzor may not respond to Kaddish or Kedusha (as he would normally when he is in Elokai Netzor) rather he should be silent and remain attentive for it is as if he is in the middle of Retzai. 52] If one says the pasuk of "Yehei u leratzon imrei fi" before Elokai Netzor the only verses that he should respond to in Kedusha are Kaddish and Barchu. Other verses should not be said then. 53] One who is waiting to take his three steps back for the person who is praying behind him should ideally wait until that person finishes his bowings as well, for the Shechina is still before him. 54] One who has completed his Shmoneh Esreh but has not taken his three steps back yet – may join with the congregation in reciting Tehillim.

XI. THE LAWS OF BIRCHAS KOHANIM

The Kohanim, the priests of a nation of priests are enjoined to bless the nation of priests by the Torah. This too has a protocol; one for the Kohanim and for the nation receiving their blessing. What should we be doing while they recite their blessings?

55] One who, while reciting the Shmoneh Esreh, is standing in a place where the Kohanim will Duchen may pass by someone who is in the middle of his Shmoneh Esreh in order that the Kohanim may be able to stand in their place. 56] If one cannot wash his hands before the blessing of the Kohanim because he cannot step backward, he may, if he has no other option, wash his hands before Davening, and make sure that he guards his hands carefully that they not become impure. Even though the Achronim have written not to do so, in this situation where there is no other recourse and he knows that he can maintain the purity of his hands – we may be lenient. 57] One who is standing in the middle of Shmoneh Esreh and the Shliach Tzibbur has reached Birchas Kohanim, should remain silent and be attentive to their blessing. This is because it is the opinion of the Charaidim that there is a positive Mitzvah incumbent upon Bnai Yisrael, Jews, that they be blessed. Even without this it would be permitted to stop because he wishes to be blessed with Birchas Kohanim. 58] One who is davening his silent Shmaneh Esreh while the Shliach Tzibbur is davening his repetition of the Shmoneh Esreh (and the one davening the personal Shmoneh Esreh is keeping up with the Shliach Tzibbur) should answer A men to the brachos of the Kohanim (but not to the bracha that the Kohanim make Asher Kid shanu BeMitzvosav etc.) 59] Those that have the custom to recite the blessings of the Kohanim silently so that just the Kohanim and not the congregation will hear are mistaken, and should recite them aloud.

XII. THE LAWS FROM SHMONEH ESREH UNTIL THE END OF DAVENING

Here are listed other rulings of Rabbi Auerbach that take us through the end of davening, and into other aspects of davening in a shul. We begin with the laws of Tachanun, literally, "supplication." Jewish history, marred as it was with blood, tears and tragedy, gave rise to this section of davening. Below we find the halachic aspects of its recitation. Other rulings that follow it give details of how the final sections of the Tefillah interact with previous parts.

60] One who is Davening in a Minyan and the congregation reached the thirteen attributes, yet he as yet did not, must stop and recite them and then go back to where he left off.

61] If one is unable to recite the entire Tachanun of Monday and Thursday carefully, it is preferable to say less of it but more carefully, as quality is better than quantity. 62] Regarding a shul in which a Bris has taken place, all minyanim that are praying after the Bris has been performed recite Tachanun. 63] One who is reciting Tachanun and the congregation has already reached the thirteen attributes should join up with them, and not say them privately with the Taamim. 64] One who receives an Aliyah in a place with a different pronunciation than his own, that is Sephardic or Yemenite, should say the Brachos with the pronunciation practiced at that place. 65] One who prays with a Sephardic pronunciation may read the Torah with an Askenazic pronunciation to an Ashkenazic congregation. For Parshas Zachar, however, he should hear it specifically in

a Sephardic pronunciation. 66] If one is in the middle of Shmoneh Esreh and the congregation is up to the reading of the Torah, it is prohibited to stop his prayer in order to listen to the reading. This is too great a Hefsek and it is inappropriate to interrupt his Tefillah. He also does not have to make it up later by hearing the reading elsewhere unless he wishes to on account of Hiddur Mitzvah, performing a Mitzvah in the most beautiful manner. 67] One who began to say LaM'natzayach one day that this Mizmor is not said, should stop and not continue the Mizmor even though he already began the posuk Yaancha Hashem BeYom Tzara. 68] One who prays Nusach Ashkenaz and already recited the Alainu after UVah LeTzion and is now saying Ain KeElokainu while the congregation (which is Nusach Sefard) is reciting the Alainu, does not have to stop and say Alainu with the congregation since he is involved in his prayer. However, ideally, he should be careful to pray just as the congregation is praying.

XIII. THE LAWS OF APPOINTING A SHOMER FOR DAVENING

The Talmud informs us of the prohibition of eating (indeed, there is even a prohibition of learning Torah) within one half of an hour of the time to recite the Krias Shma of night. The concern, of course, is that perhaps we will continue in our meal (or our studying) and forget to recite it. It is unfortunate that this concern is more applicable today than ever before. The Mishna Brurah, however, provides us with an interesting footnote to this halacha. In Orech Chaim 235:17, he quotes the opinion of the Achronim that if he appoints a person who is not learning to remind him to recite the Shmah, it is permitted. This person is called a Shomer. 69] Placing a sign on one's clothing (such as switching his watch to his other hand) in order to remind oneself to Daven is not considered equivalent to appointing a Shomer (person who will remind one to daven), however, setting a watch or clock alarm that will surely remind him is considered equivalent. 70] In a Yeshiva where they eat before Maariv there is no need to appoint a Shomer since everyone reminds each other and the time for Davening is well established. However, one who does not pray with regularity at the Yeshiva must appoint a Shomer.

