

Eilecha

weekly



a member
of the
jewish
futures
family

ISSUE #46
PARSHAS NOACH 5784

WRITTEN BY: R' YAAKOV KLEIN AND BINYAMIN CASPER
FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SPONSORSHIP INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT US AT LPITORAH@GMAIL.COM

עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי-גֹפֶר קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתֵּבָה וְכָפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:

MEKOR

BEREISHIS 6:14

Make yourself an ark of *gopher* wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

MEANING

RASHI, IBN EZRA

Hashem commanded Noach to make the ark out of *gopher* wood, which is very light and can float on the surface of water. The name of this wood, "*gopher*", also alludes to "*gaphris*", sulfur, with which the people of Noach's generation were smitten. Noach was also instructed to create separate rooms in the ark for the different species, as well as to allow a degree of privacy for the various "coupled" pairs of animals.

MESSAGE

RAV LEVI YITZCHAK OF BERDITCHOV ZY" A

A Jew must see to it that he is at home in his words of Torah and *tefilla*, completely invested in their meaning and focused on his intent. While literally translated as "compartments", the word "קִנִּים" in our *pasuk* may be translated as "nests". In addition, the word "תֵּבָה", translated here as "ark", may be seen as referring to the words of Torah and *tefilla*.

With this in mind, our *pasuk* may be read in the following manner:

קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתֵּבָה: An ideal experience of *avodas Hashem* is when one feels that his words of Torah and *tefilla* are nests, moments of comfort, security, and peace - experiences in which he is entirely invested and feels completely at home.



"AND LIVE BY THEM!"

While the *yetzer hara* most often appears in his recognizable form, as a force which seeks to distance us from our mission of aligning our lives with the Will of Hashem, he sometimes goes undercover, disguised as a "positive" inner voice. One of his favorite tactics in this disguise is to make a Jew feel as if his or her *avodas Hashem* is full of blemishes and that the Master of the world has no pleasure from our crippled attempts at serving Him. Oftentimes, this inner voice appears upon the completion of a *mitzvah*, bent on convincing us that because we weren't careful to act with this special intention or that *chumrah*, our efforts are entirely worthless. This is the voice of the *yetzer hara*, working hard to ensure that we do not feel a sense of fulfillment or satisfaction from yiddishkeit and lose interest in serving Hashem on the level we are capable of.

In truth, this is the very opposite of what Hashem desires. Although we must always strive to do our very best, Hashem wants us to be proud, excited, and joyous over our efforts in our *avodah* – regardless of how blemished our service may be. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains that the verse "And live by them (the words of Torah)" (*Vayikra* 18:15) teaches us that each Jew must engage in *avodas Hashem* in a manner which brings him satisfaction, passion, and vitality. "Live by them – and do not die by them", say our Sages (*Yoma* 85a): If one's Judaism, for whatever reason, becomes a source of sadness, frustration, anger, or despair, he can be sure that something is very wrong. (See *Likutei Moharan Tinyana* 44)

Our parsha begins with the verse "These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a righteous man" (in modern parlance, "a big tzaddik"). Commenting on these words, Rashi writes, "The primary offspring of tzaddikim are their good deeds."

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains with the following. It is the nature of parents to turn a blind eye to the faults of their children and constantly look for reasons to praise them. While they are certainly aware that their son or daughter is nowhere near perfect, this realization does nothing to infringe on the unconditional love they feel and the pride they take in their child's sweetness and goodness. When Chazal teach that the good deeds of tzaddikim are likened to their children, they are revealing that the tzaddikim reached their lofty level by treating their mitzvos like their children: they loved their good deeds unconditionally, focusing only upon the greatness of their effort and the purity of their desire to serve Hashem as best as they could, never paying heed to the negative outlook of the *yetzer hara*. It was this practice that enabled the tzaddikim to maintain a passionate, loving, and meaningful relationship with Torah and mitzvos throughout their journey and ultimately reach lofty levels of spiritual perfection.



