

Noach

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Hilula

3 – Maran Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, Chief of
Mo'etzet Chachmei HaTorah

4 – Rabbi Moshe Chadad, author of
Kemach Solet

5 – Rabbi Chananya Vizgan, Rav in
Marrakesh

6 – Rabbi Shlomo Katzin, Av Beit
Din Egypt

7 – Rabbi Mordechai Leveton

8 – Rabbi Nachum of Horodna

9 – Rabbi Shimon Shkop, author of
Sha'arei Yosher

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Man's Role in Life Includes Zikuy Harabim

"Noach, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him, went into the Ark because of the waters of the Flood" (Bereishit 7:1)

Rashi quotes Chazal who explain that before the Flood began, Noach stood by the entrance to the Ark and did not wish to enter because he lacked faith. He 'believed, yet did not believe' that Hashem would bring a flood. He therefore stood there until the rising waters forced him to enter.

This seems most surprising. Did Noach really not believe Hashem would bring a flood? Hashem told him clearly (ibid 6:17), "And, as for Me – Behold, I am about to bring the Flood-waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which there is a breath of life from under the heavens." So how do we understand that even when the rain began to fall Noach was still unsure and did not enter the Ark?

I would like to suggest the following explanation. We are told "Noach walked with G-d", which implies He walked with G-d alone. He was concerned only for himself and studied Torah only for himself. He was lacking the aspect of toiling in Torah for the sake of transmitting it to others, and meriting the public (zikuy harabim). This is in contrast to Avraham Avinu a"h who converted many of his generation and brought them closer to Hashem. The absence of this factor is what brought Noach to a state of wavering belief.

However, we can easily exonerate Noach by the fact that he was surrounded by wicked people on all sides; his entire generation was corrupt and rebelled against Hashem. He, his wife, his sons and their wives were the only upright people. This may be why he kept to himself.

Noach's very name testifies to his conduct. The word Noach come from the term menucha – rest and tranquility. He lived a tranquil life and did not invest effort in trying to make his generation repent. Zikuy harabim was not part of his life. He was calm, knowing that "the waters of Noach", the Flood, would not harm him. This is how he arrived at a situation of wavering belief and only entered the Ark when he was forced to do so.

This was Noach's level. After the Flood, too, he displayed concern for himself and not for the rest of his generation. He took a sapling from Gan Eden, planted a vineyard for himself, drank from the wine and became drunk. Instead of rectifying the world through establishing a Yeshiva, as in "The Vineyard (Yeshiva) in Yavneh" and drinking the wine of Torah,

he drank actual wine and became drunk. Instead of rectifying the world, he ruined it.

I think that if the Torah testifies about Noach that he was "a righteous man, perfect in his generation", it must be that he was endowed with immense power to strive and elevate himself, and also merit the public. Since he was capable of raising his three sons to be righteous, this shows he could also have influenced others. Just as he influenced Og, King of Bashan, the only one who survived the Flood, he possessed the ability to influence others as well.

But since he walked only with Hashem and not among the people, and did not bring merit to the public by arousing them to repent, our Sages say that had he lived in the generation of Avraham he would have been considered insignificant.

The holy Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli zy"a was famous for his powerful message: "In the World to Come, they will not ask me why I did not become Avraham Avinu a"h, but why I did not become Zusha!"

The meaning is that Heaven does not demand of us to attain the level of a holy tzaddik who was born with a lofty soul and exceptional strengths. Rather, each person is required to bring his very own potential to fruition and utilize the strengths he was given to serve Hashem. If a person does not carry out his mission in this world, he will be held accountable. About this he will be asked in Heaven, "Why were you not Zusha?" Meaning, like the Zusha you were capable of becoming.

Deep inside each person there is a desire to fulfil Hashem's will, but the Yetzer Hara protests, and invests great effort to prevent a person from recognizing and using his inborn strengths. Man must wage a continuous battle against the Yetzer Hara as Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b), "A person's inclination renews attacks daily, tries to overcome him every day, and seeks to kill him."

In truth, each person is blessed with enormous powers but uses only a small fraction of them. The proof is, at a time of danger a person is capable of employing latent strengths he was unaware of. For example, if a lame person who can hardly walk is suddenly confronted by a lion, he will succeed in fleeing from it like an energetic child who knows how to run very fast. If a person truly desires to overcome his Yetzer Hara, he will be assisted by Heaven. He will be capable of both toiling in Torah and bringing merit to others, and in this way he will merit constant closeness to Hashem.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

A Miraculous Birth

One Hoshana Rabbah night, my talmid, Michael Ben-Shushan n"y, drove his daughter-in-law to the hospital to give birth. Shortly after they arrived, the doctors realized that both the mother and baby were in danger and much Heavenly mercy was required for them to survive, particularly since the estimated weight of the baby was very low. Michael asked the doctors to repeat the tests, certain the results were mistaken. Since he was acquainted with the staff, they agreed to his request but unfortunately, the new results now showed the situation to be even more critical.

