

זכור את־יום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל־מלאכתך,
ויום השביעי שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

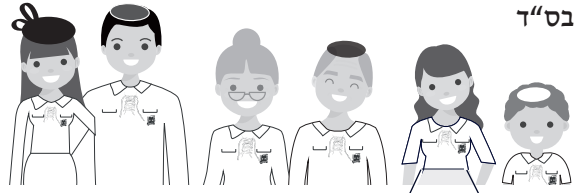
THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT NOACH

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בס"ד



This week's edition of Shabbat Lashem is dedicated to the refua of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben Liba. May he have a refua shelema amongst all the other cholim of Israel.



THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY

RAFI KLEIMAN
SHEVET AVICHAI

עָשָׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גֹפְרִית קָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַתֵּבָה וְכָפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ
מִבִּיֵּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:
'Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark
with compartments, and cover it inside and out with
pitch.' (Bereishit 6:14)

All would agree that Noah's Ark is a childhood classic. 'The animals went in two-by-two - hurrah, hurrah!' undoubtedly rings in the ears of Shul goers upon hearing this Torah portion read in Shul. However, taking a step away from the nursery nostalgia, there are glaring questions about the very task Hashem instructs Noah to undertake.

Perhaps most notably, as picked up by the Chizkuni, why does Hashem actually command the construction of an ark? 3 verses later (Bereishit 6:17), He is clear that He is 'about to bring the Flood... to destroy all flesh under the sky'. Surely it is far smarter to utilise the expanse of space available to Him, 'cutting off' a bit of land for Noah, the Mishpacha (his family) and the animals to reside in rather to have them cooped up in a cramped, wooden structure, floating its way amongst the raging flood?!

Comes along Rashi and answers with a well-known comment - the aim was for Noah to spend 120 years dedicated to this ark project, enabling enough time for the men of the Generation of the Flood to ask Noah, 'What do you need this for?', prompting the response that a Flood is on its way and acting as a call to do Teshuva.

This aptly answers 'Why an ark?' - it was a means to invoke mass attention towards Noah, the odd, 'righteous man in his generation', whilst he was putting the structure together and encourage the sinful locals to scratch their heads, ponder upon

what they are seeing and engage with the ark builder himself. Though a question yet remains. Why did Noah's mission require 120 years?

From a construction perspective, 120 years to follow a few instructions communicated by Hashem is seemingly rather excessive. Even with the ark-building equivalent of exam 'Extra-Time' or football 'Stoppage-Time', this allotted time appears generous for a relatively easy task.

From an educational perspective, would one not view 120 years as a bit 'uber' of an amount of time to inspire society to change their ways? When considering this latter question, it is worth considering that 120 is the stock age which Jewish tradition notifies as a long, full life - 'Ad me'a v'esrim' ('May you live until the age of 120!') we often extend to one another. So, what purpose is there of a lifetime's worth of communicating a message? If anything, as time progresses, this pre-Flood generation is more likely to resist the lesson even more - as Rav Yisrael Salanter said, it is harder to change one habit than to complete learning the entirety of the Talmud!

Chizkuni aids our search for an answer. He notes that Hashem wanted to show the attribute of Mercy, that he had done everything in His power to avoid the imminent destruction of the world when the wicked took note of Noah's serious approach to Hashem's warning. It could be suggested that 120 years was Hashem stretching out his attribute of Mercy for as long as possible. Hashem does not want to destroy His creations; he does not want to destroy His world. He will even go as far as giving 120 chances. Though if it is necessary, it is necessary.

The question for us, particularly post-Chagim, is are we also being given chances? Are we being given several chances? It is our responsibility to scratch our heads, ponder and engage with the world-builder Himself to find out.

