

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON NOACH - 5760

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From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand[SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org]
"RAVFRAND" LIST - RABBI FRAND ON PARSHAS NOACH

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 211, Animal Experimentation. Good Shabbos!

Rash"i's Comment About the Raven Is Not 'One for the Birds'

Towards the end of the flood Noach sent out a raven to see whether the waters had subsided. However, the raven circled the ark and did not fulfill his mission of seeking dry land [Bereshis 8:7]. Rash"i informs us (based on Sanhedrin 108b) that the raven suspected Noach of having "improper intentions" towards its mate. The raven felt it had to keep an eye on the situation and therefore just circled the ark so that Noach would not steal his wife.

I heard a true story on a tape from Rav Wolfson, who is a faculty member at the Ohr Somayach Yeshiva in Israel. Rav Wolfson met a student who had just started learning in Ohr Somayach and was a Chozar B'Teshuvah [a recent returnee to studying and practicing Judaism]. Rav Wolfson asked the student what material he was learning and how he was doing. The student replied that he was learning Chumash with Rash"i and everything was fine -- except for one Rash"i that he found to be 'ridiculous'. Rav Wolfson asked, "which Rash"i is that?" The student pointed to the Rash"i quoted above and labeled Rash"i's comment "patently ridiculous!" At best, this seems to be a strange Rash"i. Rav Wolfson, however, gave the student a beautiful answer: The trouble is that we fail to appreciate the distinction between Halacha [legal texts] and Aggadah [homiletic texts]. The latter are written in a different style. The words may be the same words, but, in fact, they are written in code. In order to understand what our Rabbis mean in Aggadah, one requires the 'keys' to interpret the code. Chazal [Our Sages] are not teaching us something about ravens here. Chazal are teaching us about human beings. In the context of the world of Aggadah, they used the raven.

Of course the raven's fear was ridiculous! But why did the raven have such a ridiculous thought? Because the raven was paranoid! When one is paranoid, one thinks the most ludicrous and ridiculous things in the world. Certainly the raven was crazy. But, when a general picks a soldier to go on a risky spy mission, the soldier can think one of two things: (A) The general picked me because I am the bravest, the smartest, the fastest; or (B) The general picked me because he wants to get rid of me. Someone who is paranoid can come up with the most unbelievable theories in the world.

This is not only true with ravens. Has it ever happened that we are attending a wedding or other occasion and we see two people talking to each other at the side of the room -- and as we approach, they stop talking? What is our reaction? "They must have been talking about me. That is why they stopped. I wonder what they were saying. What did I ever do to them?" These are paranoid thoughts. Really they were just gossiping about someone else. They were embarrassed to have someone hear them gossiping, so when the person came over, they stopped. This is the logical explanation. But one who is paranoid can come up with the most ludicrous of theories. People are paranoid and think in these terms because they are egocentric. They think that everybody is talking about them, as if those people have nothing better to do with their time. A person whose world revolves only around himself is bound to think like that. Such a person can only view the world in his own terms.

We tend to analyze the actions or reactions of other people in terms

B'S'Dof ourselves. (Why did that person in the supermarket answer me so coldly? Why is he angry with me? What did I do to him?) In fact, the reactions of others are best explained in terms that are related solely to themselves. (He is upset because he just had a fight with his wife or boss or any of fifty other reasons. The most unlikely reason in the world is related to the person who he answered coldly.)

Someone once told me that until age 20 (for any of us who have teenage children, we know this to be the honest truth,) one is totally preoccupied with what others think of him or her. From age 20 to 40, when one's ego is more developed, one's attitude becomes "I don't care what they say about me. Let them say whatever they want about me. I am my own person -- I'll dress the way I want, I'll drive the way I want, I'll look the way I want, I am going to do what I want." Sometime after age 40 -- I do not know exactly when -- a person realizes that people are not thinking about him at all. "I don't occupy such an important place in everyone else's world. People don't even care how I dress or look or what I drive or what I say." If we can take the focus off ourselves, we will be less paranoid and less compulsive and less concerned about what others say. We can then become more interested in improving our own world.

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From: Yated[SMTP:yated-usa@yated.com]
PENINIM AHL HATORAH: PARSHAS NOACH BY RABBI A.
LEIB SCHEINBAUM

These are the generations of Noach, Noach was a righteous man. (6:9) The Torah begins by stating that it will list the "generations" of Noach. Instead, it proceeds to relate that Noach was a righteous man. Are we discussing his offspring or his good deeds? Rashi cites the Midrash that infers from this pasuk that the primary generation, the principle legacy of a righteous person, is his good deeds. This is what he bequeaths to the next generation. Horav Moshe Feinstein, z"l, remarks that offspring and good deeds should be analogous. No good deed should be viewed as inconsequential. The same love that one manifests toward his offspring should, likewise, be demonstrated toward ma'asim tovim, good deeds. As a father loves all of his children regardless of individual personality, character, or acumen, too, should one love his good deeds, never regretting that he did not devote himself to deeds of greater significance. This same love should manifest itself in his attitude towards performing good deeds. He should not feel compelled to perform. Rather, he should look forward to their performance, as a parent is excited to help his child. A father scrutinizes his children, looking for ways to enable them to grow spiritually, morally and intellectually, ferreting out their apparent flaws and correcting them. So, too, should an individual examine his good deeds, seeking out imperfections and correcting them. The Yid Ha'kadosh m'Peshischa was wont to say, "People are used to saying that they work hard only for their children. They slave and toil, so that their children will grow up to be devout Torah-observant Jews. When these children grow into adulthood, rather than strive for self-perfection, they focus once again on their children. They also claim to do everything for their children." The Rebbe continued, "Ribbono Shel Olam, I would like to see that one child for whom all of the generations are toiling!" These words have great meaning. Everyone focuses upon his children, all the while completely ignoring his own self-development. While this form of selflessness is noble, there is a limit. A father who expends all of his time

for his children, who does not find time for his own advancement, will ultimately not appreciate his children's spiritual development. One must be self-knowledgeable in order to acknowledge and appreciate another's learning. "These are the generations of Noah." Noah was not a person who neglected his own spiritual growth. The generations of the righteous are their good deeds. They understand the significance of their own deeds. They accord them the same respect they would give to their offspring. While they continue to strive to transmit a legacy to their children, they realize that if they do not study and perform mitzvos, they will not have much of a legacy to transmit to their descendants.

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OU Torah Insights Project
Parashat Noach October 16, 1999
RABBI EPHRAIM Z. BUCHWALD

Secular scholars speak of the story of the flood as if it were a myth, or a fairy tale. Not surprisingly, several ancient documents report striking parallels to the story of the flood.

Perhaps, the most famous document is the Babylonian "Epic of Gilgamesh," which tells the story of a man by the name of Utnapishtim. The gods decide to destroy the earth, there is a great flood, and because Utnapishtim is the favorite of one of the gods, Ean, he is saved. Despite the parallels between the "Epic of Gilgamesh" and the Torah's story of Noah, they are strikingly different. In the Babylonian story, the gods arbitrarily decide to destroy the earth as if it were a plaything. Furthermore, the gods choose to save Utnapishtim only because he is a "favorite" of theirs, not because he is worthy of being saved.

In Parshas Noach, however, there is a moral imperative. The world is flooded not because G-d arbitrarily decides to destroy the world, but because it had become corrupt and destructive. Noah is not arbitrarily saved. He is deserving. He is a "righteous man, perfect in his generation. With G-d, Noah walked."

But the flood changed Noah. After a year on the ark, Noah is finally commanded by G-d to leave. A normal person would have been jumping out his skin to get out of the ark. But Noah is hesitant to leave. Why?

Elie Weisel, the great writer, offers a poignant insight. Weisel calls Noah the first "survivor." The world had experienced a Holocaust, and Noah was reluctant to walk out of the ark because he knew that the entire world was one giant graveyard for all the people he had known and he just couldn't face it. Once on dry land, after giving thanks to G-d and bringing sacrifices, the Torah tells us that Noah's reaction to the flood is to plant. Planting after a great destruction is surely a meaningful and satisfying response. It represents hope and belief in the future.

But what does Noah plant? He plants a vine and drinks the wine of the vineyard. He becomes drunk and wallows in the muck in his tent. Poor Noah. He cannot face the fact that everybody except himself and his immediate family were destroyed in the flood. He is unable to face reality. He needs an escape and resorts to alcohol. He becomes a drunkard.

Noah's response to the flood is not dissimilar to the reactions of some Holocaust survivors in our own generation. Some survivors were just not capable of facing the fact that they were singled out to live, while their beloved friends and relatives, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters, had been murdered.

What is the reaction of those who behold Noah in this desperate state? The Torah tells us that Noah had three sons: Sheim, Cham, and Yefes. Cham "saw [Noach's] nakedness" and told his two brothers outside. Our Sages note that this expression has sexual connotations, and, in fact, Cham did not just mock his father; he sodomized or castrated him. Sheim and Yefes respond to Cham's claim by taking a cloak and

walking backwards into Noah's tent, so that they would not see their father's nakedness. They took the cloak and covered him. When Noah awoke from his stupor, he knew what his youngest son, Cham, had done to him. Noah cries out, "May Canaan be cursed." Oddly enough, Noah doesn't curse his own son, Cham, but Cham's son, Canaan. "He will always be a slave to his brothers."