When Michael heard the diagnosis he told the doctors: "Tonight, which is Hoshana Rabbah, the Heavenly decree will be averted in the merit of the esteemed Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"a, in whose merit I became religious. With Hashem's help, my daughter-in-law will give birth to a healthy baby and she too will be well. In addition, I wish to donate a sum of money corresponding to the baby's weight – three kilos."

The doctors laughed and said, "How do you think the baby will gain so much weight in just a few hours when he now weighs less than two kilos..." Michael responded, "With Hashem's help there will be a 'good note – pitka tova' for the mother and baby and Heaven will change everything for the good." The doctors just smiled and wished him and his family a joyous Chag. "By the way," Michael replied, "I really must get ready for the Chag. I must leave now to go to a lecture and study Torah as is customary on Hoshana Rabbah eve." And he left.

With Hashem's kindness, a great miracle occurred. The mother gave birth to a healthy baby boy, weighing three kilos! The medical staff were simply amazed – they could not believe their eyes! They thoroughly examined all the tests they had performed earlier that night but could not fathom how this miracle occurred.

This wonderful story teaches us that anyone who toils in the study of Torah is enveloped with an ever-increasing faith in Hashem. The entire hospital was abuzz with the great miracle which some believed and others were skeptical about. But the healthy mother and baby are witnesses to its veracity.

Michael merited this great miracle since he had complete faith in Hashem. He was confident Hashem would act in a certain manner and indeed all went well with the birth. In addition to his firm faith in Hashem, he would not forgo his fixed times for Torah study and also dedicated part of his time for the benefit of the public.

The Haftarah

"Sing out, O barren one" (Yeshaya 54)

The connection to the Parshah: In his prophecy Yeshaya mentions the Flood and Hashem's promise to never bring another flood, "For [like] the waters of Noach this shall be to Me." The Flood is the central topic of Parshat Noach.

Ashkenazim add the chapter, **"O afflicted, storm-tossed one"**.

The Path of the Upright

It is a mitzvah to love each Jew as one loves oneself, as it says "You shall love your fellow as yourself." This is a fundamental rule, the basis for many Torah commandments.

Therefore, it is important to praise others, show compassion for them and their money, and always seek their good. This includes praying and asking for mercy for each wayward Jew. (The prayer is especially beneficial if they themselves entertain thoughts of repentance. They are then blessed with Heavenly assistance.)



In Our Father's Path

Why is Man Compared to a Fish?

On leaving the Ark, Hashem blessed Noach and his sons with abundant offspring and control over all beasts and birds. The verse tells us: "...in all the fish of the sea; in your hand they are given" (Bereishit 9:2). HaGaon Rabbi Ben Tzion Mutzefi shlit"a, in his sefer Doresh Tzion, points out that the Navi compares man to fish: "You have made man like the fish of the sea" (Chabakuk 1:14). The Midrash writes, "Do not be like these fish, where the bigger ones swallow the smaller ones." The Yalkut Shimoni brings a similar idea: "Regarding fish in the sea, whichever is bigger swallows his friend. This is what the Mishna teaches: Rabbi Chanina, the deputy Kohen Gadol, says: Pray for the welfare of the government, because if people did not fear it, a person would swallow his friend alive."

The mother of the Gaon Rabbi Yehuda Tzedakah zt"l related a story about a righteous woman, a niece of the Ben Ish Chai, who merited attending him in her youth. When women would come to the Ben Ish Chai but were embarrassed to approach him with their question, she would ask instead of them. In this way she became well-versed in many Torah laws.

One Friday she bought a fish in honor of Shabbat. When she opened it up, she discovered another fish inside it. She felt sorry for the unfortunate smaller fish that had been swallowed by the larger fish, but when she opened up the second fish, there was another fish inside its belly! She then declared: Even with fish there are Heavenly reckonings! Since this fish swallowed a smaller fish, it too was swallowed by a larger fish.

And that week she had three fish with which to honor Shabbat...

The Gemara says that if one wishes to catch a fish, one can do so only through its mouth. One throws out a line with bread and when it opens its mouth to eat the bread it is caught on the hook. So too, Yisrael are only 'caught' because of their mouths, when they transgress with forbidden speech.

The Navi says (Hoshea 14:2-3), "Return, Israel, unto Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity. Take words with you and return to Hashem... let our lips substitute for bulls." Hashem does not ask us for fasts or sacrifices, but His only wish is "Take words with you." Your speech should consist of Torah and prayer alone.

As with fish, Am Yisrael's power is in its mouth. During the breeding season, fish lay a huge amount of eggs. The Tilapia, for example, lays hundreds of eggs. Following this, both the male and the female place the eggs in their mouths and that is where they watch over them until the fish hatch. The fish uses the power of its mouth to create worlds.

