



Home Alone

By Mayer Adelman, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

Noach seems to not earn the respect he deserves. Despite the fact that he saved all life on planet earth, he does not get the same amount of recognition as do our Avos. How could it be that Noach, who nearly single-handedly saved the planet, does not hold a more monumental place in Jewish history? What is the flaw in Noach that limits him to a stature lower than that of our Avos? Why should Noach not be considered the first of our Avos?

Despite apparent differences between Avraham and Noach, there is one activity that links the two leaders—they both planted. About Noach the pasuk states, “Noach the man of the earth planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk” (Genesis 9:21). Avraham is shown to have planted in the pasuk of “Avraham planted an eshel in Beer-Sheva” (Genesis 21:33). Rashi brings down two different opinions on how to interpret the word “eshel.” Some explain it to be an orchard, which Avraham planted to feed hungry travelers. Others, however, claim that it is an inn: Avraham built a place for tired travelers to rest.

No matter which interpretation one follows, the contrast between Noach and Avraham is clear. Avraham planted with not himself in mind but others. Noach, on the other hand, planted a vineyard for his own indulgence. Avraham’s

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The Best Man

By Chaim Alper, Editor-in-Chief, 12th Grade

It was only last week that we had read about the birth of mankind and the universe. Civilization was just getting started, and they had already turned bad. The world was full of corruption and an insatiable drive to do evil. Thus, in the second Parsha of the entire Torah, G-d makes the decision to destroy the world and go back to square one.

In the midst of the planning of this reversal of creation, G-d goes to one man, the best of the time: Noach. When G-d informs Noach of His cataclysmic plan, Noach simply replies, “What will you do with me?” Unlike Avraham and Moshe, Noach made no attempt to defend the people from G-d’s punishment. This does not sound like something the best man of a generation would act, Noach never even asks G-d for a better reason, he accepts G-d’s plan immediately.

Amidst the argument between the Meforshim on the true righteousness of Noach, this seems to favor the opinion that Noach was not a unique man, or rather, only a unique man when compared to his generation. A mediocre man, who was only good when compared to his generation.

The Zohar points this out and criticizes Noach’s inaction for hastening the destruction of the world.

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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. Which grandfather and grandson had the same name?
3. Which mitzvah is given personally to both Adam and Noah?
4. Where else in the Torah is a raven referred to?
5. Aside from the 40 days of rain, where else is the number 40 mentioned in this parsha?
6. When do we say Kaddish after a non-Jew dies?
7. Where does the number seven appear in this parsha? (4 answers)

Answers

1. The six parshas named for a person: Noach, Chayei Sarah, Yisro, Korach, Balak, Pinchas.
2. Nachor has a son Terach who has a son also named Nachor (Genesis 11:24, 26).
3. Adam and Noah are both given the mitzvah "to be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28, 9:1).
4. The raven is found in Leviticus 11:15 and Deut. 14:14 in the list of non-kosher birds.
5. Noah waits 40 days from seeing the tops of the mountains, to opening up the window to send out the raven (Genesis 8:6, with Rashi)
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. Seven pairs of kosher animals are brought into the ark (Genesis 7:2). There is an additional seven-day waiting period before the Flood begins (Genesis 7:4, with Rashi). On the seventh month, the ark rests on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:4). Before sending the dove on each mission, Noah waits seven days (Genesis 8:10, 12).

The Haftarah Corner*Written By Adam Zahler*

This haftarah like the one preceding it for Bereishit can be found in Isaiah. There are many connections to the parsha contained in this haftarah. A direct reference to Noach is highlighted in verse 9 (Isaiah 54:9), as the prophet states, "For like the waters of Noach shall this be to me, as I have sworn never to pass the waters of Noach again over the earth." Hashem recalls the flood and the promise He made to Noah never to destroy the whole earth through a flood ever again.

