



The Difference Between Avraham and Noach

By Yoel Horwitz, 11th Grade

Noach, despite his being alive before the birth of Judaism, is really the second major figure in the Torah after Adam. That said, Noach doesn't seem to gain the same respect as the other major Torah figures, like Avraham. Even though Noach was the one that single handedly saved all living creatures, fed them, and cultivated life on a destroyed planet, he doesn't get the same recognition that his future descendants, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov receive. Noach's biography is summed up in this week's Torah reading, "All existence on earth was blotted out—man, cattle, creeping things, and birds of the sky; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noach was left, and those with him in the ark" (Bereishis 7:23) Noach's place in history and especially Jewish history is not so memorable. Why doesn't the savior of humanity receive the same honor that is bestowed upon our forefathers?

A story is told about Mr. Stephen Klein, one of America's largest Kosher confectioners and world renowned Askan. Mr. Klein was a major supporter of Beis Medrash Govoha, the yeshiva founded by Rabbi Ahron Kotler zt"l in Lakewood and later led by his son Rabbi Shneur Kotler, zt"l. It just so happened that Rav Shneur Kotler and Mr. Klein were together at an affair and Mr. Klein was scheduled to introduce Rav Shneur. And he did so in a unique way.

"Both Rav Shneur and I have much in common. We both went to Cheder

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Life After the Mabul

By Eitan Eckman, 11th Grade

In this week's Parsha, following the flood that destroyed most of civilization, all of the people on Earth spoke the same language and acted as one cohesive group. This was done by Hashem in order for them to work on the mistakes of the previous, evil generations that existed before the flood. The pre-flood generation had lots of problems with robbery and violence - each of which are committed by individuals that harm a collective. The new generation, however, stressed the unity of the people and not the individual.

The question is where did it all go wrong for the people of Babel if they were living in such a perfect society? The answer, ironically, was their over-emphasis on unity. "Come let us build a city and a tower with its head in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves" (Bereshis 11:3). This project was carried out to show the accomplishments of their society. The Chachamim tell us that they were so devoted to the tower that they would only be upset when a brick broke off the tower but not when a person would die during the construction. This emphasis on society left them to not care for the individual and they became another example of a failed generation.

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Bracha on the Rainbow

Gemara In Berachos 59a: One who sees a rainbow in a cloud should fall on his face, because it's based on the pasuk, "Kemareh Hakeshes Asher Yihye Beenan...", that the rainbow in the cloud is indicative of the glory of Hashem and should be treated as such.

However, they condemned this practice in Eretz Yisrael, because it looks like you're bowing to the rainbow and not Hashem. Rather, they would recite a bracha of "Baruch Zocher Habris, Ve'neaman bevriso Ve'Kayam Bema'amaro".

There is a Gemara in Chagigah 16a which tells us that anyone who does not heed the honor of his Creator is better off not having been born. This is one who gazes at a rainbow. These gemaras seem to be contradictory, as one says to look at the rainbow and make a blessing, while the other says the opposite! The Shulchan Aruch asks this question, and the Seder Chassidim quotes the Rosh which says that there is a difference between looking and gazing: looking is actually permitted while gazing for long periods of time is not allowed.

R' Ovadya Yosef on Orach Chaim Siman Vav Chalek Yud Gimmel says that in Avodah Zarah 20 Rav holds you cannot say how beautiful a non-jew is because it violates Lo Saichaneim. The Gemara then questions this with examples of Rav Shimon Ben Gamliel and R' Akiva who both acknowledged the beauty of non-jewish women, and answers by declaring those instances as being by accident. R' Ovadya then asks that based on what we said by a rainbow, that you could look for a small period of time, these Sages did nothing

wrong! Didn't they just look for a short period of time? However, we still hold like the Rosh.

The Chayei Adam writes that he saw in a Sefer that one should not tell his friend about a rainbow, because it is akin to spreading bad news, like we see in Kesubos that a rainbow is a sign Hashem is angry with the generation. We also know one can't share bad news from Pesachim 3-4 where the Gemara states that Rav's father was R' Chiya's half brother, while his mother was R' Chiya's half sister. When Rav asked them how each was doing, he would deflect the question to the other to avoid spreading bad news.