Very intriguing. Why does Noah curse his grandson and not his son? Perhaps it is because, of all the children, Cham was the only one who was himself a father. Cham should have been aware of how difficult it is to be a parent. Of all the children, Cham should have been most sensitive to Noah's plight. Yet he was the least sensitive!

Noah says, if that's the way you behave, if that's the model you intend to provide for your children, if you respond to a person in need by acting insensitively, the end result will inevitably be that your own child, Canaan, will be a slave. Just like you, he will be unable to control himself. He will be a slave to his own passions and needs. The story of the flood is not at all a myth. It is a narrative replete with endless fascinating insights, as is the entire Torah. All we need do is study and review it, and in it we shall find the secrets of all human life and human relations.

Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald Rabbi Buchwald, Director, National Jewish Outreach Program

From: RABBI YISROEL CINER [SMTP:ciner@torah.org]
PARSHA-INSIGHTS - Parshas Noach

This week we read the parsha of Noah. A mere ten generations after creation, the world had reached a state of depravity that necessitated its destruction. However, "Noach ish tzaddik, tamim hayah b'dorosov {Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation}. [6:9]" Only Noah, his family and all those that would sheltered in his taivah {ark} would be saved from the flood. What were the grievous sins which were being committed? "And the land was destroyed before Elokim..." Rashi explains that the "destroyed land" is a reference to its spiritual state, as it was filled with adultery, incest and idol worship. "...And the land was filled with thievery. [6:11]" The usual term for thievery is 'gezel', yet here the passuk {verse} uses the term 'chamas.' The Medrash explains that this term refers to stealing an amount so insignificant that it is unclaimable in court (less than a sha'veh prutah). When a merchant would bring out a basket full of lupines (a type of herb) to sell, people were careful to come and steal only one or two stalks. Ultimately, the vendor was left with nothing.

It's a bit hard to understand the mind-set of the 'dor ha'mabool' {the generation of the flood}. Adultery, incest and idolatry were all part of the daily schedule. But stealing? Me? A thief? G-d forbid! I'd never really steal anything... Maybe help myself to a few lupines, (maybe a few towels from the hotel). But to steal? Heaven forbid! Why were these debased and corrupted people so careful to avoid actual stealing?

Rav Sholom Schwadron zt"l explains that a person can be involved in the worst of things and yet consider himself to be a tzaddik {righteous}. While he's enjoying that which he stole he's relishing the feeling that he's so cautious and observant of the injunction against stealing. Rav Sholom relates that he was once walking through the back-streets of Jerusalem. In the distance he saw that when people would pass near to a certain place, they would grab their noses and run. As he drew closer he started to smell a putrid odor but still didn't know where it was coming from. As he drew even closer and the odor grew that much stronger, he noticed a group of people gathered around a large sewage pit. Realizing that the sewer was the source of the smell, Rav Sholom's first inclination was to distance himself as quickly as he could from there. However, he was overcome with curiosity. What fascinating sight was holding the attention of all of those people in spite of the sickening odor? He too went close to the sewage pit and was amazed by

what he saw. This was a very large, main sewage point into which many smaller sewage routes emptied. As such, the stench was incredible. Inside were a number of workers trying to open up a blockage with, all of that which one expects to find in a sewer, flying all about. Amazingly, one of the workers had moved off to the side, cleared out a little area, sat himself down and was enjoying a falafel. The same enjoyment and satisfaction that one feels when dining at an elegant restaurant was being experienced by this 'subterranean sanitational engineer' in this sewer! As Rav Sholom was walking away (at a rather rapid pace) he began to contemplate what lesson could be learned from what he had just seen. How was it that he was gagging from the smell already from a distance and yet this worker, sitting in the midst of the smell's source, was able to enjoy his falafel? Why wasn't he gagging? Rav Sholom understood that when one is in the midst of the stench, he doesn't even smell it...

I recently took my sons to Yad Vashem, the holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem. There's a quote there from one of the S.S. men who was in charge of one of the concentration camps. He said that it was very important, while being involved in his 'work' all day, to still be a good guy--a good father, husband and friend--once he got home. In the midst of the stench, one doesn't even smell it...

The 'dor ha'mabool' {the generation of the flood} were able to relish their abstention from actual theft as they were committing every other forbidden act in the book. I'm really a good guy. Those other acts don't define who I am. This defines who I am. I'm really a wonderful person. No need for me to work on myself.

"Elokim said to Noach, the (time for the) end of all flesh has come before me because the land is filled with chamas {the aforementioned type of stealing}. [6:13]" The ultimate cause of the flood wasn't the adultery or the idolatry--it was the 'chamas.' As such, it follows that the 'new world order' which would follow the flood would deal with illicitly gained wealth...

The Medrash relates that falsehood approached Noach, wanting to enter the ark. Noach responded that nothing can enter without a partner. Falsehood then met up with loss and destruction who asked, "Where are you coming from?" Falsehood explained that Noach had turned him away because he didn't have a partner. "Would you be my partner?" he asked loss and destruction. "What will you give me?" it responded. Falsehood offered a deal. "Any profit that comes about through me (through falsehood) will be given to you (loss and destruction)." With the deal agreed upon, they entered the ark. That deal stands until today.

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner Parsha-Insights, Copyright (c) 1999 by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Yisroel Ciner is a Rebbe [teacher] at Neveh Zion, <http://www.neveh.org/>, located outside of Yerushalayim. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350

Yated Neeman USA Columns I

HALACHA DISCUSSION: RECEIVING AN ALIYAH TO THE TORAH BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

A minimum(1) of eight people (a kohen, a levi, five yisraelim and an additional person for maftir(2)) are called to the Torah every Shabbos morning. If a kohen is unavailable, either a levi or a yisrael is called instead of him, but if a yisrael is called instead of a kohen, then a levi can no longer be called after him(3). If a levi is unavailable, then the same kohen who was called for kohen is called again(4).

The procedure The person being called should take the shortest possible route to the bimah so that there is no unnecessary delay. If all of the routes are equal in distance, he should ascend from the right side(5). Before reciting the blessing, the oleh should look inside the Torah to see where the ba'al koreh will begin reading. He then rolls up the scroll and recites Borchu followed by the first blessing. Alternatively, he may leave the scroll unrolled but closes his eyes while reciting Borchu and the blessing(6). After the reading is over, the sefer should be rolled up and

the final blessing recited. The final blessing should not be recited over an open sefer even if one keeps his eyes closed. The blessings must be recited loud enough so that at least ten people are able to hear them. The poskim are extremely critical of those who recite the blessings in an undertone(7).

Who is called to the Torah? While it is appropriate and preferable to call to the Torah only those who are G-d fearing Jews who observe the mitzvos, when the need arises or for the sake of peace it is permitted to call even non-observant Jews(8). But under no circumstances is it permitted to call non-believers to the Torah, for their blessings are not considered blessings at all. If absolutely necessary, it may be permitted to accord them honors that do not necessitate a blessing, e.g., hagbahah or gelilah(9). Most often the aliyos are allocated in rotating order or at the gabbai's discretion. But it is a long-standing tradition which has become universally accepted to mark milestone events by receiving an aliyah. People marking such events are called chiyuvim, since custom dictates that they are obligated to receive an aliyah. Sometimes, however, there are not enough aliyos for all of the people who are chiyuvim(10). Based on the opinion of the majority of the poskim, the following, in order of priority, is a list of the chiyuvim who are entitled to an aliyah(11): (1) a chasan(12) on the Shabbos before his wedding [or on the Shabbos before he leaves his hometown to travel to his wedding]. (13) A child(14) who becomes bar mitzvah on that Shabbos(15). (16) The father of a newborn(16) boy or girl, if the mother is in shul for the first time since giving birth(17). A chasan on the Shabbos after his wedding, if the wedding took place on Wednesday or later in the week. (18) A Shabbos yahrtzeit(18). The father of baby boy(19) whose bris will be that Shabbos or during the coming week(20). (21) A chasan on the Shabbos after his wedding, if his wedding took place before Wednesday. A yahrtzeit during the upcoming week(21). (22) One who must recite the ha-Gomel blessing(22). (23) One who is embarking on or returning from a journey. (24) An important guest.

