

**OPENING
ISSUE!**

The Greatness of a Simple Jew

By Brain Chernigoff, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

"Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation" (Bereshis 6:9).

Rashi cites a *Medrash* which suggests two explanations as to what "in his generation" means. One explanation is praiseworthy of Noach, suggesting that if he was righteous in his generation despite the negative influence of his peers, how much greater would he have been had he lived in an era with the positive influence of righteous individuals. The other explanation is derogatory of Noach, suggesting that he was righteous only in comparison to the evil doers of his time, but had he lived in Avraham's generation, he would have been insignificant in comparison to him.

The second explanation of *Rashi* simply points out that Noach was not so righteous, and he would be insignificant in the face of the righteous of other generations. Yet the question begs itself why *Rashi* said specifically that had Noach been in *Avraham's* generation he would be insignificant, and does not simply make a generalization that had Noach been in the generation of someone exceptionally righteous he would have been insignificant.

To answer this, we must understand who Avraham was and what he accomplished during his lifetime. Avraham is popularly known for his *chesed*, or acts of kindness. It was said of him that he set up his tent in the barren desert

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Middos Before the Mission

By Yehuda Shetrit, 11th Grade

In this week's parsha, we have many different events. However, probably the most important one is the incident with the mabul and the tevah. One puzzling aspect of this event is the one with the raven. The puzzling part is: why does the Torah mention the raven if it did not fulfill what Noach wanted it to?

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the reason the raven did not fulfill what Noach wanted is that the traits and behavior of ravens are flawed. Only an individual with the proper *midos* and attributes can perform special missions and tasks. Therefore, the reason it was put in the Torah could be to teach us that we must have proper *midos* to get the opportunity to be involved in *mitzvos* and to receive great reward.

The Chofetz Chaim goes on to use this idea to explain the famous *pasuk* in *tehillim* which is "Ezri Meim Hashem"... The *pasuk* does not actually say from Hashem Himself, so it can be interpreted a little differently. The Chofetz Chaim explains that Dovid Hamelech is asking Hashem to send him help *through people* that are with Hashem. Only if they are *tzadikim* does Dovid want help from them, because then they are with Hashem. So this is just another example of many where it is seen that Hashem gives special *kavod* to perform important actions, only to people with the proper *midos*.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Noach
Questions

1. Which parshas are named for people? (6 answers)
2. Where else in the Torah was someone saved from harm by being situated in a taiva?
3. Where else in the Torah is a raven referred to?
4. Which mitzvah is given personally to both Adam and Noah?
5. A rainbow is called a keshet. Where else in the book of Genesis does the Torah speak about a keshet in reference to a regular bow? (5 answers)
6. Which grandfather and grandson had the same name?
7. When do we say Kaddish after a non-Jew dies?

Answers

1. Baby Moshe is placed into a taiva by his mother to save him from being drowned in the Nile river by the Egyptians (Exodus 2:3).
2. The raven is found in Leviticus 11:15 and Deut. 14:14 in the list of non-kosher birds.
3. Adam and Noah are both given the mitzvah "to be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28, 9:1).
4. When Hagar and Yishmael are in the desert, the verse states that he was a "bow's distance" away (Genesis 21:16). A few verses later, the Torah refers to Yishmael as "an archer" (Genesis 21:20). Before giving the blessing, Yitzhak instructs Esav to take his bow and prepare a meal (Genesis 27:3). Yaakov gives the city of Shchem to Yosef, which he captured "with [his] sword and bow" (Genesis 28:22) The bow is also mentioned later on in the blessing that Yaakov gave Yosef (Genesis 49:24).
5. Nachor has a son Terach who has a son also named Nachor (Genesis 11:24, 26).
6. In the last verse of the parsha, Terach dies (Genesis 11:32). When completing the reading of the parsha, the one who reads the Torah, recites Kaddish.
7. The six parshas named for a person: Noach, Chayei Sarah, Yisro, Korach, Balak, Pinchas.



In this week's Parsha, Parashat Noach, Hashem tells Noach that he will bring a flood that will destroy the entire world due to the immorality that his generation possesses. Hashem tells him that only Noach, his family, and some animals will survive the great flood. After the flood ends, Hashem promises Noach that he will never bring a flood that will destroy the world again.