Lastly, R' Shternbuch holds that one should be careful to only say the bracha when it is a perfect semi-circle. Everyone holds you can only say one bracha per rainbow, and you do not need to stand while doing so.



SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Jared
Mark*

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Noach, we are introduced to two of the most famous characters in Jewish history; beginning with the extraordinary life of Noach Hatzadik and ending with the birth of Avraham Avinu and his family. As we all know, they were both powerhouses in all aspects of Yiddishkeit and Avodas Hashem. Both had the fire of Torah burning astoundingly within them, although, even though it may appear to not be so on the surface level, there is a fundamental difference between these two giants.

To fully understand the difference between them, let's start by taking a closer look at the story of Noach. As we were taught way back in 2nd grade, Noach brought tons of animals with him onto the Teiva in order to protect them. Now, why would these animals need protection? After all, they're just animals; what could they have done that would warrant their population being wiped off the face of the Earth?

Rashi in Noach (6:7) gives two fundamental answers to our question. Firstly, he says that the wrongdoings of the humans were so great and encompassing that they had such a negative effect on the animals, which warranted them to be wiped out. Animals were created for a sole purpose: For the use of man. And if man were to be destroyed, the animals would have no purpose on this Earth. For the purpose of this Dvar Torah, let's focus on the first answer of Rashi, which also happens to fit in nicely with the idea that the fish were killed because they had the water as a barrier to shield them from the humans' sins.

Now, to tie this idea into the descriptions of our great forefathers, let's use a Mashal of two types of Jews: A jacket Jew and a campfire Jew. Superficially, they seem to accomplish the same purpose: To provide us with the warmth of Torah. In reality, though, these two Jews couldn't be more dissimilar. While a jacket provides warmth only for the beholder, a campfire provides warmth not only for the creator but also for all those who are near it.

There is a direct correspondence between the Mashal of these two Jews and the personalities of Noach and Avraham. On the surface level, Noach would appear to be the jacket Jew, as he kept to himself while building the Teivah for 120 years. On the other hand, Avraham would appear to be the campfire Jew, focusing his entire life on spreading the Torah to others. Now, doesn't it seem that what Noach did is on a "lower-level" than Avraham? Even accounting for the fact that if Noach operated as a campfire Jew he likely would have warranted death, as the fish did, it still seems as if Noach was somewhat selfish, and didn't spread his knowledge.

This analogy relating the Mashal of the two types of Jews to Avraham and Noach imparts on us a crucial life lesson, namely, that everyone has a place/job in this world. Not everything in this world can be judged as simple as black and white. As we see from Noach, it's important to look past the objective viewpoint of your role and just do you. Hopefully, by all playing our unique parts we can together bring the Moshiach Bimhaira Beyamainu!

Ein Shum Yeiush

By: Eitan Schafler, 9th Grade

Looking through the pesukim of Parshas Noach and the overall storyline of his journey with Hashem from the Mabul and the Teiva, I came across the following question: why is Noach so quickly willing to leave behind his generation? Moshe at least tried to defend his nation, so why doesn't Noach attempt to do the same? Furthermore, Avraham was even willing to defend the nation of Sidom which was not his own. We have this concept of trying to bring back civilization to the ways of Hashem. Why is Noach ignoring this concept? The Zohar explains that when Hashem wants to destroy a nation he always talks to the most righteous of the nation. In our case, that individual was Noach. He did not take the initiative to save his generation and the question we are left with is why? We also see that he only saw the gravity of the event after the fact. The Zohar states "What did God answer Noach when he left the Ark and saw the world destroyed? He [Noah] began to cry before God and he said, "Master of the universe, You are called compassionate. You should have been compassionate for Your creation." God responded and said, "You are a foolish shepherd. Now you say this?! Why did you not say this at the time I told you that I saw that you were righteous among your generation, or afterward when I said that I will bring a flood upon the people, or afterward when I said to build an ark? I constantly delayed and I said, 'When is he [Noah] going to ask for compassion for the world?' ... And now that the world is destroyed, you open your mouth, to cry in front of me, and to ask for supplication?" [Zohar Hashmatot, Bereishit 254b]" God tells Noach that he was constantly delaying, waiting for Noach to ask for forgiveness for his people. So why does he only cry to Hashem now?