Consecutive aliyos for relatives In order to avoid ayin harah, a "bad omen", the gabbai does not call a father and a son or two brothers [who share a father] for consecutive aliyos(23). Even if the parties involved are not concerned with ayin harah and wish to be called consecutively, it is not permitted(24). Moreover, even if the gabbai mistakenly did call the relative for a consecutive aliyah, the one who was called should remain in his seat and not accept the aliyah(25). If, however, the mistake was realized only after he ascended the bimah, then he is not instructed to descend(26). L"chatchillah, even brothers who share only a mother, or even a grandfather and his grandson, should not be called for consecutive aliyos. If, however, there is a need to do so, or if "dieved" the call to ascend to the bimah was already made, it is permitted for them to accept the aliyah(27). All other relatives may be called consecutively even l"chatchillah. The consecutive aliyos restriction does not apply: (1) If the consecutive aliyah is the maftir on a day when a second sefer Torah is read for maftir. e.g., on Yom Tov or Rosh Chodesh or when the Four Parshios are read(28). (2) If the maftir is read by a minor (one who is not yet bar mitzvah)(29). (3) When the names of the olim are not used when they are called for an aliyah. While most Ashkanazic shuls today do use names when calling the olim, in some congregations no names are used for the shevii or acharon aliyos(30). (4) To hagbahah and gelilah, provided that they are not called by name(31). (5) If another person was called for his aliyah between them and that person happened not to be in shul or was unavailable to receive his aliyah(32).

1 Some congregations add aliyos while others do not. Since both practices have a basis in halachah, each congregation should follow its own custom. 2 Who can be either a kohen, levi or yisrael. Those congregations who add aliyos may also call a kohen or a levi for the last aliyah (called acharon), but should not call kohen or a levi for any of the other additional aliyos; Mishnah Berurah 135:36-37. 3 O.C. 135:6. 4 O.C. 135:8. 5 O.C. 141:7. 6 Mishnah Berurah 139:19. The third choice, which is to leave the sefer open but turn one's head to the left, is not recommended by the poskim, including the Mishnah Berurah. 7 O.C. 139:6. See

Chayei Adam 31:12. 8 Preferably, he should be called only after the first seven aliyos; Pe'er ha-Dor 3, pg. 36, oral ruling from Chazon Ish. 9 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:12,21,22. 10 A general rule is that members of a shul have priority over non-members, even if the non-member's chiyuv takes priority over the member's. 11 This list covers the Shabbos kerias ha-Torah only. 12 Who has not been married before. 13 If both the aufroz and the bar mitzvah want the same aliyah, then the one who is a greater talmid chacham has priority. If that cannot be determined, then the two should draw lots. Lots should be drawn whenever two chiyuvim lay equal claim to an aliyah. 14 The father of the child, however, is not a chiyuv at all; Sha'ar Efrayim 2:10. 15 According to some opinions, the same chiyuv applies even if the child became bar mitzvah during the past week; Harav C. Kanivesky (Ishai Yisrael, pg. 409). 16 Even if the baby was stillborn; Sha'arei Efrayim 2:5. 17 If the wife is not in shul, then the husband has an obligation to receive an aliyah when 40 days have elapsed from the birth of a male child, or 80 days from the birth of a female child. 18 A yahrtzeit chiyuv is only for a father or a mother. A yahrtzeit for a father has priority over a yahrtzeit for a mother; Kaf ha-Chayim 284:6. 19 A father of a baby girl who is naming her on Shabbos has priority over a father of a baby boy whose bris will take place during the week; Da'as Torah 282:7. 20 According to some opinions, if the bris will take place on Shabbos, then the father is a greater chiyuv than a yahrtzeit on that Shabbos; Ishai Yisrael, pg. 410. 21 If two people have yahrtzeit during the week, the one whose yahrtzeit is earlier in the week has priority; Kaf ha-Chayim 284:6. 22 Ha-Gomel can be recited without an aliyah. 23 O.C. 141:6. 24 Mishnah Berurah 141:19. Aruch ha-Shulchan 141:8 maintains, however, that one who is unconcerned with ayin harah may do as he wishes. 25 Be'er Heitev 141:5; Sha'arei Efrayim 1:33. 26 Mishnah Berurah 141:18. 27 Sha'arei Efrayim 1:33. 28 Mishnah Berurah 141:20. Some poskim do not recommend relying on this leniency when no kaddish is recited between the aliyos, e.g., Chol ha-Moed Pesach (Sha'arei Efrayim 1:32), while others are not particular about that (Aruch ha-Shulchan 141:8). On Simchas Torah, however, all poskim are lenient about this; see Yechaveh Da'as 3:50. 29 Mishnah Berurah 141:20. 30 Mishnah Berurah 141:21. 31 Teshuvos Avnei Cheftetz 16. 32 Sha'arei Efrayim 1:30.

From: Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky[SMTP:rmk@torah.org]
 DRASHA PARSHAS NOACH -- LANGUAGE BARRIER RABBI
 MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

The lessons of the flood were just washed away. 340 years later the humans were up to their rebellious antics. This time, however, they were unified in rebellion. They decided that they would battle the Almighty by building a Tower that would ascend to the heavens. But their plans would topple like a house of cards. Hashem turned to his celestial hosts and declared, "Let Us descend and confuse their language that they should not understand one another's language" (Beraishis 11:7). Havoc reigned. When one construction worker asked for a brick he was handed a hammer. Someone asked for a ladder and they got a trowel. The only thing being built was discord and mistrust. Within days the project fell apart and the people and their languages were dispersed. Why, however, did Hashem choose to destroy this project through a most delicate manner. Why not have a wind topple the tower or an earthquake shatter it. What message did Hashem send by confusing the languages?

Jacob M. Braude, a former Illinois judge, tells the story of an American visiting the UK who was driving with an Englishman through London. During their trip some mud splattered on the car and the Englishman commented that the car's windscreen needed a cleaning. "Windshield," retorted the American. "Well, on this side of the pond we call it a windscreen." "Then you're wrong," argued the American. "After all, we Americans invented the automobile, and we call it a windshield. "That is mighty dandy," snapped the Englishman. "But who invented the language?"

My brother-in-law Rabbi Yitzchak Knobel, founder of Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov in Woodmere, once noted something amazing. Though Hashem acts independently and needs not consult with any being before executing any decision, the Torah on a few occasions has Him descending to observe, and even consult with his celestial tribunal before taking action. Last week, before creating man, the Torah quotes Hashem speaking, "Let Us make man." This week, when deciding to confuse the language of humankind, thus inhibiting the ability to communicate, Hashem also consults with inferiors. "Let Us descend and confuse." Hashem does not say, "I will descend and confuse." Both instances must be related.

The power of man over his co-creations is his ability to express his innermost feelings and expressions. The creation of man was more than the creation of a physical entity with complex motor functions. It was the

creation of a being with the power of expression the power to communicate. When Hashem decided to remove the ability to communicate, He returned to his original tribunal the one He originally consulted while empowering speech in humankind. The greatest downfall of humankind is the removal of his superiority over the rest of the animal kingdom. That is accomplished when he does not communicate.

Recently, a billion dollar project to Mars was destroyed because the language of the metric system was spoken in one factory and feet and inches were spoken in the other.

Hashem taught those builders who wanted to reach G-d that their mortality did not lie in lime or mortar. Rather it lay in the small intangible gift that we all take for granted, yet is so fragile and not utilized properly. Our mortality begins and ends with our power to talk properly and for the correct reasons to our fellow human beings.

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 KORTZ UN SHARFt SHORT AND SWEET PARSHA VERTLACH
 BY SHAYA GOTTLIEB

"Eleh Toldos Noach, Noach Ish Tzaddik." These are the children of Noach, Noach was a tzaddik. 6:9 Rashi: The children of the tzaddikim are their maasim tovim. The Yid Hakodosh of P'shischa said, "Many people toil in pamosa and spend their lives amassing money and property for their children. When the children are grown, they, too, spend their time and energy preparing for their children. And so it goes, from generation to generation everyone gives the same excuse, that they are working for their children. I would like to see that child, for whom every father during all the generations has toiled!" Thus the meaning of the possuk, "These are the children." Noach did not merely work for his children. He considered himself a child as well, and toiled on his own shleimus, his own Avodas Hashem. He was his own 'child'. As Rashi said, "The children of the Tzaddikim are their maasim." Tzaddikim consider their deeds as obligatory as providing for their own children. φBais Yaakov; Rav Yaakov Aharon of Alexander

Rav Yoshe Ber of Brisk often said, "I have worked my entire life not to rely on my children's zechuyos, that their deeds should not be my only entry to Olam Habo." This is alluded to in, "The children of the tzaddikim are their good deeds." Tzaddikim do not rely on their children's merits, but work to amass their own.