The Navi says to Am Yisrael, you too should resemble these fish. Use your mouths to create worlds! Praying in the Beit Midrash and answering Amen and Baruch Hu u'baruch Shemo (blessed is He and blessed is His Name), has a great effect on the world. This is the power inherent in our mouths; whether we restrain ourselves from forbidden speech or use it for Torah and prayer, we are thereby sustaining the world.



The Sabbatical Year

1. Regarding the maintenance of a garden belonging to an apartment building where all the occupants pay towards its upkeep: If the residents are observant Jews they must not perform any forbidden acts, for example: trimming, fertilizing, clearing, etc. Only permissible acts may be performed – watering the grass and plants just to keep them alive. In the rainy season one should not water at all.

2. If there are irreligious Jews among the residents and one cannot pleasantly influence them to desist from taking care of the garden during Shemittah, there are three ways to avoid transgressing:

A. One should explicitly tell the committee that one's payment is intended for other mutual expenses of the building's upkeep and not for the garden. If there are no other expenses, one should state that the payment is for permissible acts only.

B. Another option is to ask the committee for irrevocable power of attorney and sell this section of land to a gentile, through the Rabbanut. In this way one will not be a partner in any forbidden acts. However, if the neighbors agree not to perform forbidden acts in the garden during Shemittah and there is no reason to suspect that they will stumble out of lack of knowledge, one should ideally not rely on selling the land to a gentile.

C. The third option would be to declare one's share in the garden ownerless, in front of three people.

3. Trimming a hedge results in growth. Nevertheless, one may trim one's hedge if one's intention is so it should retain its form and not become wild. Since one's intention is for beauty alone and not to promote growth, it is not included in the prohibition of pruning for the tree's growth but rather to maintain the tree, and is therefore permissible. However, if a hedge has holes in it and is not full, and one's intention in trimming is also to aid its growth and help it become denser, this would not be permitted during Shemittah.

4. Treating Shemittah produce with sanctity does not apply to grass. One may therefore run on it, cause it damage, burn it etc. One may mow a lawn to straighten it if one's intention is ornamentation alone, so it should retain its form, rather than intending to prune. But if the grass has not reached full maturity and is not dense, for example if one sowed grass seeds (in contrast to laying ready mats of grass) and it is necessary to mow it several times so the grass should grow and spread, in this case one must be stringent since one's intention is to cause growth.

5. Some are stringent not to mow grass in Shemittah. Instead, they allow an animal to eat the grass so it will grow again in an improved way. We do not follow this stringency since it leads to being lenient with the prohibition of raising small cattle in Eretz Yisrael. Even though during a certain period this prohibition was annulled, today when Eretz Yisrael has been re-populated by the Jews, this prohibition has been reinstated.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



The Incident of the Raven

"He sent out the raven, and it kept going and returning until the waters dried from upon the earth" (Bereishit 8:7)

We can learn an important principle from the incident of the raven.

The Midrash writes on the words: "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noach opened the window of the Ark... He sent out the raven, and it kept going and returning..." The raven did not wish to perform this mission and asked Noach why he had chosen him out of all the animals. Noach replied, "Why does the world need you? You are not fitting to be eaten nor to be offered as a sacrifice..." The raven kept returning and Noach did not wish to allow it back inside the Ark until Hashem told him, "In the future the world will need the raven when Eliyahu will be hiding in a cave and the raven will bring him food."

This Midrash is hard to understand. The Admor of Sanz zt"l asks, why did Hashem not tell the raven to go and carry out the mission he was being asked to perform now? Why did He only refer to his future role?

The reason is as the Midrash tells us (Bereishit Rabba 50:2), "One angel does not perform two missions." This is true for an angel, whereas man is different. He can be adorned with tefillin and at the same time wear a tallit, study Torah and perform many mitzvot. Why is this? Hashem created man in a way that he possesses enormous powers and can perform many mitzvot at the same time. For example, it may seem that someone studying Torah is doing that alone, but one should realize that this person becomes a partner to the performance of thousands of mitzvot, since in the merit of his Torah study he is sustaining the world, as it says (Yirmiyahu 33:25), "If My covenant would not be [studied] day and night, I would not set up the laws of heaven and earth." Since he is sustaining the world, anyone living at that time (and performing mitzvot) is alive in his merit.

This is what Hashem said to Noach: Allow the raven to return to the Ark since he is not a human being and is not destined to carry out several roles. It is enough that he will fulfill his mission in the time of Eliyahu Hanavi and it is not necessary that he do something now too. The raven cannot be called to task for refusing to go since it is not required to carry out another mission in addition to its intended role.

This carries an important message for us. We must know that we are blessed with enormous powers with which we can even sustain the entire world. Due to this, we must be particularly careful to study Torah and accord it the necessary appreciation.