When Noach was first addressed by Hashem, he had already been put through years of abuse from his people for doing the right thing and being a moral person. Noach believed, with all his heart, that this nation was beyond saving. Rabbi Soloveitchik ZTz"l explains that one who does not believe in the possibility of redemption and forgiveness for every Jew, does not himself partake in it. Yom Kippur, also known as Yom Din, is a day that is based on this very concept of forgiveness; if someone does not believe in redemption he cannot be redeemed. The lesson of this story of Noach is that it is not our job to judge people and determine whether or not they deserve forgiveness; rather, it's to help our fellow Yidden on their journey to forgiveness. Avraham could not stand to see that a nation was about to suffer before his eyes and so he prayed to Hashem for their forgiveness, regardless of whether or not they deserved it. Hashem tests Avraham another time and he passes again as he defends a nation that is far beyond saving. On the other hand, Hashem tests Noach on a bigger scale and Noach fails. He says to himself: if Hashem wants them to be destroyed then I trust him. But the Zohar explains that Hashem was WAITING for Noach to argue with him. And only after the fact did Noach realize his failure and he said to Hashem, "I was wrong, I should have taken responsibility for the people and I did not but when You saw that I chose wrongly, You should have stepped in and saved the nation." Noach says "Master of the universe, **You** are called compassionate. **You** should have been compassionate for Your creation". We can all take a lesson from this story of Noach and Hashem to never give up on our fellow Yidden. We learn as well that it is not our job to determine who is worthy of redemption, but our job is to lead them to it.

A guten Shabbos to all!



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

Rav Hershel Schachter shlit"va once took a taxi with his son on their last night in Yerushalayim before returning to America the following day. Rav Schachter usually had a driver, but for whatever reason he ended up taking a taxi that night. Soon after they got to their hotel, they realized that they had left Rav Schachter's briefcase in the trunk of the taxi. With his passport inside it.

They weren't really concerned because, after all, they were in Yerushalayim, and goodhearted Jews have a way of making miraculous things happen in the world's holiest city. They were confident that some way, somehow, they would see it again soon.

It took just two hours for the briefcase to be located, identified, and returned. Apparently, when the next rider hailed the taxi to go to the airport, the driver opened the trunk to load his luggage into it and realized there was already a bag in there. They opened it to see who it belonged to and found Rav Schachter's ID. The rider recognized his name.

"Do you know whose briefcase this is?!" he asked the driver. "Rabbi Hershel Schachter is the Baba Sali of American Ashkenazim!"

After a little detective work and some Jewish geography, the driver reached the Schachters and told them he'd bring the briefcase to their hotel. Rav Schachter sent his son downstairs to meet the driver with a \$100 bill to thank him for his efforts. Surprisingly, the driver refused to take it, saying that what he really wanted was a minute with Rav Schachter.

Their meeting was short but surreal. The driver poured his heart out, explaining that he had been married for 14 years and had no children. Rav Schachter is a very emotional individual who sincerely feels the pain of others. He held the driver's hand and with tears in his eyes, told him that he would celebrate the bris of his son the following year.

Rav Schachter's son was dumbfounded. He couldn't believe that his father could make a promise like that to a man whose prayers had been unanswered for well over a decade. He isn't the Baba Sali, and he had never heard him say anything like that before. But when he asked his father about it, he responded with just five simple words: "We're going to daven for him."

They never exchanged contact information with the driver or even caught his name. Life went on, and the incident faded from Rav Schachter's son's memory.

About a year later, the Schachters found themselves in Ner Israel Baltimore for Simchas Torah — a first for them. As they were dancing, Rav Schachter's son noticed that one of the bochorim kept trying to get Rav Schachter's attention. He asked him if there was something he needed, and he said he had just come back from Eretz Yisrael where a taxi driver who heard him speaking English asked if he knew Rabbi Hershel Schachter.

Yes, it was the same driver. And yes, he wanted to tell Rav Schachter that he and his wife had just become the proud parents of a baby boy, exactly as he had promised.

Rav Schachter's son went to his father. "Do you remember the taxi driver who returned your lost briefcase to us?" he began.