XIV. THE LAWS OF MINCHAH AND MAARIV

Just as davening Shacharis with a minyan is important, so too is davening Mincha and Maariv with a Minyan most important. Among many Yeshivos and some shuls, the custom at Mincha has become prevalent for the reader to recite a half Shmoneh Esreh (i.e. to say aloud until Kedusha and then everyone begins their personal Shmoneh Esreh silently while the reader merely continues silently). Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zatzal recommended against this practice (at least in a shul setting). Below we find two rulings about the Shmoneh Esreh for Mincha and Maariv.

71] It is better to say a Mincha with a full Shmoneh Esreh even if the repetition of it will be after Shkiyah (sundown) than to say a half Shmoneh Esreh. 72] Even though there is an opinion that davening at the same time as the Shliach Tzibbur's repetition is still considered Tefillah BeTzibbur, this does not work for one who is davening Maariv when the Shliach Tzibbur is davening Minchah. For this is prayer of the day and the other is prayer of the night. The fact is that even Kaddish Tiskabel of the evening should not be said for the day prayer, but the custom is not like this. It is the author's hope that presenting this small glimpse of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zatzal's rulings will motivate the reader to take a fresh look at some of the halachos discussed herein. We hope that the reader will perhaps have the opportunity to delve further into the halachic issues discussed with his or her Rabbi, in the actual sources themselves. The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com

The author would like to note that this article was compiled on the wifi equipped plane trip from New York to Arizona on the occasion of the wedding of Effie Loffman to Leoni Zilcha. Mazal Tov!

THE TANACH STUDY CENTER www.tanach.org

In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag

Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT NOACH

The **Mabul** (the Flood) and **Migdal Bavel** (the Tower of Babel) are undoubtedly the two primary stories in this week's Parsha. However, each of these two stories is preceded by a list of genealogies that appear to be rather irrelevant.

Furthermore, at the conclusion of Parshat Noach (see 11:10-25) we find yet another set of genealogies (that introduces the story of Avraham Avinu).

In this week's shiur, we explain how these 'sifrei toladot' (lists of genealogies) create a 'framework' for Sefer Breishit and can help us better understand how these stories (i.e the Flood and Migdal Bavel) contribute to its overall theme.

INTRODUCTION

In our introductory shiur on Sefer Breishit, we discussed the methodology that we employ to uncover the primary theme of each sefer. We begin our shiur with a quick review of those basic steps:

- 1) To identify the primary topic of each 'parshia'
- 2) To group the titles of these 'parshiot' into units that share a more common topic. [Each of these units could be considered as 'chapters' of the book.]
- 3) To group these 'chapter' divisions into larger units that share a common topic or theme [similar to 'sections' of a book].
- 4) To suggest an overall theme of the book, by analyzing the progression of theme from one section to the next.

In our shiur, we will show how the various sets of "toladot" in Sefer Breishit can help us apply this methodology, and can point us in a direction that may help us uncover its underlying theme.

FROM A LIST TO AN OUTLINE

In the following table, we list all of the 'parshiot' in the first seventeen chapters of Sefer Breishit, joining together only the most obvious groups of parshiot by noting their specific and then more general topics.

Study this list carefully, noting how the specific topics can easily group into more general topics:

PSUKIM	SPECIFIC TOPIC	GENERAL TOPIC
1:1-2:3	7 days of Creation	Creation of nature
2:4-3:15	the Gan Eden story	Gan Eden
3:16	Chava's punishment	Gan Eden
3:17-21	Man's punishment	Gan Eden
3:22-24	Expulsion from Gan Eden	Gan Eden
4:1-26	Cain's sin and punishment	Outside Gan Eden
5:1-31	[Toladot:] Adam->Noach	Dor Ha-mabul
5:32-6:4	Man's downfall	[pre-Mabul]
6:5-8	reason for Mabul / Hashem	[pre- Mabul]
6:9-12	reason for Mabul / Elokim	[pre-Mabul]
6:13-8:14	Punishment - the Flood	The Mabul
8:15-9:7	Leaving the Ark	[post-Mabul]
9:8-17	'Brit ha-keshet'	[post-Mabul]
9:18-29	Cham cursed/Shem blessed	[post-Mabul]
10:1-32	[Toladot:] sons of Noach	The 70 Nations
11:1-9	Builders of the Tower	Migdal Bavel
11:10-32	[Toladot:] Shem->Terach	Avraham Avinu
12:1-9	Avraham's aliya	Avraham Avinu
12:10-13:18	Lot leaves Avraham	Avraham Avinu
14:1-24	War of 4 & 5 kings	Avraham Avinu
15:1-21	Covenant/brit bein ha'btarim	Avraham Avinu
Chapter 16	Yishmael's birth	Avraham Avinu
Chapter 17	Brit mila - another covenant	Avraham Avinu

etc.[To verify this, I recommend that you review this table (and its conclusions) using a Tanach Koren.]