WHEN OUR SAGES COMPARE MITZVOS TO CHILDREN, IT IS TO TEACH THAT JUST AS A PARENT LOVES HIS CHILD UNCONDITIONALLY, PAYING NO HEED TO ANY FAULTS, SO MUST WE LOVE THE MITZVOS UNCONDITIONALLY.

- Rav Moshe Feinstein zy" a



Creating and Being Our Best Selves

Based on a teaching of Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg *shlit"a*

Eilecha
weekly

אלה תולדות נח נח. נח לעליונים נח לתחתונים, וכל שנכפל שמו בידוע שהוא צדיק כמו אברהם אברהם.

The *Daas Zekainim M'Baalei HaTosafos* quote the above Midrash, which first states that the consecutive names of Noach refer to him personifying his namesake of being נח/‘pleasant’/beloved in **two spheres**. It then explains that a **double name** is a sign that the person is a **tzaddik**. The simple understanding of the Midrash and the two spheres:

נח לעליונים	נח לתחתונים
Noach was beloved above ; beloved by Hashem .	Noach was beloved below ; beloved by people .

But was Noach really beloved by people?



According to Rashi (7:13), the Torah tells us Moshe entered the ark היום הזה to note that Hashem was showing the strength of His word that Noach would enter, even though the people were ready to **kill** Noach when he entered...

Rav Moshe Weinberger *shlit"a*, in the *derech* of the ספרים הקדושים, explains the Midrash in a different way to help answer: The pasuk says ‘תולדות’, but doesn’t list anyone Noach created! There is no mention of Noach’s progeny, so who are his תולדות?

The meaning of the pasuk - נח אלה תולדות נח - is that Noach **created Noach**.

 נח לעליונים	 נח לתחתונים
There was an image of Noach that Hashem had...	...and Noach spent his life trying to create and build that image.
Similarly, there is an image of us in the heavens; an ideal version of each of us that Hashem envisions for us.	We spend our lives trying to ensure that the lower version of who we are aligns with the upper version Hashem holds.

Tzaddikim, who merit the Torah using their “double name”, are people who became the person Hashem wanted them to be. They are **true** to themselves, they are **good** to themselves. ‘Noach created Noach’ and that was a wonderful thing. Spending our live trying to create and recreate ourselves, and not simply passively pass through existence, is praiseworthy.

One of the 48 ways to acquire Torah enumerated in Avos 6:6: **המכיר את מקומו**

Simply understood, this means someone who knows his/her place, knows when to speak and when not to speak, etc.

In his sefer *Tzav V'ziruz*, the Piaseczna Rebbe *hy"d* writes that **המכיר את מקומו** can also mean to **make your place known**.

Make an imprint on the world in a positive way, such that your place in the world is recognized after you are gone.

Don't just be a byproduct of society, rather be like Noach and fight against the current to be a light to your surroundings. As the *pasuk* states (using the plural) **נַעֲשֶׂה אִדָּם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ - together** with Hashem, form yourself into who you are meant to be.

The Gemara in Shabbos 133b on the topic of *hiddur mitzvah*, says ...וְלִילֵב נָאֵה, וְלִילֵב נָאֵה...

Reb Pinchas Koritzer *zy"a* asks that when Sukkos ends and we come to Shemini Atzeres, we put away the *lulav*, the *esrog*, the *hadasim* and *aravos* - don't we need those things, which represent part of our body we're supposed to use properly?

He answers that **if your heart is in the right place, you don't need an esrog**. If you did Sukkos properly, your spine, eyes, and lips are all in the right place. You don't need this outer version / the picture of Noach in *shamayim*. **You are the Noach below**.

You become the *lulav*; you *are* the *lulav*. You are the *Sukkah*; your house becomes the *Sukkah*.

נַעֲשֶׂה לְפָנֶיךָ סֻכָּה נָאֵה - Make your house into a nice Sukkah so that you can sit in the Sukkah all year round.

A thick darkness began on *Shemini Atzeres*, which we are trying to grapple with as we battle through pain and sorrow. May we each take all the good we accomplished on *Sukkos* before this upheaval, and, with Hashem's help, become the best versions of ourselves (נח לתחתונים) to bring endless light into the world and leave our individual, beautiful impressions upon it.