The title "Ish Tzaddik" was earned by Noach because he wasn't only a tzaddik bayn odom l'Mokom, between himself and Hakodosh Boruch Hu, "Es Hoelokim Hishalech6". Noach was "Tomim Hoyo B'dorosov", righteous in his dealings with other people as well. φRav Yitzchok of Volozhin

"Tomim Hoyo B'dorosov" φ he was a 'tomim', complete, in his generation. 6:9 Noach remained humble in his own estimation. Even though he was an only tzaddik in the entire generation of wicked men, it did not make him arrogant. "Es Hoelokim Hishalech" φbecause Noach constantly contemplated the "gadlus haBorei", his own good deeds were

not especially great in his eyes. When he compared his spiritual standing to the greatness of "Elokim", he remained humble and 'tomim'. ☐Noam Megadim

"Eleh Toldos Noach Vayoled Noach Es Shem, Es Chom, V'es Yofes." These are the children of Noach, Shem, Chom, and Yofes. 6:9 Rashi: The primary children of tzaddikim are their maasim tovim. This possuk alludes to three things that Noach internalized. Shem, to remember Hashem's name; Chom, to have a 'chamimus' to a mitzva, and Yofes, to do things that are "tiferes l'oseho v'tiferes lo min hoodom." ☐The Rebbe of P'shischa

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SEEING A RAINBOW BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES

The Torah tells us that after the Mabul, Hashem decided that He would never destroy the world again by flooding it, and He emphasized the point by establishing a special covenant to guarantee it. He then added that the rainbow which would periodically be seen in the clouds would serve as the symbol of this covenant. The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos indicates that the rainbow actually existed long before the Mabul, having been one of the items created on Erev Shabbos just before nightfall of the first Shabbos in history. The Gemara in Berachos states that one who sees a rainbow must make a Beracha, the text of which refers to the aforementioned covenant and also, as the Maharsha points out, to this idea that the rainbow existed since the Sheishes Yemei Bereishis.

Rabbeinu Yehudah bar Yakar (a teacher of the Ramban) writes in his Peirush HaTefillos Vehaberachos that although the Pesukim imply that the rainbow "reminds" Hashem of His promise not to destroy the world when He seems to want to do so, Hashem, of course, needs no reminders because He forgets nothing. Rather, He is showing the people on earth who see the rainbow that there is too much wickedness in the world and that if not for His oath never to destroy the world, He would do so right then, just as He created and destroyed other worlds before this one existed, as mentioned in the Midrash. Therefore, he adds, one ought to be inspired to do Teshuvah when seeing a rainbow. With this explanation in mind, perhaps, the Chayei Adam cites an opinion that one who sees a rainbow should not tell anyone else about it because he would be spreading a negative report about the inhabitants of the world by publicizing that they deserve to be destroyed at the moment.

The Gemara in Chagiga states that one who gazes at a rainbow displays disrespect for Hashem because the Posuk in Yechezkel says that Hashem's appearance is somewhat similar to that of a rainbow (in the eyes of Yechezkel). The Gemara then adds that one's eyesight can fail if he gazes at a rainbow. The question may be raised as to how one can ever look at a rainbow and make the Beracha upon seeing it if it is improper to gaze at it altogether. The Beis Yosef quotes from the Avudraham that the Rosh was asked this question and responded that the "looking" necessary in order to require a Beracha is not the same as "gazing" which is considered inappropriate. Thus it is fine to see a rainbow and subsequently make the beracha; what is forbidden is staring at it with care and precision. The Tur therefore writes that it is prohibited to stare at a rainbow; the Shulchan Aruch likewise prohibits gazing at a rainbow excessively. The G'ra stresses that one must see the rainbow in order to make the Beracha; the only prohibition is against staring at it and examining it closely. The Mishnah Berurah states that one should therefore simply see it and make the Beracha right away.

How often should one recite this Beracha? The Shaarei Teshuvah rules that although the Gemara in Berachos suggests that the Beracha required upon seeing certain things is recited no more than once every thirty days, the Beracha on the rainbow may be recited many times in thirty days because when one sees a rainbow again, it is presumably a

new one, since the old one has already disappeared. The Mishnah Berurah accepts this ruling. In the Biur Halacha, however, he adds that it is unclear whether one must see the entire rainbow (in the shape of a bow) in order to make the Beracha, or whether seeing a part of it suffices. It would thus seem that because of this doubt, one perhaps should not make the Beracha unless he has seen the entire rainbow.

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Prologue: Some recall him L'Shevach and some L'Genai. It is a very well known statement of the Midrash that people often can parrot from Rashi concerning Noach. While many Derashos struggle with an attempt to reconcile the two opinions, one could simply ask himself why we are daring to deify or vilify Noach? Additionally, while trying to reconcile the two opinions (In his generation he was a Tzaddik vs. not being the Tzaddik of Avraham's character) we must ask ourselves why Chazal use such strong, diametrically opposing recollections of Noach (Shevach and Genai) when it seems as if the Midrash is merely trying to contrast Noach in different situations and terms like 'Tzaddik' vs. 'less Tzaddik' would apply better?

Moreinu Harav Yosef Blau Shlita (Sichos, 5760) suggested that when talking about Noach one must remember that Chazal were not simply contrasting him with Avraham or the people of his generation. Rather, from a closer examination of Chazal, it appears that the two positions taken were taken about Noach himself. (Yesh Dorshin OSO L'Shvach) The statements are made about Noach and clearly concern him. Harav Blau shlita suggested that Noach the man, later classified himself following the flood. As the Possuk tells us, he went from Ish Tzaddik to Ish Ha'adama. In fact, he did not go from one level to the other. Rather, when there was no one left in the world and he was to begin anew, Noach was who he was, an Ish Ha'adama. The question of Shevach or Genai is a question of discussing how this man dealt with his own life. L'Genai, he was a Tzaddik only in the face of adversity. Avraham, by contrast, was a Tzaddik all the time. Lacking the ability to rise to the occasion all the time is a Genai of Noach.

Others disagree. They feel that the ability to stand up to adversity, especially when the individual's internal locus of character is somewhat weaker, is a marked shevach. Noach was an Ish Ha'Adama. He could not convince the people of his generation to stay off the flood. Still, this individual did not succumb to the pressures of society. He did not parrot the actions of the world around him and stood up to that world for himself anyway. That is a Shevach and a strong one according to this position (See TBP-YIJE, 5759).

Hence, when discussing a character who appears in a Sefer of Ma'aseh Avos Siman L'Banim, Chazal dare to try to discuss the power of Noach's activities. As a Tzaddik he could withstand adversity against his nature (of Ish Ha'Adama) and withstand society because he knew they were wrong. However, as a full role model, he was not able to withstand himself, he lacked the consistency of an Avraham. These two statements are ones about Noach the person and are, by definition diametrically opposed.

Often when facing challenges or tough decisions we are called upon to make decisions. Sometimes we can withstand the 'peer pressure' while at other times we feel overwhelmed. However, society is quickly developing a new category of decision making. This category refuses to recognize a decision. It turns down the right to think and merely mimics patterns the individual has learned without providing much thought to the decision-making process. It leaves us like parrots in our own homes. This week's Chaburah discusses the appropriateness of having parrots in our homes entitled: Pet peeves ...

Battala News Mazal Tov to SHRAGA AND PERRI GOLDENHERSH and family upon the birth of Leeba. She'Tizku L'gadela L'torah L'chuppa

U'l'Maasim Tovim.

Mazal Tov to JOSH WISOTSKY and family upon his Aufruf and forthcoming marriage to LEAH SHENKER

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* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion
Parshat Noach Insights

We Have The Technology "They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them in fire.' And the brick served them as stone, and the lime served them as mortar." (11:3) Technology is the conceit of the modern world. The GNS system in our car allows us to receive satellite signals locating our position to within six feet anywhere on the planet. Behind the helm of our trusty gleaming V-8, we are the kings of the road. Previous generations pale into technological primitives. We have the technology. With a cellular phone we can call from the desert, from the top of a mountain, from the middle of nowhere, and communicate to anywhere in the world. And what are those deathless words that we wish to communicate across the tens of thousands of miles? "Hi! Guess where I am!" Now that's what I call progress. We may know where our car is better than ever before, but when it comes to knowing where we ourselves are -- that's a different story. If we had developed in any real sense over the last couple of thousand years, would we still find anything of value in Shakespeare? If the human spirit had undergone a comparable degree of progress to technology, the poetry and art of those who died hundreds of years ago should seem impossibly quaint to the modern eye. If we were really more advanced, no-one should be in the slightest bit interested in John Donne, Cervantes, Sophocles, Pascal, Mozart or Boticelli -- except for historians. And yet, we recognize that our generation is hard put to come anywhere close to these artists. Technology is an apology for our feelings of inferiority when we compare ourselves to our forebears. Our axiom is "We may have less to say, but we can say it from the middle of nowhere." Cold comfort is better than none.

At the end of this week's Parsha, the Torah describes the attempt of the Generation of Dispersion (Dor Hapalaga) to build a tower that reached into the sky. "They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them in fire.' And the brick served them as stone, and the lime served them as mortar." Rashi comments: "In Babylon there were no stones.." Because there were no rocks in Babylon, they were forced to apply technology and invent the brick. Immediately following this verse they say, "Come, let us build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens..." They wanted to make a tower to challenge G-d. This is a seeming non-sequitur. What does the lack of stones in Babylon have to do with building a city and a tower to challenge G-d? Why is making bricks a harbinger of incipient rebellion?

The Dor Hapalaga were intoxicated with technology. Bricks were the Babylonian equivalent of a Saturn V rocket. Take some mud, bake it and voila! Genius. If man can take mud and turn it into towers and spires and palaces, what can he not do? Is there a limit to his powers? From this kind of thinking there is a very small step for mankind to think that they can dispense with G-d completely.