Benyamin

In This week's Haftorah (Yeshayah 54), Hashem reassures us numerous times that although we, the Jewish people have sinned, and aren't deserving of any mercy, He loves us and He will never leave us. Speedily

The prophet assures the Jewish people that Hashem has not forsaken them. Although He has momentarily "hid His face" from them, He will gather them from their exiles with great mercy. The haftorah compares the final *Geulah* (redemption) to the covenant Hashem made with Noach in this week's Torah reading. Just as Hashem promised to never bring a flood over the entire earth, so too He will never again be angry at the Jewish people.

"For the mountains may move and the hills might collapse, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace collapse." (Yeshaya 54:10)

Hopefully, this should be a chizuk for us, and we should understand that Hashem loves us dearly, and may Mashiach and the final redemption come speedily in are days!

Shabbat Shalom.



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Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers
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(keyword Torah Teasers)

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yuTorah.org

Transcribed by
Zachary Goldberg

Swimming on Shabbos

Hello, my name is Zachary Goldberg, and I am very excited to give over Rabbi Lebowitz's תורה. My email is zachary.goldberg@drshalb.org if there are any questions which I will try and pass on to Rabbi Lebowitz.

Given that this week's parsha focuses on water, we will discuss the issues related to swimming on Shabbos.

-Zachary

Most people think that the reason one cannot swim on Shabbos and Yom Tov is the gemara in Beitzah (36b). The Mishnah there reads: It's asur to swim on Shabbos and Yom Tov since it's a g'zeira that you might come to make a raft. One may suggest that since I will not make a raft, the reason does not apply to me, and therefore, I am permitted to swim. But that's not the reason why it's asur to swim Shabbos and Yom Tov in the first place.

The challenge in explaining why it's asur to swim on Shabbos and Yom Tov is that you would then need to explain why it's mutar to go to a mikvah on Shabbos and Yom Tov. In both situations you are taking your whole body and putting it into a pool of water. So why would it be that going to the mikvah has been accepted as perfectly permissible, but going swimming is something that is asur. What would the difference be?

3 critical differences between a pool and Mikvah:

1) One goes to the mikvah, it's for a mitzvah (tosefes kedusha), and therefore there is some positive element. When one goes swimming, it is simply for pleasure.

2) By the mikvah you are not wearing anything, but by swimming the person is wearing swim apparel of some sort.

3) By the mikvah, the person does not swim, one just dips, but by swimming one actually lifts ones feet off the ground, splashes, and swims.

Issues:

In addition to the mishnah in Beitzah (36b), there is a gemara in Shabbos which reads: One time Rebbe Zeira saw Rebbe Abahu in a pool of water, and

he didn't know if Rebbe Abahu uprooted or didn't uproot, and the gemara says that for sure Rebbe Abahu didn't uproot because you're not allowed to swim on Shabbos and Yom Tov because of the gemara in Beitzah.

What does it mean did he uproot or not?

Rashi says it means he wasn't sure if Rebbe Abahu picked up his feet off the ground and actually swam, or was he just wading through the water. *The gemara concludes that he couldn't have been swimming, because it's asur to swim, so he must have been wading through the water.*

Later the gemara suggests that he might have been swimming, but he was swimming in a pool that it had an edge around the pool. *Since the pool has an edge around the pool then it's not a problem of swimming o Shabbos and Yom Tov, since one will not be building a raft for a pool with an edge.*

The Rif understands this gemara a little differently, that uprooting means that he is uprooting water as he swims, that water is shpritzing out of the pool, and *if water is shpritzing out of the pool then that's the issur of swimming on Shabbos and Yom Tov. But the gemara says that even then, if there is an edge around the pool, it's permissible.*

Whether you follow like Rashi or the Rif, our swimming pools are mutar in the sense that there would be no problem that you would build a raft. And in fact that's how the Shulchan Aruch paskens in siman 339, sif 2.

Rav Moshe zt"l in his work Even Haezer cheilek 2 siman 13 writes, there is no issue that you might come to make a raft. So what is the problem?

1) **Exercising-** is one allowed to exercise on Shabbos and Yom Tov? The Mishnah Berurah siman 301 sif katan 7 writes that walking is also an exercise and that's allowed on Shabbos and Yom Tov since it's a normal thing to do. The same is true when you go swimming, some go swimming for exercise and some just to cool off their bodies. So, if you normally swim for exercise, then swimming is fine.

