

# עֵטְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ



A Weekly Torah Publication from the students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

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ח'י ב"ר משה שמואל ע"ה

## THE MESSENGER OF CHESED. . . *Rabbi Leibe Wolf, 10th Grade Rebbe*

The Torah describes Avraham Avinu as the "sar shel chesed", the paragon of kindness. However, perhaps Noach who preceded Avraham Avinu should be described as "נח איש חסד"? After all, look at the kindness Noach dealt to the animals in the *teivah*. For close to a year, day and night, he persevered in caring for all the animals of the *teivah*.

However, the Torah does not characterize Noach as a *baal chesed* because he did what was required of him *mitzad hadin*. He was responsible for the care of the animals put in his charge. Avraham Avinu went beyond the call of duty, and conducted himself as a paragon of *chesed* because his *penimus*; his inner self called within him to do so. Avraham erected a tent with four doors because he envisioned the wayfarer approaching the back of his tent with a parched throat. Therefore, Avraham erected a tent with a door in each direction, truly feeling with the wayfarers.

Chazal tell us "את האלקים התהלך נח" – the word "את" over here means *עם*; *with*. Noach needed assistance from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu provided that aid. Whereas Avraham Avinu was *mechazek* himself and reached the *madriegah* where he didn't need any

extra assistance. As the pasuk says, *אשר התהלכתי לפניו*.

Avraham Avinu was *mispallel* for the cities of Sidom and Amorah where only *rishoim* dwelled. The inhabitants of Sidom were the antithesis of what Avraham represented. They forbade anyone to invite guests, yet Avraham was *mispallel* for them because as long as they were alive, he felt

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## WELL PLANTED INTENTIONS

*Avi Lieberman, 12th Grade*

ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם [ט:כ]

NOACH, THE MAN OF THE EARTH, DEBASED HIMSELF AND PLANTED A VINEYARD.

After the *mabul* ended, Noach along with his family and the surviving animals are commanded to leave the *teivah*. It is interesting that one of the first things Noach does once he steps foot on dry land is plant a vineyard, thereafter getting intoxicated.

There's a Midrash that explains that the reason Noach planted a vineyard so soon, was because during one of his rounds serving food to the animals on the *teivah*, he was late serving the lion. Out of anger, the lion bit one of Noach's limbs, causing him immense pain. He was in so much pain that when he came out of the *teivah*, he planted the vineyard to relieve his pain.

This raises a practical problem; if Noach was in so much pain, why didn't he find something quicker to sooth his agony? To plant something, one has to work the land; the actual planting, watering, soil and the required waiting, etc. Noach was going to wait for all this? If he's in such pain, he should run to find something quicker?

Rabbi Aryeh Zev Ginsberg, Morah D'Asrah of the Chofetz Chaim Torah Center in Cedarhurst NY, brings a Midrash from *Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer*. The Midrash states how when Adam HaRishon was told he would

have to leave Gan Eden because of the sin with the *eitz hadaas*, he was devastated. Hashem felt his pain, and threw a branch from one of the trees in Gan Eden for Adam to take along with him. It was part

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נפטר ו' מרחשון

# STORIES OF TZADDIKIM



A draught had hit Eretz Yisroel because of the lack of rain the entire winter, and everybody felt the impact. The yeshivos, though, got hit by it the most. In this time of great distress, the rabbonim of each community got together, and decided that someone should travel to the other Jewish communities abroad, fundraising for the yeshivos. But who would embark on such a long journey, especially when these rabbonim barely knew anything of the outside world? A raffle was held, and Rav Avraham Galanti picked the 'winning' ticket. He was a righteous Jew known for his modesty and vast Torah knowledge.

Being that the situation was urgent, Rav Avraham quickly packed a few items and boarded a ship for his main destination; Constantinople. It was a very dangerous journey over seas, and more than a few times Rav Avraham prepared to swim for it. After a few weeks, the captain finally spotted land, but something was noticeably different. The ports which were usually full of merchants and ship crews were deserted, with people wearing petrified faces standing on rooftops. Fearing that a plague or some epidemic had broken out, the captain announced that they were skipping over the Constantinople port. Rav Galanti was extremely upset, realizing he could not simply leave empty handed. He approached the captain with his situation, prompting the captain - who had gained respect for this fearless and determined Jew - to provide him with a rowboat.