"Let us build and make for us a name." We have the technology.

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MISHNA BERURA SHIUR #89: Siman 154

BY RAV ASHER MEIR

SIMAN 154 - WHAT IS CONSIDERED A "TASHMISH KEDUSHA" In the MB and BH on our siman, we find three distinct levels of sanctification or dedication:

1. KEDUSHA: Sifrei Torah, tefillin, and mezuzot are considered to have actual "kedusha" - holiness. These are not profane items which were then dedicated to holy use but rather items whose very creation is predicated on an intention to invest them with sanctity. The MB adds another member of this category in s.k.7. According to the above definition, is this addition still relevant nowadays (for printed books)? The Mishna Berura (s.k.9) seems to imply that it is - but pay attention to the source (from a son of the Rosh, who lived about a hundred years before Gutenberg). We discuss this issue in detail below.

2. TASHMISHEI KEDUSHA - items which serve (mishamesh) objects of kedusha. An example would be a Torah cover. The MB in s.k.7 adds the pouch in which tefillin are held. Nowadays almost everyone keeps his tefillin in special boxes (the MB calls this a "nartik" - see e.g. MB 42:2.) which cover the whole tefillin. Is the pouch still considered a "tashmish kedusha?" According to s.k.14, it depends on whether we view the pouch as HONORING the tefillin or as PROTECTING them. (For the answer to the question, see Beur Halakha at the end of siman 34 - d.h. "shtei zugot.")

3. TASHMISHEI MITZVA - items which are set aside to be used for a mitzva. In s.k.6 the MB refers us to siman 21; there he mentions the examples of succa, lulav, and shofar. In siman 153 (s.k.37 and 48) the MB implies that a beit kneset also belongs in this category. The fact that the second level is called a "TASHMISH kedusha" and the third doesn't have the word "kedusha" in its description at all does not mean that levels two and three do not have "kedusha." Of course they do, and the MB refers several times to "kedushat beit kneset." (Example in our siman: BH d.h. "aval aron.") Here are some of the differences.

1. DIVREI KEDUSHA can certainly never be used for any other purpose. Their sanctity can never be conditional. Even preparing something (hazmana) for kedusha may sanctify it. (SA Orach Chaim 42:3.)

2. TASHMISHEI KEDUSHA even if sold in a permissible way retain their sanctity. (MB 153:37.) However, their sanctity CAN be originally conferred temporarily or conditionally. (Rema on Orach Chaim 42:3.) The Beur Halakha in our siman (d.h. tashmishi kedusha) discusses if it is ever possible for their sanctity to lapse barring an explicit condition.

3. TASHMISHEI MITZVA if sold in a permissible way lose all of their sanctity - though under some conditions the proceeds may retain it. (MB 153:37.)

In many places the MB refers to a fourth category "tashmish detashmish" - something which serves a "tashmish kedusha." These have NO sanctity (MB 42:9) and the MB on our siman (s.k.6) indicates that at any time they may be diverted to secular purposes.

PROPER REVERENCE FOR HOLY BOOKS In s.k.31, the MB lists a number of restrictions which demonstrate our reverence for "sifrei kodesh" - holy books. (Interestingly, one of them is discussed in hilkhos Shabbat - see SA Orach Chaim 315:7 and the MB there.) Are these restrictions due to the holiness of the OBJECT of the book? If that is the case, we need to ask if the printing process is halakhically equivalent to writing, and is equally capable of investing an object with sanctity. Or are they due to respect for the WORDS OF TORAH which we can learn from the books - in which case the restrictions should certainly apply to printed books and perhaps even to magnetic media (audio and video cassettes, floppy disks) and optical media (CD-ROM's - like the ones I use in preparing these shiurim to provide them with the "virtual bekiut" their preparation demands)?

PRINTING Some chronology is in order. Moveable type was invented by Gutenberg around the year 5210, secular date 1450. Within a generation Hebrew printing was widespread; for instance, I have found several responsa of the Re'em (Rav Eliyahu Mizrahi - passed away in 5258/1498 CE) which refer to books of "defus" - printing. The Re'em often compares the printed books with manuscripts which constituted all sefarim until the advent of Hebrew printing. This time period is just about the generation which separates Rishonim from Acharonim (Avraham Brauner's book classifies the Re'em as a Rishon and his student Maharshdamer, who was born about fifteen years later, as an Acharon) and we could even characterize the "Acharonim" as that generation of scholars who grew up with printed books. One by-product of printing was a lot of Torah material which was discarded. The printing process itself produced waste such as galleys, trial printings, pages which didn't turn out and so on. In addition, the monumental decrease in the price of books meant that books would be considered worn-out at an earlier stage of their decline. For centuries, the bindings of books were made by gluing together and pressing pages from discarded books, and among these discarded books were Hebrew holy books. This problem is decreed in the MB s.k.31. Over three hundred years earlier this practice disturbed the Maharshdam (YD 184); and the claims of the binders that they had received a lenient ruling in the matter did not seem credible to him.

The Maharshdam suggests four possible reasons for leniency: 1. Printing is not "writing" but rather "engraving" - "chakika." 2. In printing, many letters are printed all at once - as opposed to writing in which each letter is written individually. 3. Torah scroll, tefillin and mezuzot need to be written on parchment; books are printed on paper. 4. Hand-written books are written with intention (lishma), unlike printed books which are created automatically.

Ultimately, he rejects all four candidates. Regarding ENGRAVING, the Maharshdam cites a responsum of the Rambam (268) in which the Rambam explicitly rules that there is no difference between writing, engraving or even embroidering. The Rambam proves this from Yoma 37b which indicates that the oath of the Sota was engraved on a metal tablet, and even so had to be written in a special shorthand so as to evade the prohibition of writing Torah verses other than in a chumash. Regarding the simultaneous printing of the letters, as far as I can tell this is not discussed in the Maharshdam nor in the Rambam which he uses as a reference. However, we could readily bring a proof from Yoma 38b. The mishna relates that the Sages denounced Ben Kamtzar who refused to "teach writing." The gemara explains that he had the ability to take four quills between his

five fingers and write a four-letter word all at once. Since the Sages considered this a valuable skill which was worthy to be transmitted to others, it seems obvious that such writing is kosher. Regarding PAPER, the responsum cites Shabbat 61b which requires geniza even for names which are written on the handle of a utensil or on furniture legs. Regarding the problem of INTENTION, the Maharshdam cites Shabbat 116a which teaches us that books written by non-Jews who are not "minim" - meaning that the books were not written with specific idolatrous intention - may be saved from the fire on Shabbat like other holy books. It is clear to the Maharshdam that the intention of such a non-Jew has no special halakhic status, and he proves this from the inability of a non-Jew to write a get. Furthermore, the Maharshdam claims that even some books which we do NOT save are still forbidden to discard and require geniza. This means that printed books are considered "sifrei kodesh" LECHUMRA - they are subject to the STRICTURES of holy books. What about LEKULA - do they qualify as sifrei kodesh when these leniencies are required?

The Magen Avraham at the beginning of OC 284 cites the Levush, who writes that it is improper to read the haftara from printed books, since these are written like megillot or sifrei Torah. It would be better, says the Levush, to write the books by hand on parchment even if only the haftarot are written, and not the entire books of Neviim. The Magen Avraham takes the opposite approach. Writing PARTIAL books is permissible only in "shaat hadechak" - when there is duress. Since today we have ENTIRE printed books which are relatively inexpensive AND have the sanctity of sifrei kodesh, we MUST use these. The Magen Avraham cites Rav Menachem Azaria (93) who rules that a get may be printed and that this is considered writing "lishma" - for the sake of a bill of divorce. (This Magen Avraham is cited by the MB at the beginning of 284.)

The Taz on YD 271:8 also rules unequivocally that printing is considered writing, and that printed books have full kedusha. The Taz asks, what difference does it make if I bring the ink to the paper (via a pen) or the paper to the ink (via a press)? (And in ink-jet printers, the ink is actually brought to the paper in a way which resembles writing even more).

Another seminal responsa on this question is the Masat Binyamin (a student of the Rema) siman 99-100, who also rules that printed books have kedusha. We should point out that all of these responsa were written when printing presses were still run by hand. With a machine press, we need to decide if doing something by machine can be considered "lishma." This was discussed starting about 150 years ago around the question of whether machine-baked matzas are fit for "matzot mitzva." (Rav Shlomo Kluger author of "Chokmat Shlomo" was among the first to rule stringently, Rav Yosef Shaul Natanzon author of "Shoel u-Meshiv" among the first to rule leniently - and the dispute continues to this day.) Since many authorities are lenient in that case, we certainly have reason to be stringent in our case.