(Continued on page 5)

Good Actions: Ha'kol B'yidei Shamayim

BY EITAN CARROLL, 10TH GRADE

Parshas Noach begins with the famous *pasuk* "eleh toldos noach" (these are the children of Noach). However, it is only in the next *pasuk* that Noach's children are actually listed. Rather, it mentions good attributes about him in that first *pasuk*, such as that he was righteous in his generation and that he walked with Hashem. *Rashi* makes a puzzling comment about this, "Good deeds are more important than good children". The *Maharal* asks the obvious question on this, "Why is this so?"

The *Maharal* answers that there is a fundamental difference between children and yourself. When it comes to children, they are a combination of Hashem and man's efforts. However, when it comes to your good deeds, "All is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven" (Gemara Berachos 33b). You control what you do in terms of doing mitzvos, and therefore they are a person's greatest accomplishment. This explains why Noach's good deeds are mentioned before the listing of his offspring. It is fitting that Noach's good attributes come first, as *Rashi* says, "A person's main offspring are his good actions".

(Brian Chernigoff — Continued from page 1)

with an entrance in each direction to make it easier to invite guests inside to offer them food and drink. While eating, Avraham educated them about G-d and subsequently brought them under the wings of the *Shechina*, or G-d's presence, drawing many away from their idolatrous practices and towards monotheism. Avraham indeed had a tremendous influence on the people of his generation.

On the other hand, Noach did not exert such influence on his generation. While he in no way condoned the immoral and abominable actions of his peers, he did not exert enough effort to chastise and make an impact on them, and therefore failed to save them from the impending destruction.

In light of this, we can now understand *Rashi's* comparison of Noach to Avraham. Had Noach indeed been in the generation of Avraham, he would have been considered nothing, as he had little to no influence on his colleagues, while Avraham, indeed the first master of *kiruv* had a tremendous impact on his contemporaries.

With this understanding of *Rashi's* second explanation of Noach, we see that Noach was just a simple man who was religiously devoted to G-d, but no great *tzaddik*, as his impact on others was limited to his immediate family. Yet this does not undermine his greatness. Noach lived in a time when the very fabrics of society were discarded in favor of moral depravity. The very things termed as atrocious and abhorrent by the Torah were accepted norms. But despite this, Noach remained firm in his beliefs. He did not budge from what he truly believed was right and wrong.

Noach epitomizes the *pashuter yid*, the simple Jew who despite the changing times, clings to what he believes is the truth. He serves as a role model for us to this day, that while society may continue to change its beliefs and morals, the simple Jew in his faith does not.



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Noach's Descendants

By Harry Schwat, 9th Grade

In this weeks parsha, it says that Noach had three sons, and then goes to list the names of the sons. It states at the end of Bereshis all of noach's geneology without any numbers. So, what's the point now to tell us the numbers?

Rav Dovid Feinstein states that the descendants were born equally to have the potential to be great, but also to be able to inherit the greatness of there father. However, Shem was the only one that followed in his fathers foot steps, where as Cham and Yafat let the outside world affect them and go towards some bad behavior. We should learn from Shem not to let the outside world influence us negatively, and affect us from doing mizvos.

Good Shabbos!

(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 3)