When making it to shore, a guard quickly approached the tzaddik and told him to immediately turn around. He explained that two lions belonging to the sultan had escaped and were feasting on innocent people, which is why people were standing on their rooftops. Just then a roar was heard, sending the guard running for his life. Left on the port was Rav Avraham Galanti and a hungry lion. The townspeople couldn't bear to look, yet when they glance back, they were shocked to see that Rav Avraham was calmly leading the lion by its royal leash through the streets. The people followed to see the tzaddik retrieve the other lion as well, who had just finished crushing a large door.

Rav Avraham calmly continued his way through the streets, leading these now tamed lions all the way to the steps of the sultan's palace. The tzaddik was seated next to the sultan who asked how he had the courage to approach the dangerous lions, and what magic was used in the process.

Rav Galanti explained that he had come fundraising for his brethren back in Eretz Yisroel, and

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## SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS?

*Rabbi Elchonon Zomber, Rebbe*

In describing Noach's level of righteousness, the Torah uses the term *tzaddik tamim*. The commentaries are bothered why the term "*tzaddik*" by itself is insufficient. Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt'l*, gives the following explanation:

*Tzaddik* refers to a person who gets criticized and others have *טענות* on him, but after a thorough examination he is exonerated of all accusations. A "*tamim*", on the other hand, has a perfect record - no *טענות* against him at all.

When a person is by himself and he minds his own business, he should aspire to be a *tamim*, which is a higher level than that of a *tzaddik*. However, when a person is involved in a leadership role, the highest level he can attain is that of a *tzaddik*. This is because it is inevitable that he will be subjected to intense scrutiny when he is in the public eye.

If so, why shouldn't a person preferably play it safe and keep to himself rather than expose himself to abuse and criticism when he is involved in trying to be a *mashpiah*?

The answer is that Hashem demands that those who *can* lead - *should* lead, even if that will mean they will have to accept being on a lower *madreigah*.

This is the message Hashem was telling Noach. I appreciate that you're a *tamim* in your personal affairs, but even more so I cherish your *madriegah* of *tzidkus* as you try to teach and guide the world.

AVI LIEBERMAN (continued from page 1)

of this powerful branch that was used by Noach when he planted his vineyard after the *mabul*. It is amazing that from this vineyard came the terrible sins found at the end of this week's parsha, eventually leading to the cursing of an entire nation.

Yet what about the other piece of the branch thrown from Gan Eden – whatever happened to that? The Midrash explains that the other part of the branch was used by Avraham Avinu for the big tree outside his tent which was used to give comfort to travelers while Avraham performed his *hachnosas orchim*. While being honored with Avraham Avinu for a waiter, the travelers were also graced with pleasurable shade from this special tree.

*Imagine!* From the same branch that emanated from Gan Eden came two amazingly different outcomes. One led to many sins and punishment, while the other led to great acts of kindness! If we examine Avraham's adherence to *hachnosas orchim*, we will see that it was through his love and compassion for this mitzvah that led to the birth of Yitzchak, thus beginning the lineage of the Jewish People! We are all "thrown" many opportunities in our life to choose for better or for worse, and we can imagine how much of an effect our choices will have. To think twice before acting can bring blessings upon blessings to everyone involved. Everything is from the same blessed source. . . and it's up to us where we plant our intentions.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM (continued from page 2)

that no magic was used in taming the lions. He explained, "All my life I have fought against my evil inclination, and have purified myself to the extent that I no longer fear anything but the Almighty Himself! Your majesty, our Torah states, [ויכ:] *שנים מכל יבאו אליך להחיות*. . . *מהעוף למינהו*. . . *From each bird according to its kind. . . two of each shall come to you to keep alive*. The animals came to man to stay alive, because man is the ruler over all the creatures. Hashem created animals with an instinct to fear man, but this fear is only present when man acts like man – not like an animal. When a person corrupts himself, he is ruining Hashem's Image within him. It is no wonder that when man does wrong, *he* actually fears the animals instead of the reverse!"

The sultan and his officers stood in awe from the words given over to them from an obvious man of G-d. The sultan quickly led the rav to his treasure vault, giving him enough gold and jewels to last the Jews in Eretz Yisroel for years. Rav Avraham returned home from a fulfilled mission amidst much happiness and joy.



Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"v by the Kosel

Hashem has put us in a position over many beautiful and amazing creatures. Nevertheless, we are only in that position if we have control over ourselves, without acting like an animal. Only *then* can Hashem's creations truly come to respect us and even fear us – when we come to truly fear. . . and love Hashem. *Gut Shabbos*.

RABBI WOLF (continued from page 1)

there was hope they would be *חוזר בתשובה*, because his *kavanos* were *לשם שמים*.