Without blinking, Rav Schachter replied, "Of course. I've been davening for him three times a day, every single day!"

Only in Israel is a lost briefcase returned in a matter of hours. Only in Israel is a reward rejected and a blessing requested in its place. And only among Am Yisrael could the belief of one, and the love of another, combine to create a miracle.

Adapted from Mishpacha Magazine

(Yoel Horwitz- Continued from page 1)

in Europe, survived the war, and now we both run major institutions. We both provide the public with an excellent product which is sweet and enjoyable. Many people stand in line to meet with me and many people stand in line to speak to the Rosh yeshiva. We are both well known and try hard to help others. However there is one difference between us”, Mr. Klein said. He smiled. “I make lollipops and Rav Kotler makes men.”

An important similarity between Noach and Avraham is that they both planted things at important junctures. Noach planted a vineyard when he came out of the Ark and he became drunk. “Noach, the tiller of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard...He drank of the wine and became drunk.” (Bereishis 9:20-21) Avraham similarly planted an Eshel in Be'er Sheva. “He planted an Eshel at Be'er-Sheva, and invoked there the name of the LORD” (Beraishis 21:33) There is a dispute of what this “Eshel” is, whether it was an orchard to feed people or it was an inn for people to rest.

At the same time, there is an obvious contrast between the two: Avraham planted orchards for others; his goal in life was to educate people about the ways of Hashem. Noach, on the other hand, planted for himself; when he left the Ark he planted a vineyard and got drunk - lost in his own world.

We all produce. The question we must ask is who are we producing for? Are we producing fruits that will be used to benefit mankind, or are we providing “lollipops” for self-indulgence? Noach had the opportunity to save many lives, yet despite his personal greatness, Noach did not take advantage of his momentous opportunity. He was not able to nurture and save his generation and he became drunk. Avraham made men, Noach made wine.

Adapted from Rabbi Mordechai Kametzky's book Parsha Parables.

(Eitan Eckman- Continued from page 1)

So how are we supposed to live our lives? Do we focus on the individual and succumb to the mistakes of the first generation, or do we focus on the community and fail as the second the generation did? Naturally, we would assume that if both sides are bad we should try to take the middle road: respecting both the community and the individual. This is why at the very end of the Parsha it mentions Avraham; namely, to show someone who embodies the best of both worlds. Avraham was considered to be one of the most selfless people of all time, but at the same time, the Torah is telling us the story of an individual. The point of this lesson from the Torah is that we need both of these ideologies to live because with individualism there is anarchy and with unity, there are dictators. A society of Avraham-like people will be the apex of greatness for a society where people can think on their own, not be ruled by the mob, but also be altruistic and not being self-centered.

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Rainbow of Hope

Moshe Acobas
11th Grade

Rav Meir Shapiro discusses a commonly asked question: How could it be that Noach, during all 120 years that it took him to build the Teiva, didn't have an effect on a single person that led to them doing teshuva? When the Mabul started, the only people saved were Noach and his family! Wouldn't that in it of itself be enough to leave some sort of impression? Additionally, if the Torah called Noach a "Tzadik Tamim" (a righteous and perfect person), how is it possible that he had no impact whatsoever on anyone around him?

Rav Shapiro answers that it was impossible for Noach to leave an impact on these people because he himself had no faith that they were capable of doing Teshuva. He felt that they were so low spiritually that there was no chance they would ever stop their sinful actions and do repentance for them. A person must be sincere at heart if he really intends to accomplish a goal. If Noach truly didn't believe in his heart that they were going to do teshuva, surely there was no possible way that he could impact them positively.

Rav Shapiro proposes that the reason why Hashem brought a rainbow was to show that the world would never again be destroyed. It signifies to us that even after a dark and rainy storm, a bright rainbow from heaven illuminates the sky. Just because the generation of Noach was in such a low level of holiness, doesn't mean that they couldn't do Teshuva. If Noach truly believed in them, the light of Teshuva would emerge from the darkness of the generation.

The rainbow shows us that in every person, evil or pure at heart, a clean Neshama is found. Hashem never gives up on any person, and all Noach had to do was see the light of the rainbow after the storm.
(Adapted from Torah.org)

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