- 2) **Sechitas seiar** - the concern that one may come to squeeze out his/her hair. The gemara in Shabbos daf 128 says - ein sechita b'seiar - there is no issue of sechita when you squeeze out your hair. The Rambam, however, says that the gemara means that there is no issur d'oraisa of sechita, but there is an isur derabanan. *So maybe that's why it should be asur to swim on Shabbos and Yom Tov.*
- 3) **Gozez** - pulling out tangled wet hair. Kaf Hachaim siman 30 sif katan 25 writes, even when one blows his/her nose or removes mucus from your nose, you have to be very careful not to remove little nose hairs.
- 4) **Sechitah of the towel** - one squeezes out the wet towel. The Shulchan Aruch siman 301 sif 48 permits using a towel, so it's fine.
- 5) **Sechita of the bathing suit** - one squeezes out the wet bathing suit. The Rama in siman 302 sif 9, quoting the gemara in Shabbos on daf 113, says that you are not allowed to walk through a puddle or a pool of water because of a gzeira that if your clothing gets soaked, you will come to squeeze out the clothing. This is what Rav Moshe zt"l wrote in a teshuvah, that the reason swimming is asur on Shabbos and Yom Tov is that a person wears a bathing suit, and it's going to become soaking wet and people often squeeze it out after they come out of the pool. Rav yitzchak Yosef however learns, that no one has any interest in drying out their bathing suit, one changes out of it before it dries up anyway. The case however in the gemara is where one is wearing clothing all day, and wants the clothes to dry more quickly.
- 6) **Issur of bathing on Shabbos** - You are not allowed to put yourself into a bathtub and bathe yourself on Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch in siman 326 sif 1 says that one is allowed to bathe in purely cold water. The Mishnah Berurah however points out in sif katan 9 and 21, that Ashkenazim are machmir to not even bathe in cold water, which is a chumra of the Terumas Hadeshen which we had for hundreds of years. But Sefardim don't have such a minhag. So, if it's perfectly cold and it's not a heated pool, it's mutar for them.

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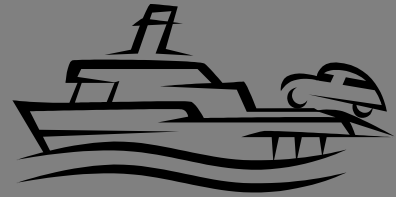
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Noach's Quest for Success

By Avi Bulka, 11th Grade



We all know the story of Noach and the ark: G-d wants to send a flood to destroy the people, and Noach builds an ark and is saved. But What was the terrible sin of Noach's generation that God wanted to destroy them? The Gemara (Sanhedrin 57a) tells us that the world was immersed in jealousy, greed, theft, violence, and lying.

Before God sends the Flood, Noach spent 120 years building an Ark. It measured larger than a football field and contained over a million cubic feet of space! It was outfitted with three separate levels: The top for Noah and his family, the middle for the animals, and the bottom for the garbage.

But there are obviously many ways by which God could have saved Noach besides the through tremendous ark. So why did Noach have to bother building an ark, and why did it take him 120 years?

The Midrash says that God specifically wanted Noach to undertake a strange and unusual project, to get people curious. God emphasized the oddity of it all by having Noah construct this huge boat on a mountain-top! This way people would ask Noah what he was doing, and he could answer them by telling them what was going on in the world. The hope was that people will listen and start changing their ways.

(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 5)

7) **Hotzaah** - Carrying drops of water when you leave the pool. The Shulchan Aruch says that you have to be careful to dry well, and this is also one of Rav Moshe zt"l's concerns, that you are going to be carrying the drops of water that come off of the pool onto your body (problem of - carrying). And Rav Yitzchak Yosef says that usually the pool is in a closed area anyway, and no one would leave the pool area until he dries off completely.

Now, in conclusion Rav Yitzchak Yosef writes that all the Ashkenazic rabbis say that it's asur to go into a pool on Shabbos, even if you don't swim, just to go into the pool because of that Terumas Hadeshen that you are not allowed to bathe in cold water. In addition, he says that for sefardim (who follow the Shulchan Aruch), meikir hadin that as long as it is perfectly cold and it's not heated at all, then you are allowed to go swimming if you are sefardic. And then after spending eight pages telling you why he thinks it's mutar to go swimming on Shabbos and Yom Tov, he says that l'inyan halacha, even though I came up with ways that would make it totally mutar, l'maaseh I asked my father (Rav Ovadya) and he said it's asur, so we shouldn't do it. But remember, for an ashkenazi jew, it's not just a chumra, it's completely asur.

(Stories of Greatness — Continued from page 8)

ager, the squire said: “It is true that you have served me honestly and devotedly for many years, but it appears that you were not able to resist temptation this time, when you saw this unique gem. Because of your past loyal service, I promise you I will not punish you if you confess your guilt and give me back my precious diamond.” “Heaven forbid,” called out Shmuel. “I would never steal anything, especially anything belonging to you, my kind and generous employer. I can see that, under the present circumstances, you cannot believe otherwise. But please, I beg you, give me an opportunity to clear myself.”