As you review this chart, note how the first set of major topics all relate in one form or other to God's 'Hashgacha' [providence], i.e. His intervention in the history of mankind as He punishes man (or mankind) for wayward behavior.

In fact, just about all of the stories in Chumash (prior to the arrival of Avraham Avinu) relate in some manner to the general topic of 'sin & punishment' ['sachar ve-onesh']. For example, after Creation we find the following stories:

- * Adam & Eve sin & hence are expelled from Gan Eden
- * Cain is punished for the murder of Hevel
- * Dor ha-mabul is punished for its corruption
- * 'Dor ha-plaga' is 'punished' for building the Tower

Afterward, the focus of Sefer Breishit shifts from stories of 'sin & punishment' to God's choice of Avraham Avinu - and the story of his offspring.

ENTER - 'TOLADOT'

However, within this progression of topics, we find a very interesting phenomenon. Return to the table (above) and note how each of these general topics are first introduced by a set of toladot [genealogies]. For example:

- * The **toladot** from Adam to Noach (chapter 5) introduce the story of the **Mabul** (chapters 6->9).
- * The **toladot** of Noach's children (chapter 10) introduces the story of **Migdal Bavel** (11:1-9 / the Tower of Babel).
- * The **toladot** from Shem to Terach (chapter 11) introduce the story of Avraham Avinu (chapters 12-...)

In fact, as surprising as it may sound, even the story of Gan Eden (chapters 2-3) is first introduced by toladot!

"These are the **"toladot"** of the heavens & earth..."

[See 2:4! / note the various English translations.]

Furthermore, later on in Sefer Breishit, we continue to find toladot.

Note how we later find: **toladot** of Yishmael (see 25:12); **toladot** of Yitzchak (see 25:19); **toladot** of Esav (see 36:1); & **toladot** of Yaakov (see 37:2).

The following table summarizes this pattern, and illustrates how [some sort of] "toladot" introduces each of the main topics in Sefer Breishit. As you review this table note how the first several topics all relate to 'chet ve-onesh', i.e. God's punishment of man (or mankind) for his sins, while the remaining topics relate to the story of our forefathers - the Avot!

CHAPTERS	TOPIC
=====	=====
2	Toldot shamayim va-aretz
2->4	-> Man in (and out of) Gan Eden
5	Toldot Adam to Noach
6->9	-> ha-mabul - The story of the Flood
10	Toldot Bnei Noach - Shem, Cham & Yefet
11:1-9	-> Migdal Bavel - The Tower of Babel
11	Toldot Shem until Terach
12->25	-> God's choice of Avraham Avinu
25 -35	Toldot Yitzchak - story of Yaakov & Esav
36	Toldot Esav - story Esav's children
37- 50	Toldot Yaakov - story of Yosef & his brothers

Although this pattern is rarely noticed, these **sifrei toladot** actually create a framework for the entire book of Breishit!

In this manner, the **toladot** introduce each and every story in Sefer Breishit. To explain why, we must first take a minute to explain what the word **toladot** means:

WHAT IS A TOLADA?

The word toladot stems from the Hebrew word 'vlad', a child or offspring. Therefore, 'eileh toldot' should be translated 'these are the children of...'

For example: 'eileh toldot **Adam**' (5:1) means - 'these are the **children** of Adam' - and thus introduces the story of Adam's children, i.e. Shet, Enosh, Keinan, etc. Similarly, 'eileh toldot Noach' introduces the story of Noach's **children** - Shem, Cham, and Yefet. [See Rashbam on Breishit 37:2 for a more complete explanation.]

Some of these toldot in Sefer Breishit are very short; as they simply state that the person lived, married, had children and died (e.g. the generations from Adam to Noach). Other toldot are very detailed, e.g. those

of Noach, Terach, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Nonetheless, **every** story in Sefer Breishit could be understood as a detail in the progression of these "toladot".

This explanation raises a question concerning the first instance where we find toldot - i.e. **toldot shamayim va-aretz** (see 2:4). How do the heavens and earth have 'children'?!

[Note how various English translations attempt to solve this problem when they translate this pasuk!]

The answer to this question may be quite meaningful. Recall that the first chapter of Breishit explains how God created **shamayim va-aretz** (heavens and earth) from 'nothing' (ex nihilo). Then, immediately afterward in the next chapter, we encounter the first use of toldot:

"Eileh **toldot** ha-**shamayim** ve-ha-**aretz** be-hibar'am..." (2:4).

So what does Chumash refer to as the **toladot** of **shamayim va-aretz**, i.e. what are the **children** of heaven and earth?

If we follow the progressive pattern of Sefer Breishit (as illustrated by the above table) then 'toldot shamayim va-aretz' must refer to man himself [i.e. **Adam ha-rishon**], for it is the story of his creation that immediately follows this introductory pasuk!