Of course, this assumes that in fact the machine is operated with an intention to create sifrei kodesh - just as the matza machine needs to be operated "leshem matzot mitzva." If the machine is operated by a non-Jew, then there is no "lishma." Likewise, it is possible to make a condition that the printing is not "leshem kitvei hakodesh" - for the sake of creating sifrei kodesh. The Chazon Ish (end of YD 164:3) recommends making an explicit condition that the printing is for the sake of "a mere concatenation of letters" - "tzairu otot bealma." Scores of responsa have been written on related topics such as the requirement of geniza, the problem of melting down the plates (which are impressed in mirror image), the possibility of recycling the paper (this could be consistent with a requirement for geniza since the recycling bin itself is clean, since the person putting the paper in is not destroying it, and since the recycler may be able to rely on the fact that the vast majority of the paper is NOT geniza) and so on. However, as far as the specific rulings of our siman are concerned, it seems that the accepted view is that printed books should be considered to be "sifrei kodesh" and all of the customs of reverence should apply to them.

There is an entirely separate reason to respect these books. Even if they do not have an intrinsic sanctity, they should be respected because they are a vehicle for learning Torah. (See Avot 6:3.) For a parallel reason, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe YD I:173, YD II:142) rules that while erasing a tape recording of Hashem's name is not a transgression of the prohibition to erase a written name, it should preferably be avoided because it smacks of disrespect.

There is a famous piece of Yeshiva folklore about a certain member of the Soloveitchik family who was learning in a certain eminent yeshiva and finding the space available too small for his pile of books proceeded to stack them on the floor. An unfortunate young bachur politely suggested that this could possibly be considered disrespectful, and found himself overcome by a withering barrage of Bavlis, Yerushalmis, Rishonim and Acharonim all proving that their could be no possible objection to this behavior. Unfortunately, the folk story does not indicate the actual list of sources, and I can only rely on the sources which I was able to find - sources which seem to lead to a different conclusion.

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash yhe@vbm-torah.org
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua Parashat Noach "AND MAN'S LOFTINESS WILL BE BOWED:" [1] THE SIN AND PUNISHMENT OF THE TOWER OF BAVEL BY RAV ELCHANAN SAMET

On the surface, the brief episode of the Tower of Bavel (Bereishit 11:1-9) appears to be a story of sin and its punishment. However, what is the nature of this sin, and where exactly is it described in the narrative? These are not easy questions. Bereishit Rabba notes (38:10), "The deed of the Generation of the Flood is explicated, but the deed of the Generation of the Dispersal is not." Yet,

their story is clearly a seminal event in Bereishit and in the Torah's view of history, shifting the focus from a universal approach to the concept of the Chosen People. How are we to understand this cryptic but momentous passage?

1. THE VIEW OF THE "PASHTANIM" A group of early commentators, termed by the Ramban "the pursuers of peshat" (the literal meaning of the text), read our passage in light of God's blessing to Adam (1:28) and Noah (9:1): "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the land..." The following is Ibn Ezra's commentary to verse 4 (emphasis mine): "The verse reveals their desire and their ultimate intent: to build a metropolis to inhabit, and to build a high tower to provide a symbol and fame and acclamation... Their reputation would outlast them, as long as the tower stood; this is what Scripture means when it quotes their objective, "And we shall make for ourselves a name..." Do not be confused by the expression, "[A tower] with its top in the heavens," as Moshe used a similar expression (Devarim 1:28): "Great cities, fortified to the heavens." These builders attempted to prevent their own dispersal; G-d did not desire this ϕ BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW.

Similarly, in his explanation of verse 7, Ibn Ezra states: "G-d spread them out, FOR THEIR OWN GOOD, as it says, 'Fill the land.'" Apparently, based on his approach, the story is not one of sin and punishment, but rather a story of human error and its divine repair. The builders' monomania contradicts the divine plan, and therefore G-d involves Himself ϕ so that His design will be realized, for the ultimate benefit of humanity. Yet it is difficult to accept that our passage is not one of sin and its punishment. Verse 5 relates, "G-d descended to observe the city and the tower," reminding us of a similar verse regarding another sinful city, Sodom (18:21): "I will descend and observe if they have done as the cry which has come to Me [indicates]." Both examples describe G-d's descent to observe, akin to the judge's survey of the scene of the crime before issuing a verdict (see Rashi's commentary to these two verses). It appears that the general ambience of the story does not agree with Ibn Ezra's analysis.

Consequently, Radak accepts the main thrust of Ibn Ezra's explanation, but sees in the actions of the architects of the city a direct and willful rebellion against the divine plan. He explains (11:5): "They are called 'Children of Adam' since they follow their heart's inclination, ignoring G-d's actions; for He wanted the world, from east to west, to be settled, while they wanted to settle only one small location, AND THEY INTENDED BY THIS TO ANNUL GOD'S WILL." Rashbam's explanation (11:4) runs along the same lines. Ramban, however, asks a common-sense question of these pursuers of peshat (11:2): "If they are correct, [the builders of the city] would have to be fools. How could any one city or tower be sufficient to hold the entire world's population? Or did they think that they would not reproduce? Indeed, it is difficult to see G-d's blessing to Adam and Noah as the background of our narrative. There is a great conceptual difference between the two instances: there mankind is blessed to "fill the land" through normal population growth, while in our case G-d spreads the people all over the face of the land not in order to settle it, but to disperse them. An analysis of the root of the Hebrew word for spreading, "hafatza," in Scripture, reveals that, in the vast majority of cases, it describes a negative scattering: usually, the losers in a battle, the shepherdless sheep, and the far-flung exiles are the Scriptural "nefotzim." [2]

2. THE MIDRASHIC APPROACH OF RASHI In his commentary, Rashi pursues the path of derash, the non-literal, aggadic approach. In accordance with Bereishit Rabba (38:6), he finds the allusion to sin already present in verse 1: "All of the land was of one language and united ideas" ϕ "one language" refers to a shared tongue, while "united ideas" denotes a universal consensus. (Radak echoes this.) Regarding what was their consensus? Rashi supplies three possibilities: They came with one counsel and declared: "[G-d] is not the be-all and end-all, that He should select the upper regions for Himself. Let us ascend to the firmament and wage war on Him." Alternatively, ["united ideas" ("devarim achadim") means] concerning the Unique One ("Yachid"). Alternatively, "united ideas" implies that they said: "Once every 1656 years the firmament collapses, as it did in the time of the Flood; let us make supports for it!"

These explanations are derived by way of derash; the pashtanim, as is their wont, deal with Rashi's commentary only to question it. Without mentioning by name Rashi or the midrashim, Ibn Ezra (11:4) states: "These builders of the tower were not such fools as to think they could climb to the heavens. They also were not afraid of the Flood, for Noah and his children, to whom G-d had sworn [not to bring another deluge], were still alive, and all listened to them, as all humanity was descended from them. The common point shared by all three of Rashi's explanations, representing the Sages' view of the Dispersal generation, is that they regard this sin as a serious revolt against G-d. [3] Thus, Rashi's exegetical approach intensifies their sin, to the same degree that the approach of the other commentators lightens it. The sin is severe, in theological terms, creating an expectation of a corresponding punishment. However, in actuality, that generation's punishment is a slap on the wrist: they are simply scattered linguistically and geographically. Rashi (11:9) struggles with this question, once again following Bereishit Rabba: "Which sin was worse, that of the Flood generation or that of the Dispersal generation? The former did not assault the Essential, while the latter did assault the Essential (as if it were possible to wage war on Him); yet those were drowned, while these were not utterly destroyed! Still, those of the Flood generation were thieves, and they had social strife, so they were destroyed; but these acted with love and fellowship, as it says, "one language and united ideas." We thus see that contention is despicable, while peace is great."

Ironically, the phrase that condemns the Dispersal generation, "one language and united ideas," also proves to be their salvation. Rashi's aim here, following the midrash, is clear: to teach us that human unity, even when used for evil and thus necessitating dissolution, is considered meritorious.

3. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE NARRATIVE One who reads the story of the Garden of Eden in the previous parasha does not ask questions concerning the realia of the story (e.g., Where is Eden located? What species was the Tree of Knowledge? How could the serpent speak? etc.), and rightly so, because that narrative (like many of the early episodes in Bereishit) has a distinctly unreal quality. What about our narrative?