Noach however felt that *על פי דין* the generation deserved death – so be it – he was not *mispallel* for his generation and therefore we find Chazal referring to the *mabul* as "מי נח," as to imply that his insensitivity for the generation caused the *mabul* to come.

The first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of the *עבירות חמורות*. Seventy years later the second Beis HaMikdash was built. However, 420 years later because of *sinas chinam* it was destroyed. The opposite of *sinas chinam* is *ahavas chinam*; love for no reason except because your fellow man is a Yid!

In the Tefilah of Yomim Noroim the Chazzan recited, "וגו', וכל גיירה רעה ושנאת חנם מעלנו ומעל כל בני בריתך אבינו מלכנו זכור רחמיך וכבוש כעסך וכלה דבר." We know when Chazal enumerate by listing, it is done *מהקל אל החמור* - obviously *sinas chinam* is the last on the list since it is the most severe *aveirah*.

On Purim we say, "ברוך מרדכי היהודי, וארור המן אשר בקש לאבד כל היהודים." When cursing Haman we recite a reason, yet when blessing Mordechai no reason is recited. . . he is blessed simply because he was a *יהודי*. From all these lessons of *chesed*, we can gain immensely and truly be *zoche* to the *geulah shleimah* through the merit of *ahavas chinam*, speedily in our day.

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l

Before Noach entered the *teivah*, Hashem commanded him to take a certain number of every type of animal, in order that all of the animals would survive the devastation, and no species would become extinct. He was told to take seven males and seven females of every kosher animal, and one male and one female of every non-kosher animal. The Meforshim explain that the reason Noach had to bring more kosher animals onto the *teivah* was so he would be able to offer *korbanos* after the flood was over. On the other hand, the only reason that Noach had to take the non-kosher animals aboard the *teivah* was to protect them from extinction. As such, it sufficed for only two animals to be brought. The Meforshim point out another difference between the kosher and non-kosher animals, namely that the non-kosher animals came to the *teivah* of their own accord, while Noach had to venture out to find the kosher animals.



Based on the explanation of the first differentiation, HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt'l offers the following explanation for the second difference. The non-kosher animals, which came only for their own self-preservation, came of their own accord. In contrast, the kosher animals, which were to be offered as *korbanos*, required effort on Noach's part, as an essential part of doing a *mitzvah* is the effort that goes into it. As such, it would not suffice to have the animals come by themselves, and it was necessary for Noach to exert effort to obtain them.

We find a similar idea by Dovid HaMelech (שמואל ב' כד: כ - כד). Towards the end of Dovid's life, he asked a man named Aravnah to sell him wood to build an altar, and animals to bring as *korbanos*. Aravnah offered the king anything he wanted to take, "on the house". Dovid responded that it was not fitting for a *korban* to be obtained with so little effort, and he therefore wished instead to purchase the materials for the full price. We see that to be done properly, *korbanos* require effort and self sacrifice. Only then is a *korban* truly complete.

Rav Yaakov concludes by pointing out, that the birds all came to Noach by themselves, indiscriminate of whether they were kosher or not. He explains, that this is because birds are not as easily discernable as kosher or non-kosher as animals. Therefore, the appropriate amount of each animal came to the *teivah* by themselves.

Working to perform *mitzvos* is an essential part of our *avodas Hashem*, which truly requires our toil and effort. Let our *zerizus* and exertion be a merit to Klal Yisroel, and bring us closer to the coming of the *geulah shleimah*, speedily in our day.

During Succos of the year 5684 (1923), Reb Meir Yechiel Shapiro zt'l, the Drohobitscher Rebbe, once asked Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt'l the following question. "My chassidim asked me why I urge them to emigrate from Poland to Eretz Yisroel? After all, they argue, there is trouble in the Land as well: Arabs strike Jews, etc. I answered them that in Poland, the gentiles beat Jews because there are too many of them, while here in Eretz Yisroel, they beat Jews because there are too few."

Rav Kook responded: "I too was asked this question, and I explained the difference between Poland and Eretz Yisroel as follows: There are two medical conditions that people face during their lifetimes: The first is physical degeneracy which comes with old age. Everyone dreads this condition, even though in and of itself it is not so dangerous. The second condition, on the other hand is actually dangerous. Nevertheless, everyone looks forward to it and is happy when it comes - that is childbirth."

"The troubles that Jews face in *Chutz LaAretz*," concluded Rav Kook, "are the degenerative diseases of old age. The troubles we face in Eretz Yisroel, however, are birth pangs."

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