May the Memory of a Tzaddik be for a Blessing

This week is the hilula of the legendary Gaon, Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin zt"l, the originator of the Daf Yomi (the daily study of a page of Gemara, adhering to a calendar followed by Jews the world over.) As we know, Rabbi Meir Shapira zt"l did not merit offspring. But in his merit thousands of Jews study the daily daf every single day, eventually completing the entire Shas.

Rabbi Meir Shapira's name is engraved in letters of gold in Am Yisrael's history, due at large to the two Torah enterprises he instigated: the first – studying a page a day from Talmud Bavli, an idea raised at the inaugural conference of Agudat Yisrael, and the second – establishing the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva, referred to as 'Em HaYeshivot – mother of all Yeshivot', that changed the face of the Yeshiva world. Chazal say, "Anyone who teaches his friend's son Torah is considered as if he gave birth to him." Accordingly, the myriads affected by Rabbi Meir's visionary ideas all have a deep spiritual connection to him.

The sefer Nitzutzei Or Hame'ir brings a poignant description of the event. This is what took place at the Agudat Yisrael conference in Vienna:

3 Elul 5683 (1903). The ornate hall of Vienna's State Theater glowed with a spiritual light. This was a gathering for the sake of Heaven. The Gaon (then a young man) took his place on the dais. Fueled by a spiritual force, eyes flashing with a fiery sparkle, he electrified the atmosphere with his passionate address:

"If the entire Jewish population, wherever they find themselves, will all study the same page of Gemara on any given day, could there be a more tangible expression of the eternal, lofty

unity between Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people than this?!"

And Rabbi Meir went on to describe his vision of the Daf Yomi in fascinating detail. The audience were spellbound by his gripping, stimulating portrayal of what was to become a world-famous enterprise.

Can there be anything more remarkable! A Jew departs Eretz Yisrael by ship, a masechet Berachot tucked under his arm, for a two-week voyage to America. Every evening he opens his gemara and studies the daily daf. When he arrives in America, he enters a Beit Midrash in New York and to his great joy finds the congregants engaged in the same daf he studied that day. He joins their learning session with delight and can easily participate in debating the subject matter. The Name of Heaven is glorified and elevated.

A Jew from America moves to Brazil or Japan. First thing he does is go to the Beit Midrash where he finds the men studying the very same daf where he is holding. Is there a warmer welcome than this?! He instantly feels at home. No matter one's origin, one becomes united through this spiritual bond. Additionally:

Up until that point, there were several 'orphaned' masechtot that were generally not studied. Only select, outstanding individuals had compassion on them. Along came Daf Yomi and rectified this.

The Wonderful Vision Becomes Reality

Myriads of Jewish people, the world over, began studying the Daf Yomi that very night. In every city and village, groups were formed for the joint study of the daf. The 'daf' became part of the calendar, and newspapers even made note of it next to the date.

This initiative became Rabbi Meir's most passionate pursuit. He used to say, "Initially, as I formed my dream of the daf, I intended to propose it at the Agudah convention as an idea for the youngsters. I did not dream they would

vote it for the elderly too. But as I began explaining the advantages of a daily daf, how in my opinion there is great benefit for thousands of Jews to study one daf every day, I was stunned by the response. All the Rabbanim unanimously agreed that it would be beneficial for every single Jew." And he concluded, "Fortunate is the generation where the elders listen to the youngsters..."

Embedded in the Daf Yomi initiative is the essence of the Jewish approach, Rabbi Meir would explain. Prayer used to be a private obligation until the Arizal taught us that before beginning to pray we should declare "For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, Blessed is He, and His Presence, in fear and love to unify the Name, in the name of all Israel"; one should unite with Am Yisrael. Until now each individual studied a different daf of gemara, one studied Berachot while another studied Bechorot, but now we have improved on this – if all learn the same daf, this connects the entire Am Yisrael. "Hashem, the Torah and Yisrael are one." So if Hashem, the Torah and Yisrael are all engaged in the same masechet, one daf in one day – all the more so!

Each masechta is studied for the number of days corresponding to the number of its pages. Each day has its daf. Do not fall behind or skip ahead, for if you miss a daf, you lose a day. And a lost day can never return.

Where is Your Place in Gan Eden?

Years after his passing, Rabbi Meir Shapira appeared to Rabbi Tzvi Aryeh Fromer (who became the Rosh Yeshiva after his passing) in a dream. Harav Fromer asked him, "Where is your place in Gan Eden?"

Rabbi Meir answered: "You should know that Heaven is not impressed by deeds; what determines is as said by Rabbi Levitass ish Yavneh." He was referring to the Mishna (Avot 4:4) where the Tanna Rabbi Levitass ish Yavneh says, "Be exceedingly humble"...