In its opening lines, the narrative describes a known geographic area: "a valley in the land of Shinar," or Mesopotamia, and at its close it names the city of Bavel, one of the oldest and most famous in the ancient Near East, mentioned repeatedly in Scripture, and site of the earliest archeological excavations. The city of Bavel was already very large in the earliest extant records, and its temple to Mardukh was distinguished; its tower as well was the grandest in ancient Babyloni earning it the appellation, "The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth." The ruins of this tower, which our episode deals with, are visible today (for those who have the opportunity to stroll through rural Iraq), and they were excavated at the turn of the century. We do not know exactly when the tower and temple of Bavel were built - nor did the ancient inhabitants of the city. But we do know that the ancient inhabitants of the city were quite proud of their edifices, attributing their construction to the gods themselves. The towers, or ziggurats, were meant to serve as a point of encounter between the gods (dwelling in the heavens) and man (dwelling on earth). A stunning set of stairs surrounded the tower, allowing the priests to ascend to its apex. At the tower's top sat a temple, in which the priest would "meet" the gods. With this background in mind, it appears that the traditional exegetes erred in seeing the expression "with its top in the heavens" as hyperbole. The ziggurat's architects and their followers truly intended for the tower to reach the heavens, the residence of the gods. Knowledge of these historical and archeological facts compelled Cassuto to explain our narrative as satire, intended to mock the pagan pride of Bavel. The city of Bavel, with its temple and tower, was destroyed many times throughout the long march of history, and there were long periods in which the entire city, and the tower in particular, were heaps of ruins. We cannot point out all the details in the story which Cassuto explains as satirical [4], but let us cite one example. Verse 5 ties together the two halves of the story, serving as its central axis: "The Lord DESCENDED to observe the city and the tower which the CHILDREN OF ADAM had made." The first difficulty is theological: does G-d need to descend in order to observe the actions of the humans? Rashi replies by citing the Tanchuma's words: "He did not need to do so, but He came to teach judges not to condemn the accused until they would see and understand [the facts of the case]." Cassuto adds, "There is a satirical allusion here: they thought their tower would reach heaven, but in G-d's eyes their edifice was not giant, but rather the creation of puny creatures, a thing of earth and not of heaven. If G-d, the Dweller of the Heavens, wanted to see it up close, He had to come down from heaven to earth." Similarly, the words "children of Adam" at the verse's end, which are strikingly extraneous, prompt Rashi to ask: "Rather than children of whom? Perhaps children of donkeys or camels?" Cassuto attempts to see here as well satirical allusions: divine beings did not build the tower, as the Babylonian myth claims, but rather children of Adam built the city and its tower.[5]

4. THE EXEGESIS OF CHAZAL: A REEXAMINATION This conception of the episode, as a satirical protest aimed at the pagan arrogance of the ancient inhabitants of Bavel, brings us back to Chazal's explanation, cited by Rashi, of the Dispersal generation's sin. Following are Midrash Rabba's original words (38:6): "Rabbi Yochanan says: 'Devarim achadim' ϕ that they said harsh things (devarim chadim) about 'the Lord our G-d, the Lord is one (echad)'... They said, 'He is not the be-all and end-all, that He should select for Himself the upper regions and give us the lower regions! Rather, let us build for ourselves a tower, AND LET US MAKE AN IDOL AT ITS TOP, and we will put a sword in its hand, and it will appear as if IT WAGES WAR ON HIM.'" It becomes apparent that the midrash links the Tower of Bavel to the idol at its apex, which dovetails beautifully with our knowledge of the ancient conception of the ziggurat. However, the midrash tells us more: the basis of this paganism lies in typical human arrogance and foolishness. Thanks to their technological know-how, with which they are blessed by their Creator, they suppose that they can invade the divine arena, force themselves on the supernal realm, and walk there as the equals of G-d. This is nothing but a ludicrous declaration of war by humanity on the divine.

The Sages were closer than the medieval pashtanim to the realia of the Tower of Bavel episode, both chronologically and geographically. They lived either in Israel or in Babylonia itself, at a time when the remains of Bavel's towers, and of the city of Bavel itself, were still recognizable. In Bereishit Rabba (38:8), a number of sages describe their personal observations of the remnants of the Tower. In their era, the pagan myth still had followers, and the link between it and the still-visible ancient ruins of Bavel, as well as the Torah's response, was natural and understood.

5. THE LITERAL EXEGESIS According to this view of our episode, shared by both Chazal and contemporary commentators,[6] our story deals with the most serious human sin imaginable: rebellion against G-d. Man is created to serve G-d, and if he rebels, his very existence is counterproductive. This revolt, with its basis in human arrogance, with its undermining of the boundary between the human and the divine, finds its fruit in paganism.[7] Thus, the sin of the Tower's architects lies not in their desire to be united, but rather in their audacious attempt to darken heaven's doorstep and to defy their human bounds. "And we shall make for ourselves a name" is the essence of their pretension. In the dedications of various kings discovered in excavations in Mesopotamia (some of them in bricks sunk into the foundations of ziggurats), we repeatedly find the claim that their towers reach heaven. These dedications claim, many times, that the kings who built (or restored) these towers "made a name" for them and their kingdoms ϕ even to the extent of earning them a place among the gods.[8] According to this explanation, we might say that the words "lest we be scattered across the face of the whole land" do not indicate the objective of the construction of the city and the tower per se (as the pashtanim explained) ϕ rather the aim is mentioned prior to this: to reach the heavens at the tower's apex, and thereby "we shall make for ourselves a name." The end of the verse, "lest we be scattered," expresses their anxiety; something might prevent the united community from making its name. Social unity creates the desire for immortality and provides the tools to realize the most grandiose construction project in human history. If this unity is compromised for any reason whatsoever, this initiative cannot be realized, and therefore

the construction of the city and the tower must be completed with all due haste.

6. BAVEL AND EDEN: THE TOWER AND THE TREE In many ways, our story seems to be the continuation of the story of man's sin in the Garden of Eden. Both narratives explain the reason for basic problems affecting the human species. The story of the expulsion from Eden explains why man must struggle in the two most basic areas of his existence: finding sustenance and begetting children. (In both of these areas, man is at a distinct disadvantage as compared to the animals.) Adam and Eve desired to "be as gods" (3:5), and the perpetual existential struggles that they were punished with serve to humble them. The Garden of Eden narrative gives a reason for man's weakness as an individual. Our narrative, on the other hand, gives a reason for the basic failing of mankind as a whole, namely its lack of unity. The linguistic, cultural, and geographic divisions weaken mankind and lead to unending strife and warfare between different groups.

This is a fitting punishment for humankind, which, when it was united, dedicated its great power to overstepping its bounds and climbing into the divine arena. Thus, two curses peculiar to man ϕ labor for Adam and Chava, war for the Bavel architects ϕ emerge from these twin sins of presumption. This commonality between the narratives is expressed in their shared syntactic structure. Compare "Behold, the man has been like one of us to know good and evil" (3:22) with "Behold, one nation and one language to them all, and this is what they begin to do" (11:6). Similarly, "And now, lest he send his hand and take from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever..." is mirrored by "And now, whatever they plot to do will not be beyond them." Therefore, the result is similar: expulsion from the Garden of Eden and dispersal from the focus of human strength, Bavel, to the face of the entire earth. Man, in his wretchedness, as an individual struggling with the provision of the most basic needs, or as a member of a species sunk in internecine war, cannot reach self-deification. The human race, in this environment, learns to swallow that bitterness of pills, humility.

7. THE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE With the Dispersal, the pride of a humanity united for evil was broken, stripping the species of the ability to execute similar schemes. From that point forward, the nations were divided, separated in their language and their culture, doomed to wage war with their neighbors ϕ but not forever. When humankind once more comes together, not for self-deification, but for the greater glory of G-d, this unity will be restored in all spheres, as described by the prophets. "Then will I convert the nations to a pure language for all of them to call in the name of G-d," and to serve Him with one consent," declares Tzefania (3:9), foreseeing a return to a common tongue. The dream of the entire race finding that unity of purpose and place is most elaborately described by Yeshayahu (2:2-4): "And it will be in the end of days, the mount of the House of G-d will be set right... and all the peoples will flow to it. Many nations will go and say: 'Let us go and ascend to the mountain of G-d, to the house of the G-d of Yaakov, and He will teach us of His ways; and we will walk in His paths...' And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn war any more."

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SHIUR HARAV SOLOVEICHIK ZT"L ON PARSHAS NOACH (Shiur date: 11/2/76)

Vatishaches Haaretz Lifnay Haelokim Vatimalay Haaretz Chamas.

Vayomer Elokim L'Noach ... Ki Malah Haaretz Chamas. Why the repetition? If the Torah tells us that the land self destructed before Hashem (Vatishaches Haaretz Lifnay Haelokim) why add that it was filled with Chamas (crime)?

Chazal say that Hashchasa refers to the sins of idolatry (Avoda Zara) and illicit relationships (Giluy Arayos) while Chamas refers to robbery (Gezel). The Ramban explains that in conversation with Noach, Hashem bases the decision to destroy the world on the sin of Chamas. Why didn't Hashem mention Giluy Arayos and Avoda Zara, the Hashchasa? The Ramban explains that avoidance of Chamas is considered a Mitzvah Muskeles, an obligation that is readily grasped from an intellectual perspective. Man can readily understand and appreciate the necessity to maintain law and order. Chazal refer to such Mitzvos Sichlios as Mitzvos that would be followed even had they not been written in the Torah. Hashchasa, Giluy Arayos and Avoda Zara, are considered Mitzvos Shilios (according to the jargon of Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon), Mitzvos that we must obey and restrictions we must adhere to simply because Hashem has commanded us to refrain from them. They are prohibitions that man would not place on himself if left to his own rational devices. [That is why the Ramban only refers to Giluy Arayos

and Avoda Zara and omits murder, Shfichas Damim, from the category of Hashchasa, since murder is also a Mitzvah Sichlis.]