In other words, Adam ha'Rishon is considered the 'offspring' of shamayim va-aretz. This interpretation could help explain the significance of the pasuk that describes how God created man in **perek bet** (the first topic of this unit):

"And Hashem Elokim formed man from the dust of the **earth** and blew into his nostrils **nishmat chayim** - the breath of life" (see 2:7). This second ingredient may reflect the aspect of man which comes from (or at least returns to) heaven.

In contrast to the story of Creation in **perek aleph**, which features a clear division between **shamayim** [note the purpose of the 'rakiya' in 1:6], the special manner of God's creation of man in **perek bet** may reflect his unique ability to connect between heaven and earth.

[See Rashi on 2:5, where he explains that God created man so that he could pray for rain - in order for vegetation to grow. See also last week's shiur on Parshat Breishit.]

Similarly, the next set of **toladot** - from Adam to Noach (see chapter 5) lead immediately into the story of the Flood. Note how 9:28-29 - the psukim that conclude the Noach story, are clearly part of the same literary unit that began with the toladot in chapter 5 (i.e. they follow the same 'template').

This pattern of "toladot" that introduce stories continues all the way until the very end of Sefer Breishit. Therefore, we conclude that these sifrei toladot do more than 'keep the sefer together'; they also help develop the theme of Sefer Breishit.

We will now show how these toladot create not only a framework for Sefer Breishit; they can also help us identify its two distinct sections that create its primary theme. Let's explain:

THE TWO SECTIONS OF SEFER BREISHIT

Despite this successive nature of the **toladot** in Sefer Breishit, they clearly divide into **two** distinct sections.

- 1) God's creation of mankind (chapters 1-11)
w/ stories relating to 'sachar ve-onesh'
- 2) The story of the avot (chapters 12->50)

God's choice of Avraham's offspring to become His nation.

Even though the majority of Sefer Breishit focuses on the family of Avraham Avinu (Section **Two**), in the first eleven chapters (Section **One**), the Torah's focus is on mankind as a whole.

For example, even when Section One includes special details about Noach, it is **not** because he is designated to become a special nation - rather, it is because through Noach that mankind will be preserved. After the flood, the Torah tells us how Noach's offspring evolve into nations, and their dispersing (see chapter 10). Even though we find that Noach blesses Shem and Yefet (see 9:25-27), the concept of a **special** nation with a special covenant does not begin until the story of Avraham Avinu.

In contrast, Section **Two** (chapters 11-50) focuses on the story of **Am Yisrael** - God's special nation. In this section, Sefer Breishit is no longer **universalistic**, rather it becomes **particularistic**.

Therefore, this section begins with **toldot Shem** till **Terach** (see 11:10-24) that introduce the story of Avraham Avinu, whom God chooses in chapter 12 to become the forefather of His special nation. The remainder of Sefer Breishit explains which of Avraham's offspring are **chosen** [= 'bechira'], e.g. Yitzchak and Yaakov], and which are **rejected** [= 'dechiya'], e.g. Yishmael and Esav].

This explains why Sefer Breishit concludes precisely when this complicated **bechira** process reaches its completion - i.e. when **all** twelve sons of Yaakov have been chosen, and none of his offspring will ever again be rejected.

[This may also explain the significance of Yaakov's name change to Yisrael [see TSC shiur on Parshat Vayishlach.]

Our final table summarizes how the toladot help define these two sections of Sefer Breishit:

I. UNIVERSALISTIC (chapters 1->11) - Creation of mankind

PEREK	TOLDOT	the STORY OF...
1-4	'shamayim va-aretz'	Man in (and out of) Gan Eden
5-9	from Adam to Noah	'dor ha-mabul' - the Flood
10-11	nei Noach to 70 nations	'dor ha-plaga' - Migdal Bavel

II. PARTICULARISTIC (11->50) - God's choice of Am Yisrael

PEREK	TOLDOT	the STORY OF...
11	Shem to Terach	leads up to Avraham Avinu
11-25	Terach	God's choice of Avraham & Yitzchak
25	Yishmael	*his 'rejection' (dechiya)
25-35	Yitzchak	Yaakov and Esav (their rivalry)
36	Esav	* his 'rejection'
37-50	Yaakov	the 12 tribes/ Yosef and his brothers 70 'nefesh' go down to Egypt

However, if our original assumption that each sefer in Chumash carries a unique prophetic theme is correct, then there should be a thematic reason for the progression of events from Section One to Section Two. Therefore, to identify the overall theme of Sefer Breishit, one must take into consideration how these two sections relate to one another.

To help uncover that theme, we must take a closer look at the structure created by these toladot.

SHEM & SHEM HASHEM

Note once again from the above table how each general topic in the first section of Sefer Breishit was first introduced by a set of toladot. In a similar manner, each of these units concludes with an event which in some way relates to the concept of 'shem Hashem'. Let's explain how.

Our first unit, the story of Adam ha-rishon, concludes at the end of chapter four with a very intriguing pasuk:

"And also Shet gave birth to a son and called him Enosh, then he 'began' to call out in the Name of God [az huchal likro be-shem Hashem]' (see 4:26).