Shmuel asked the squire to keep all the guests in the hall, for the real thief was present there. Then he asked for permission to go home and bring something which would reveal the identity of the thief.

A short while later Shmuel returned, and, to everyone’s astonishment, he had a black rooster in his hand.

“Honored guests,” called out Shmuel. “I have here a remarkable rooster. It will allow any honest person to stroke it, but no sooner would a thief do so than it would flap its wings and burst out in a cry of *cock-a-doodle-doo!* And, as the real thief is among us here today, I shall ask all present to come forward, one at a time, and stroke the rooster with their right hand. When the rooster starts to crow—you will know who the thief is.”

Breathlessly and eagerly, the assembled participated in this strange procedure. But when the last of the guests had stroked the rooster and it still remained silent, all the guests began to shout:

“How dare the Jew make a laughingstock out of us with his crazy suggestion!”

“Patience, dear guests. Don’t get excited. I haven’t finished yet,” said Shmuel calmly. “You will soon know who the real thief is.”

Thereupon Shmuel asked the guests to lift up their right hands. They did so, and what the assembled saw were black hands except for one white hand. The

white hand was that of Shmuel’s assistant.

“There is the thief,” called out Shmuel. “The rooster I brought is a rooster like any other. All I did was smear its back with soot. I knew that the real thief would be afraid to stroke the rooster, in case it would begin to crow. So he just *pretended* to stroke the rooster’s back, but didn’t really touch it. So you see, the hands of the innocent guests were black, while the hand of the thief remained white and clean, though in truth, it was the dirtiest in the entire hall.”

“Bravo!” cried all the guests, and made a rush to grab the thief. The culprit had no choice but confess that he had managed to get copies made of the keys to the squire’s safe. He had been quite sure that the Jew would be blamed for the theft. The thief received his just punishment, while Shmuel was reinstated in his important trusted position.

(Yehuda Shetrit — Continued from page 1)

The lesson we learn is that in order to be a proper Jew, we must have proper *midos*. Of course it is important to do all the *mitzvos*, but only with the proper character traits.

STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YEHUDA BENHAMU

Hello, and welcome to a new year of Devarim Hayotzim. My name is Yehuda Benhamu and I will be your Maggid for the coming year. Throughout this year I will be sharing many uplifting and inspiring stories to hopefully enhance your Shabbasim. Each story will have a lesson that we can take and apply in our everyday lives. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or stories you feel should be shared with your fellow Jews, you can email me at benhamuy@gmail.com. Looking forward to an amazing spiritual year. Shabbat Shalom!
-Yehuda

Shmuel was a religious, G-d-fearing Jew. He was a Torah scholar and was much admired and greatly respected by everyone.

There was a squire who owned the entire town where Shmuel lived. The squire heard of Shmuel's wisdom and honesty, and appointed him as his business manager.

The squire had complete trust in his Jewish manager. Shmuel was the only person to whom he gave the keys to his safe, knowing that Shmuel would never touch a thing that belonged to another person.

In the squire's court there was another person who worked as Shmuel's assistant, who was extremely jealous of his Jewish boss. He was looking for some way of making trouble for Shmuel, hoping to take his place.

Once, when the squire returned from a trip, he made a big party, inviting many

guests. He related to his guests the virtues of his Jewish business manager, who was also one of the invited guests, though he could not partake of any of the food served at the party.

The squire then asked Shmuel to bring from his safe the famous diamond he had inherited from his parents. The diamond was known to be one of the largest diamonds in the world, and it was priceless.

All the guests waited breathlessly to behold this rare, precious gem.

A few minutes later Shmuel entered, bearing a golden box decorated with many beautiful gems.

The guests moved forward to get close to the squire and to get the best possible view of this remarkable diamond. But the squire seemed in no special hurry to open the box. First, he gave a lengthy talk on the history of the diamond, and then, finally, he opened the box.

To the horror of all present, the box was empty! The squire was speechless and looked ready to break into tears.

Some of the guests began to shout, "Hang the Jew!"

But the squire could still not believe that Shmuel was guilty of such an act, especially to steal something so precious belonging to his employer. Yet, if Shmuel was the only person who had the keys to the safe, who else could have been the thief?

Turning to his Jewish business man-

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Weekly Torah Publication of the DRS Yeshiva High School

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