Hashem tells Noah that He will destroy the world because it is filled with Chamas. Hashem says that even if He would be willing to overlook their transgressions of the Mitzvos Shlilios of Avoda Zara and Giluy Arayos, He can't overlook their violation of basic norms and ethical behavior, their transgression of the Mitzvos Sichlios of Chamas and Gezel, restrictions that they should have understood on their own and never violated. Chazal said that the fate of the generation of the Mabul was sealed (Nechtam) because of their violation of Gezel, which left an indelible mark on the generation and led to their destruction.

The Rav asked why the Torah used the words Lifnay Elokim when telling us that the generation self destructed (Vatishaches Haaretz Lifnay Elokim). We can readily understand using these words when describing the Mitzvah of Usmachtem Lifnay Hashem Elokaychem. But how do these words fit here?

The Rav explained that in Parshas Vayikra the Torah tells us about Shvuas Hapikadon, an oath that must be taken by a person entrusted to watch an item. The Torah describes the concept of Shvuas Hapikadon as Nefesh Ki Techta Umaala Maal B'Hashem Vkichesh B'amiso (A person who sins by committing a misappropriation offense against Hashem by lying to his neighbor). The Tosefta explains that such an offense against his fellow man can only be committed by one who has previously been Mo'el B'Hashem, acted inappropriately towards Hashem. A Jew who fears Hashem (Bayn Adam L'Makom) will refrain from acting sinfully towards his fellow man (Bayn Adam L'Chaveiro). In other words man is called a sinner not only because he violates the Mitzvos Sichlios, but because he has violated the Mitzvos Shlilios as well, and sinned towards Hashem. The Ramban says the same thing happened by the Dor Hamabul. They started out with Hashchasa, by rebelling against Hashem and the Mitzvos Shlilios of Avoda Zara and Giluy Arayos and eventually ended up violating the Mitzvos Sichlios of Gezel and Chamas.

The Rav said that in Tefilas Neilah we recite Ata Nosen Yad Lposhim, that Hashem helps man L'maan Nechdal M'oshek Yadaynu, that we desist from the robbery of our hands. Why don't we say L'maan Nechdal Mayavayros Yadeinu, that we might desist from the sins of our hands? Why use a term like Oshek instead of Avonos or Avayros that is more commonly used to refer to sin?

The Rav explained that Oshek is an all-inclusive term for all kinds of sin, similar to Chamas. [When the Torah says Ki Malah Haaretz Chamas it means that man committed all kinds of Avayros.] On Yom Kippur we say that Hashem assists man to repent for ALL sins, Oshek, that he committed. When man sins he loses his privileges, Zchusim, over himself. In Tilas Zakah we say that Hashem created man and all the parts of his body to serve Hashem and act morally, yet instead we have acted immorally and we are Gazlanim. In Malachi, the prophet says how is it possible to steal from Hashem? The answer is when man does not give Trumos and Maasros, he steals from Hashem. If Hashem gives us wealth and we do not give Tzedakah, we are stealing from Hashem. If man uses his hands or his legs for sinful purposes, he is stealing them from Hashem who created them so that we might perform Mitzvos with them. We forfeit our rights, Zchusim, over our own bodies. When we pray that we may desist from Oshek Yadaynu, we ask that we be granted the strength to resist the sin of Gezel, be it through the misuse of physical or material gifts given us by Hashem. We pray that we might not repeat our sinful past when we were guilty of Oshek Yadaynu, misuse of our hands, indeed our very existence.

The Rav explained that the Dor Hamabul was filled with Chamas because they had perverted their entire physical and spiritual existence. They were guilty of Oshek, violating all of Hashem's laws between man and God and man and man, to the highest degree and were punished accordingly.

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RABBI MICHAEL ROSENSWEIG
THE SPIRITUAL LEGACY OF NOAH AND AVRAHAM

The conclusion of parshat Noah marks the transition from Noah to Avraham Avinu. Hazal were intrigued by the relative stature of these two great religious personalities, noting that assessments of Noah's spiritual achievements range from high praise to implied criticism.

It is interesting to note that the personalities of Avraham and Noah represent significant halakhic designations. Avraham is not only the father of the Jewish nation-- av hamon goyim--, but his special qualities, especially his commitment to hesed, constitute a spiritual-genetic legacy for his descendants. The Talmud (Yevamot 79a) indicates that one should suspect the lineage of any Jew who does not exhibit the basic humane qualities associated with Avraham Avinu. Rambam codifies these sentiments in the concluding halakhos of hilkhos Matnot Aniyim (10:1-2). Although the source for the non-Jewish obligations demanded by the Torah is to be found in connection with Adam ha-rishon's sojourn in Gan Eden (Bereshit 2:16; Sanhedrin 56b), these obligations are identified with the personality of Noah, referred to as the Noahide laws, their adherents earning the appellation of ben-Noah.

Undoubtedly, a closer look at the personalities and contributions of Avraham and Noah will illuminate the different agendas and legacies of Noahide and Jewish law.

Hazal speculate whether Noah's spiritual attainments would not have been even more impressive had he lived in Avraham's generation. It is important, however, to note that even those who argue that Noah would have benefited from that more conducive environment appear to be suggesting that he would have been positively affected by that exposure, but do not project that Noah's influence in shaping the destiny of those around him would have been enhanced. The contrast to Avraham's pivotal role is stark. Avraham is credited as the father of monotheism, having single-handedly rediscovered the Divine presence. Moreover, he initiated and sustained the quest for spirituality, motivating others to join his mission, literally transforming their lives. Hazal note that the Torah speaks of the souls that Avraham created- "ve-et ha-nefesh asher asu be-haran" (Bereshit 12:5). His willingness to undertake the most painful and personal sacrifices --reflected in two formulations of "lekh lekha" (Bereshit 12:1; 22:2) --to sever his link to the past embodied by his father's home, and to abandon his long-anticipated future in the episode of akedat Yitzhak -- reflect this absolute commitment to Hashem.

Noah's commitment is characterized as "et ha-Elokim hithalekh Noah" (Bereshit 7:1), while Avraham's is described as "asher hithalakhti lefanav". According to the midrash, cited by Rashi (7:7), Noah required some impetus to enter into the tevah, the symbol of his spiritual journey, while Avraham was always self-motivated. Noah's legacy focuses on his own status and survival- "eleh toledot Noah, Noah" etc., while Avraham's active role in shaping the values and destiny of his progeny - "eleh toledot Yitzhak ben Avraham, Avraham holid et Yitzhak" - are accented. Avraham's passionate plea on behalf of Sodom, one particular society whose values stood in total contradiction to his own world-view, is often sharply contrasted with Noah's silent reaction to the doomed fate of an entire world. While Noah hedged his bets and is sometimes characterized as "mekatnei emunah", Avraham's approach is characterized by simple faith (Bereshit 15:6), idealism and enthusiasm. "Vayashkem Avraham ba-boker" (Bereshit 22:3) signifies zerizut (alacrity) in approaching the akedah, notwithstanding the fact that it was undoubtedly his most difficult spiritual and emotional challenge.

Noah is essentially a crisis manager and survivor, albeit one entrusted with the crucial role of ensuring continuity. The only way he

can respond to the crisis of "ketz kol basar ba lefanai" is by insulating himself in the tevah and riding out the storm. Avraham Avinu, on the other hand, is an idealistic visionary, passionately devoted to transforming the world into an arena for Hashem's kedushah - accenting "elokei ha-aretz", fully committed to spreading the spiritually ambitious teachings of the Torah. He employs the values of hesed in arguing on behalf of Sedom, and in implementing his rescue of Lot, though he had chosen the lifestyle antithetical to that of Avraham's- "vehu yoshev be-Sedom"(Bereshit 14:12).

Noah's limited spiritual ambition and more circumscribed role is reflected by his conduct in the aftermath of the crisis when he was faced with the opportunity to initiate and shape the new world. In many respects, he is unable to transcend the limitations of his environment and his past. Instead of seizing a singular opportunity to symbolically and substantively inaugurate a new order, he proceeds, after bringing a korban of thanksgiving, to plant a vineyard and succumb to its effects, with disastrous consequences. The contrast to Avraham Avinu, the maximalist man of destiny who never rests on his laurels, achieving new spiritual heights as he is constantly challenged and tested ϕ "va-yehi ahar ha-devarim ha-elah" (Bereshit 22:1, 20 ; Avot 5:3)-, is manifest.

These two perspectives are reflected in the contrast between the full complement of halakhic obligation and the Noahide code. The 613 commandments relate to and regulate every dimension of human life, expanding the concept and scope of the sacred and suffusing the mundane with sanctity. The more limited seven-obligation Noahide code does effectively insure significant social stability, a standard of monotheism, as well as a measure of sanctity in other realms of life, but it does not approximate the pervasive and ambitious program of the halakhah. The midrash (Mishpatim Rabbah, nos. 6, 18) contrasts the two systems in various ways, and emphasizes that the greater scope of halakhic obligation impacts upon the quality and significance of even those aspects which the two systems share in common. While Noah's role as a survivor who bridged two worlds was indispensable, it is the transition to Avraham Avinu, the embodiment of spiritual initiative and idealism, that marks the true beginning of Jewish history.

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