[Most commentators explain that 'huchal' implies that man began to 'defile' God's Name (shoresh 'chillul'), i.e. they didn't call in His Name properly - see also Rambam Hilchot Avoda Zara I:1]

No matter how we explain the word huchal in this pasuk, all the commentators agree that God's intention was for man to 'call out in His Name'. Note, however, how this pasuk concludes the section that began in 2:4 with the story of Gan Eden. Even though man was banished from Gan Eden and Cain was punished for murder, God still has expectations from mankind - man is expected to search for God, to 'call out in His Name'.

Despite this high expectation, the next unit of toladot, which leads into the story of the **Mabul**, shows that man's behavior fell far short of God's hopes. God became so enraged that He decides to destroy His creation and start over again with Noah. This unit which begins in 5:1 concludes in chapter 9 with a special set of mitzvot for Bnei Noach (9:1-7), a covenant ('brit ha-keshet' (9:8-17), and ends with the story of Noah becoming drunk (9:18-29). However, even in this final story (of this unit) we find once again a reference to "shem Hashem":

After cursing Canaan for his actions, Noah then blesses his son Shem:

"Blessed be God, the Lord of **Shem**..." (see 9:26-27).

Now it is not by chance that Noah named his son - **Shem**. Most likely, Noah's decision to name his son Shem was rooted in his hope that his son would fulfill God's expectation that man would learn to call out "be-shem Hashem", as explained in 4:26!

[It is not by chance that Chazal consider Shem the founder of the first Yeshiva, the house of learning where Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov studied, i.e. 'Yeshivat Shem ve-Ever'.]

Noah blesses Shem in the hope that he and his descendants will indeed fulfill this goal. However, once again, we find that the next generation fails. In chapter 10, again we find a unit that begins with toladot - this time the development of the seventy nations from the children of Shem, Cham, and Yefet - and again, just like the two units that preceded it, this unit also concludes with a story where the word "**shem**" emerges as thematically significant, i.e. the story of Migdal Bavel. As we will now explain, in this story, once again mankind is not looking for God; rather they are interested solely in making a 'name [**shem**]' for themselves!

MIGDAL BAVEL

When reading the first four psukim of the story of Migdal Bavel, it is hard to pinpoint one specific sin: [Note, however, the significant usage of the first person plural.]

"Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words. And as they traveled from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shin'ar and settled there. They said to one another: Come, **let us** make bricks and burn them hard... And they said, Come **let us** build **us** a city and a tower with its top in the sky, **and we will make a name for ourselves** - v'naaseh lanu **shem** - lest **we** shall be scattered all over the world. Then God came down to see..." (see 11:1-7).

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

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

"ve-na'aseh **lanu shem**" [**we** shall make a **name** for **ourselves**] (11:4) [see Sanhedrin 109a].

Instead of devoting themselves to the **name of God**, this generation devotes all of their efforts for the sake of an unholy end. Their society and culture focused solely on man's dominion and strength, while totally neglecting any divine purpose for their existence. [See Ramban on 11:4!]

Although this generation's moral behavior was probably much better than that of the generation of the Flood, God remained disappointed, for they established an anthropocentric society (i.e. man in the center) instead of a theocentric one (i.e. God in the center). Their primary aim was to make a **name** for themselves, but **not** for God.

As God's hope that this new generation would 'koreh be-shem Hashem' - to call out in His Name - never materialized - He instigates their dispersion. God must take action to assure that this misdirected unity will not achieve its stated goal (see 11:5-7). Therefore, God causes the 'mixing of languages' - so that each nation will follow its own direction, unable to unify - until they will find a common goal worthy of that unity.

AVRAHAM IS CHOSEN FOR A PURPOSE

Our analysis thus far can help us identify the thematic significance this Migdal Bavel incident within the progression of events in Sefer Breishit - for the very next story is God's choice of Avraham Avinu to become His special nation!

In a manner similar to the earlier stories in Chumash, the story of God choosing Avraham Avinu is first introduced, and not by chance, by tracing his genealogy back ten generations - so that it will begin with **Shem** - the son of Noah! The thematic connection to "shem" becomes obvious.

From this perspective, the story of Migdal Bavel should not be viewed as just another event that took place - so that we know how and when the development of language began. Rather, this story 'sets the stage' for God's choice of Avraham Avinu, for it will become the destiny of Avraham, the primary descendent of toldot **Shem**, to bring God's Name back into the history of civilization; to 'fix' the error of civilization at Migdal Bavel!

Therefore, it should come as no surprise to us that upon his arrival in Eretz Canaan, the Torah informs us of how Avraham Avinu ascends to Bet-El and builds a mizbeich where he 'calls out in God's Name':

"And Avraham came to the Land, to Shechem... and God spoke to him saying: 'To your offspring I have given this Land'... and Avraham traveled from there towards the mountain range to the east of Bet-el... and he built there an altar - and CALLED OUT IN THE NAME OF GOD"

[See 12:8 (and Ramban), compare 4:26].

Similarly, it should not surprise us that when the prophet Isaiah describes the 'messianic age' (see Isaiah 2:1-5) - he speaks of unity of mankind:

- when all nations will gather together once again, but this time to climb the mountain of God (not a valley)
- arriving at the **city** of Jerusalem - to its special **tower** - i.e. the Bet ha-Mikdash - 'the place that God has chosen for **His Name** to dwell there' [see Devarim 12:5-12]
- thus rectifying the events that took place at Migdal Bavel.