**RAFI WAS A MADRICH ON HAROEH-GIMMEL
5780 AND IS A NIVCHAR FOR 5781.**

London	In: 17:34 Out: 18:39	Oxford	In: 17:35 Out: 18:43	Leeds	In: 17:32 Out: 18:43
Manchester	In: 17:38 Out: 18:46	Bristol	In: 17:41 Out: 18:49	Liverpool	In: 17:39 Out: 18:49
Cambridge	In: 17:29 Out: 19:38	Birmingham	In: 17:36 Out: 18:45	Jerusalem	In: 17:22 Out: 18:34

NOT JUST AN ESCAPE ROUTE

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



It was one of history's great construction projects. For 120 years, Noah spent his days labouring on the building of the ark. The question is, why did he have to bother at all?

A third approach is suggested by Rav Dessler. Aside from the 120 years that Noah spent building the ark, the year in which Noah and his sons travelled and lived in it was far from easy. All of the animals on board required feeding, and all at particular times of day and night. The task of having to feed tens of thousands of animals meant that there was no time to rest, to the extent that Chazal tell us that those on board the ark didn't sleep for the entire year.

The Ramban points out that the ark could not possibly have contained within it enough room for members of every animal species on earth and enough food to sustain them all for a year. The only way to explain everything fitting into it is by a

miracle - "החזיק מועט את-המרובה". Yet if Noah and his family were to be saved by miraculous means, surely it would have been easier not to build an ark at all? Or at the very least, one smaller and less time consuming?

The Ramban himself suggests two answers. The first is that the long construction period was meant to arouse the curiosity of the generation. When people would see Noah engaged in this strange task they were meant to ask him what he was doing. Thus, talk would spread about the upcoming flood, and hopefully people would be encouraged to change their ways.

A second reason suggested by the Ramban is that miracles are usually concealed in nature to the greatest extent possible. Rather than shoving all the animals into a tiny space and produce a miracle which was apparent to all, Noah was to build a large ark in order to make it seem that nature was taking it's course.

Of all the horrible deeds committed by the generation of the flood, theft and robbery were those that sealed their fate. Rav Dessler explains that the origin of theft is the quality of taking for oneself. Nothing could be further from the ways of Hashem, Who created the world in order to give.

THE YEAR SPENT ON THE ARK WAS A YEAR OF GIVING. NOACH SPENT HIS TIME THERE ENGAGED SOLELY IN SELFLESSNESS, CHESSSED, AND GIVING BEYOND HIMSELF. THIS WAS THE PERFECT ANSWER TO A GENERATION DEVOTED ONLY TO TAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

The year spent on the ark was a year of giving. Noah spent his time there engaged solely in selflessness, chesssed, and giving beyond himself. This was the perfect answer to a generation devoted only to taking for themselves. The time on the ark provided an opportunity for the world to be reimbued with the original qualities for which it was created. Far from being just a means to rescue those on board from a destroyed world, the ark was the beginning of the process of rebuilding. Ultimately, the chesssed performed by Noah gave the world a new lease on life.

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NOACH - THE MODEL SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIOR?

DANIEL ROSS | CHINUCH WORKER



Noach is described as an “ish tzaddik, tamim haya b'dorotav; et haElokim hit'halech Noach - a righteous man, perfect in his generation, a man who walked with G-d” (Bereishit 6:9). At first glance, Noach seems like the perfect role model. When

we enter self-reflection and introspection, when we ask ourselves “Mi Anachnu? Who are we?” Noach appears to be the gold standard we should aim for.

Yet Rashi points out that not everyone understands this passuk like this. Some of our Rabbis explain that Noach was great compared to his generation, but if he was in Avraham's generation, he would not have been considered anything of significance. While others explain that whilst he was righteous in his (poor) generation, he would have been even greater in a better generation.

Rav Hirsch defines a ‘tzaddik’ as someone who “looks at everything objectively, nothing from the standpoint of his own interests, but everything from the point of view of what is right. It is primarily social justice.” “Tamim on the other hand, is preferable connected with ... derech (path). Derech is primarily the development through which a person going to the consummation of his own personality.” Unlike ‘tzaddik’ which is about deeds that relegate your own personality to the background, “in derech the satisfaction and perfection of his own personality is the aim” to the extent that the ultimate goal is self-mastery over your actions so that nothing immoral will come of them.