And when the prophet Tzefania describes ultimate redemption, we find once again an allusion to Migdal Bavel:

'ki az ehpoach el amim **safa brura**, likro chulam be-**shem Hashem** le-ovdo shchem **echad**'. (see 3:9)

In our shiur on Parshat Lech Lecha we will continue this discussion, as we will discuss in greater detail the purpose for God's choice of Avraham Avinu. Till then,

Shabbat shalom menachem

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Oct 23, 2014 at 6:27 PM subject: [Parshapotpourri] **Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport** - Parshas Noach Parshas Noach - Vol. 10, Issue 2 Compiled by **Oizer Alport**

V'zeh asher ta'aseh osah shalosh meios amah orech ha'teivah chamishim amah rach'bah u'shloshim amah komasa tzohar ta'aseh la'teivah v'el amah t'chalena mil'malah (6:15-16) Parshas Noach revolves around the flood that Hashem brought to destroy the earth. In order to save himself, his family, and all of the species of birds and animals, Hashem commanded Noah to make an ark which would measure 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits tall. One year, on a twelfth grade Chumash test, Rav Moshe Heinemann of Baltimore asked the students to determine the weight of the ark. He did not ask them to calculate the actual weight, but rather to detail how one would go about computing it.

The first key to answering this question lies in the words of Rashi, who writes (8:4) that based on the rate at which the floodwaters receded, we can conclude that the ark was submerged 11 cubits in the water. The second necessary component for this

calculation is Archimedes' principle, which teaches that the weight of an object submerged in liquid is equal to the weight of the liquid that it displaces. In our case, multiplying the dimensions of the ark specified by the Torah by the depth of water in which it was submerged (300 * 50 * 11) yields a total water displacement of 165,000 cubits³.

Converting this into contemporary measurements is subject to a dispute regarding the exact length of a cubit. The two primary opinions are those of the Chazon Ish and Rav Avrohom Chaim Naeh. Their disagreement about the size of a cubit will result in a corresponding difference of opinion regarding the amount of water displaced by the ark, and its resulting weight. According to the Chazon Ish, a cubit is 22.7 inches, in which case one cubit³ is 6.77 cubic feet, and the total amount of water displaced by the ark was 1,117,050 feet³ (165,000 * 6.77) According to Rav Avrohom Chaim Naeh, a cubit is only 18.9 inches, in which case one cubit³ is 3.91 cubic feet, and the total amount of water displaced by the ark was 645,150 feet³ (165,000 * 3.91).

Now that we know how much water was displaced by the ark, if we calculate the weight of the water, Archimedes' principle tells us that the ark weighed the same amount. Sea water is slightly more dense than fresh water, and it weighs approximately 64 pounds per cubic foot. Although this figure changes under extreme temperature variation, and the Gemora (Rosh Hashana 12a) teaches that the floodwaters were boiling during the 40 days of the flood, Rashi's calculation is based on the rate at which the water receded during the 150 days that followed the flood, at which time the water had presumably cooled to a more normal temperature.

As such, based on the weight of 64 pounds per cubic foot, the total weight of Noah's ark according to the Chazon Ish was 71,482,176 pounds, or 35,741 tons. According to Rav Avrohom Chaim Naeh, it weighed 41,257,728 pounds, or 20,629 tons. For comparative purposes, the Titanic weighed 46,328 tons, although it was 883 feet long, while Noah's ark was approximately 500-550 feet in length. Whether any of the students in Rav Heinemann's class came up with this analysis is unclear.

Vayomer Elokim zos os habris ... es kashti nasati b'anan v'haysah l'os bris beini u'bein ha'aretz (9:12-13) Hashem told Noah that the rainbow will be the sign of His covenant to never again destroy the earth. Does this mean that rainbows never existed prior to the flood and Hashem changed the laws of nature in order to bring about their existence, or that they occurred previously but only now achieved a new symbolic meaning?

A number of our greatest Rabbis disagree about this very question. After initially assuming that if Hashem declared that He was creating the rainbow to serve as a sign, it must have been a new creation at that time, the Ramban proceeds to quote the Greeks, who maintained that their advanced scientific knowledge indicated that a rainbow was a natural result of light shining in moist air.

As a result, the Ramban concludes that rainbows naturally occurred prior to the flood, but only took on new significance at that time. As a proof to this position, the Ramban and Rav Saadyah Gaon note that Hashem didn't say, "I am placing," which would indicate that the rainbow was created at that time, but rather, "I have placed my rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant."

The Derashos HaRan (Derush 1) and the Gur Aryeh disagree. The Ran questions how something which has always existed, such as the rising of the sun in the morning, can suddenly take on symbolic properties. They both write that although scientists teach that a rainbow is a naturally-occurring phenomenon, the laws of nature prior to the flood were such that the sun's rays weren't strong enough to create a rainbow. As far as the proof from the past tense of the verb, the Ibn Ezra suggests that it can be reconciled with this opinion by reading it as saying, "I have placed - now - my rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the covenant."

Min ha'aretz ha'hee yatza Ashur yayiven es Nineveh (10:11) On Yom Kippur we read the story of Yonah, who attempted to flee rather than fulfill Hashem's command to go rebuke the city of Nineveh and inform them of their impending destruction. While the narrative focuses on Yonah's refusal to go and its consequences, it is unclear from the text what special merit Nineveh had which warranted Hashem sending them a prophetic message encouraging them to repent their wicked ways.

This is not the first time in Tanach that we encounter the city of Nineveh. In Parshas Noach, the Torah records that Ashur went and built Nineveh. Why did he do this? Rashi explains that Ashur saw that his children were being negatively influenced by Nimrod and were joining his rebellion against Hashem through the building of the tower of Babel. Ashur did not want any part of it, so he left Bavel and built the city of Nineveh.

The Chizkuni (Bereishis 10:12) quotes a Medrash which says that in the merit of Nineveh being built by the righteous Ashur in rejection of Nimrod's scheme, its inhabitants merited Hashem sending them a prophet to encourage them to do teshuvah so that they would not be destroyed for their sins. The verse (Yonah 3:3) describes Nineveh as ha'ir ha'gedola l'Elokim, which can be interpreted to mean that it was originally established as a city of Hashem. Had it not been that they possessed a solid foundation and only recently began to sin, they would not have merited being warned of their impending destruction. When we contemplate the fact that thousands of years had

passed from the generation of Nimrod until the times of Yonah, it should inspire us to do mitzvos and act properly even if it means going against the tide, as we learn from Ashur that the merits that can be generated for our descendants by doing so are unimaginable.

It is also interesting to note that Yonah told the captain of the ship Ivri anochi (1:9) - I am an Ivri. Why didn't Yonah say Yehuda anochi - I am a Jew? The first person explicitly described as an Ivri was Avrohom (14:13), and the Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 42:8) explains that this name is used to connote the fact that the entire world was on one side, and he was on the other. In a generation of idolater, Avrohom wasn't afraid to stand up for the monotheism that he knew was the truth. Similarly, Ashur was an Ivri in the sense that he rejected the plans of Nimrod and built his own city, and in that merit, his descendants were visited by a prophet who referred to himself as an *ōāpōē*.

Answers to the weekly Points to Ponder are now available! To receive the full version with answers email the author at oalport@optonline.net. Parsha Points to Ponder (and sources which discuss them):

- 1) How many rooms were there in Noah's ark? (Yalkut Shimoni 53)
- 2) The Gemora in Bava Kamma (91b) derives from 9:5 that it is forbidden to injure one's body. Does having plastic surgery for cosmetic reasons violate this prohibition? (Shu"t Igros Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:66, Shu"t Chelkas Yaakov Choshen Mishpat 31, Shu"t Minchas Yitzchok 6:105, Shu"t Minchas Shlomo 2:86, Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 11:41, Shu"t Mishneh Halachos 4:246-7)
- 3) Rashi writes (9:5) that Hashem emphasized that although after the flood it became permissible to kill an animal in order to eat it, it is still forbidden for a person to kill himself. Is the prohibition against committing suicide applicable to Jews, non-Jews, or both? (Minchas Chinuch 34, Shu"t Seridei Aish 104, Nachalas Yaakov end of Masechta Kallah, Matamei Yaakov)

Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
date: Wed, Oct 22, 2014 at 2:51 PM
subject: Parshat Noach 5775 - Rabbi Berel Wein
THE RESIDUE OF THE GREAT WAR

What is Europe's problem and hang up with the State of Israel? Why is it so focused on this Middle Eastern conflict, almost to the exclusion of other seemingly greater issues closer to home? Anti-Semitism certainly plays a role in this European fixation regarding Israel but I do not believe that it is the sole, and perhaps not even the main catalyst driving European policies, statements and actions. I feel that a great deal of the attention that Israel claims from the European nations is a residue of the revolutionary inconclusiveness of World War I, a century ago. In Europe, World War I is still referred to as The Great War. Even though World War II was ever more brutal and costly in human life than its predecessor, it is World War I and its residue that has affected European thinking and behavior till this very day. World War I changed Europe forever and destroyed its veneer of civilization, scientific and social progress, and peaceful stability. Twenty million people died as a result of the war, and apparently for no reasonable aim or end. The brave slogans that the war was being fought "to safeguard human values and democracy" or to bring about the utopia of "a war that would end all wars" all proved to be empty of meaning and value. The new nations that were created in Europe - Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland - all proved to be sources of trouble, bigotry, hatred and aggression. And the carving up of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East into many artificial countries - Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and later Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, etc. - has proved to have been disastrous folly. So, there is a heavy layer of guilt that encompasses Europe over the wasted lives of tens of millions of people caused by The Great War. So, therefore, enter Israel. Israel remains practically the only success story produced by World War I. A product of the Balfour Declaration and of the League of Nations mandatory policies, Israel was nurtured by the Zionist movement and parts of the Jewish people, and fulfilled its promise of becoming an independent state and a homeland for the Jewish people. Not only that, against all odds and expert opinions, it has prospered economically and socially, over-coming enormous odds in so doing. It became the dominant military power in the Middle East and has been able to successfully defend itself against a host of enemies that have created a century of conflict. Out of all of the chaos and disappointment that The Great War created, it alone stands as a positive result of that disaster. This preys on the European mindset. Everything else that Europe created after and as a result of World War I lies in the ash heap of history and current events. Eastern Europe is still quite destabilized, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are no more, and Germany is again too big and too powerful. That Israel has somehow escaped this fate of failure is very troubling to the European mindset. It points to a mockery of human planning and alleged wisdom. It underlines the failure of nineteenth and twentieth century European diplomacy and civilization. It diminishes Goethe and Schiller, Rousseau and Renoir, Locke and Wordsworth. So, if Europe feels itself discredited, then it must discredit everything that it also feels it created - especially the State of Israel. On a deeper psychological level this explains, though it certainly does not justify, the European fascination with suicide bombers and those that behead others. Though it recoils in horror at such events, there is a deep empathy for this type of extreme violence, which is then unfortunately elevated to martyrdom in the European mind. The Great War and its aftermath created a climate of nihilism and detachment from reality, which still pervades European society. It is in such an environment that anti-Semitism flourishes and expands. Somehow, the destruction of Israel, God forbid, would complete the cycle of the tragic residue of World War I in European minds and hearts. It cannot be that Israel alone should survive as the sole positive product of the European upheaval that claimed so many millions of lives. There is a death wish that exists within European society and that death wish is not only aimed at Christian Europe itself, which is disappearing in front of our very eyes, but it is now