Noach engaged in social justice by building the teiva, the ark. The construction process took 120 years – Noach didn't spend over a century building

it for fun! He didn't do it for his own self-interest but rather “so that the people of the Generation of the Flood should see him busy with it” and thus allow him to encourage them to repent. (Rashi, Bereishit 6:14) Noach was tamim in his generation, he was perfectly moral. The wickedness of his generation, like the water of the flood itself, did not engulf him. Yet despite all this, his greatness is still minimised by some of our Sages.

Rabbi Sacks summarises Noach in two sentences: “Noah was righteous but not a leader. He was a good man who had no influence on his environment.” He explains “The Hassidim had a simple way of making this point. They called Noah a tzaddik im

peltz, “a righteous man in a fur coat.” There are essentially two ways of keeping warm on a cold night. You can wear a thick coat, or you can light a fire. Wear a coat and you warm only yourself. Light a fire and you can warm others too.”

WE MUST WORK ON DEVELOPING INTO THE BEST WE CAN POSSIBLE BE FROM A MORAL PERSPECTIVE, AND HELPING OTHERS DO THE SAME. WE MUST BE TZADDIKIM AND TAMIM BUT MUST ALSO HELP THOSE BESIDE US TO ACHIEVE THIS AS WELL.

When we are introspective, and think about who we are and who we want to be, we need to ask ourselves this question: ‘Am I going to wear a thick coat or light a fire?’ It is imperative that we strive to go beyond making the right decision devoid of self-interest, and instead encourage others to also do what is right. We must work on developing into the best we can possible be from a moral perspective, and helping others do the same. We must be tzaddikim and tamim but must also help those beside us to achieve this as well.

Is it possible to engage with the scary, ‘big wide world’ and remain morally unaffected? Rav Hirsch explains that “such a struggle as Noach had to endure does not remain without some weakening influence on one's character. But surely, on the other side, even a somewhat lesser degree of morality and honesty, attained and kept in such times, weighs incomparably heavier in G-d's scales

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- We are excited to bring you our brand new **Kadima programme for children in Years 3-10!**

Running once a month Chanichim can enjoy an exciting programme of Tochniot, Peulot and social activities in a Covid-Secure environment. **Year 3-4 will delve into the stories of Tanach** in an experiential way through fun, games and tochniot! **Year 5-6 will engage with Israel** in an enjoyable, interactive and experiential way surrounded (at a distance) by their friends! **Year 7-8 will enhance their Bar and Bat Mitzvah years with a community engagement** theme! **Year 9 will connect with Israel**, learning about the country's history, significance and culture! Sign up at bauk.org/kadima!

- **Svivot are up and running!** Look out for updates from your local sviva or visit www.bauk.org/svivot.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Over the last six months our Mazkirut and Bogrim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv in the Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, and now a packed summer of programming for over 400 children. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Applications are open for **Winter Machane**

5781! Join us at an exciting new site from **21st-28th December** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva residential full of fun, friends and Ruach! **NEW THIS YEAR: Machane Seenai for Year 11!** Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- **Winter Machane Tafkidim** have opened! Sign up at www.bauk.org/camps.

- **SBM is back!** Look out for updates on social media of the different chaburot being given on a variety of topics and keynote speakers. If you are looking for a chavruta please get in touch!

- We have launched a **chesed initiative** planned by madrichim and chanichim who volunteered at GIFT during machane: **donate your old football shirts, shorts and boots** to those who can't afford them! Drop off any donations (clean and in good condition) at the London Bayit.

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to stay informed of our online content!

- To receive weekly copies of **Shabbat Lashem**, sign up for our mailing list at bauk.org/contact.

- Visit bauk.org/feedback for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

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Winter Machane 5781



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