focused on the state of Israel as well. After one hundred years, the residue of The Great War is still with us and remains relevant as ever. The future of Europe - and certainly of the Jews in Europe - remains clouded and truly uncertain. Shabbat shalom Berel Wein

from: **Chanan Morrison** <ravkooklist@gmail.com>
to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>
date: Wed, Oct 22, 2014 at 10:23 AM
subject: [Rav Kook List] Noah: The Walk of the Righteous

Noah: The Walk of the Righteous

Not all tzaddikim are equal. Different individuals attain different levels of holiness and righteousness. The Torah calls our attention to these distinctions when it describes Noah and Abraham with similar yet slightly different phrases.

Regarding Noah, the Torah states that he "walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). To Abraham, on the other hand, God commanded, "Walk before Me" (Gen. 17:1). Noah walked with God, while Abraham walked before God. What is the difference? Which is better?

Interestingly, we find in the Torah a third expression for living a holy life. The Torah charges us to "walk after the Lord, your God" (Deut. 13:5). Where does "walking after God" fit in?

Repairing the Universe

We must first understand this metaphor of "walking." Why not "standing with God" or "running with God"?

After Adam sinned and the natural order underwent a drastic shift, God did not seek to correct the world instantaneously. Rather, humanity was to gradually correct itself, repairing the universe in stages until "the earth will be filled with awareness of God" (Isaiah 11:9). This is the inner significance of the walk of the righteous: a slow but steady moral progression.

Similarly, the Sages wrote that prophecy is not revealed to the world all at once, but in a measured fashion, according to our ability to receive and assimilate it (Vayikra Rabbah 15:2). This principle is true for all forms of divine wisdom. Enlightenment is granted to each generation in a measure appropriate for that generation, in order to uplift it and prepare it for the future.

Before the Torah's revelation at Sinai, the world was not ready to receive its full light. Enlightenment is only bestowed according to the world's capacity to accept it. Nonetheless, the universe always contained a hidden potential for its future spiritual level, when it could absorb the Torah's light.

Two Paths of Progress

But how does this explain the difference between the "walk" of Noah and Abraham?

Before Sinai, there were two paths of spiritual growth. The first path was to perfect oneself according to the spiritual state appropriate for that generation. This is called "walking with God": perfecting oneself in accordance with the divine ideals and aspirations that were ordained for that time.

A higher path was to aspire to a level beyond the normal state for that era. This was an extraordinary spiritual effort, in order to prepare for and hasten the highest level of enlightenment - that of the Torah itself. This striving for the spiritual betterment of future generations is referred to as "walking before God," or walking ahead of God.

The Torah tells us that Noah "walked with God." Noah was just and good according to the standards ordained for his time. For this reason, the Torah emphasizes that Noah was "faultless in his generation." His level of righteousness corresponded to the moral expectations for his generation.

Abraham, on the other hand, sought to awaken the entire world to integrity and holiness. Abraham "walked before God," preparing the world to be ready for the greatest enlightenment, the Torah. Since Abraham helped ready the world for the Torah, the Sages wrote that he fulfilled the Torah before it was given (Yoma 28b).

Striving for Sinai

What about the third form of walking, "walking after God"?

Once the Torah was given, and God revealed the purest divine light, we struggle to merit that pristine light that was revealed and subsequently hidden from us. It is impossible for us to reach the enlightened state of Sinai without first correcting our various failings. Therefore, we cannot be expected to "walk with God," and certainly not "before God." All we can hope for is to "walk after God" - to strive after the historic level of enlightenment that was revealed at Sinai. In our efforts to reach this level, we prepare ourselves to approach this state of enlightenment, until God "renews our days as of old" (Lamentations 5:21).

(Gold from the Land of Israel pp. 28-30. Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 101-103)