The Prophet states "Broaden the place of your tent and the curtains of your dwellings stretch out, do not skimp, lengthen your cords and your tent pegs strengthen (Isaiah 54:2)," Isaiah urges everyone to broaden their tent. This is a concept similar to that which is found in this weeks parsha. Noah had to miraculously fit in all the creatures and different species along with his family into an ark. Of course that is as much as a miracle as nature is to begin with as this is just deviating for us from the normal spacing that Hashem created. These two "expansions" can teach us a big lesson which we can take with us for life. It is very important to have a tent or ark. We must know what our values are and must stay true to ourselves. It is equally important, however, to be able to expand our borders and have them encompass all those around us. It is our job to bring everyone into our tent and follow Hashem's example and always make room for others. Hopefully we can branch out and try to accommodate and be friendly to all those around us and create an environment in which everyone can live together in one tent together harmoniously.



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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
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Zachy Goldberg

Baal Tishaktzu

When does one violate the prohibition of "baal tishaktzu" (performing an act deemed disgusting) as it pertains to refraining from relieving oneself in the restroom?

Source for "baal tishaktzu"

There are two places where the Torah teaches us about the issur of tishaktzu- of doing something disgusting. The first place is in Vayikra (11:43) which says that we are not supposed to make ourselves disgusting through eating sheratzim. Second, also in Vayikra (20:25), the Torah warns that consuming neveilos and the like are also a violation of "Baal Tishaktzu".

Other applications of "baal tishaktzu"

The Gemara applies the issur to other areas beyond eating sheratzim and neveilos. The Gemara in **Shabbos** (90b) shares that eating a "dag tahor" - a live kosher fish, is not eiver min hachai, but is rather baal tishaktzu. The Gemara in **Makos** (16b) reads that if one drinks from a cup that is used for bloodletting, one is violating "baal tishaktzu". The most famous application of baal tishaktzu is the next line of the Gemara in Makos which warns us that if one has to go to the bathroom and one holds it in, that is a violation of "baal tishaktzu".

The Rishonim add several other examples of the issur. The **Rambam** (17:29 in Hil' Ma'achalos Assuros) teaches that eating anything disgusting is included in "baal tishaktzu". The **Radvaz** writes in a teshuvah (2:739) that drinking human or animal urine is also included in "baal tishaktzu". The **Chinuch** (Mitzvah 472) shares that eating things that are unfit for human consumption is a violation of "baal tishaktzu". Therefore, one concludes that consuming anything disgusting is a violation of "baal tishaktzu".

D'oraisah vs. D'rabanan

The **Taz** (YD Siman 116) writes that the aforementioned examples are in fact an issur d'oraisah. However, one will not receive malkus for violating them, since they are included in a laav shebiklalos (a lo taasei that includes more than one issur which one is not chayiv malkus if violated). The **Ritva** in Makos (16b), how-

ever, disagrees and maintains that all these examples of baal tishaktzu are all mid'rabanan and "baal tishaktzu" is just an asmachta. So only eating sheratzim and neveilos which are explicit in the pesukim are issurei d'oraisah. The **Raah** (Bedek Habayis) takes it a step further than the Ritva and writes that even eating sheratzim and neveilos are not always "baal tishaktzu" d'oraisah. He holds that the only time eating sheratzim and neveilos are issurei d'oraisah is if they taste good to the one consuming them. However, if they do not taste good, then the issur is not d'oraisah, since it is not considered achilah.

The application of "baal tishaktzu" to refraining from relieving oneself in the restroom

The **Shulchan Aruch Harav** (Mahadura Tinyana 3:11) writes that one does not violate the issur of baal tishaktzu anytime one theoretically is able to go to the bathroom and refrains from doing so. Rather, one violates "baal tishaktzu" when one has to go to the bathroom so badly that one is unable to concentrate on anything else, other than the fact that one has to relieve himself. The **Ben Ish Chai** (Parshas Vayeitzei, Os alef) explains that one violates "baal tishaktzu" by not relieving oneself, because the individual is ultimately distracted from purity of thought and not be able to learn with proper purity. The **Mishnah Berurah** (Siman 3 Sif Katan 11) teaches that if "baal tishaktzu" is only an issur d'rabanan, then kavod habriyos takes precedence. The reason for this issur is derived from the Gemara in Berachos which teaches that kavod habriyos trumps any issur d'rabanan. So it turns out that whenever there is an issue of kavod habriyos, one is allowed to violate "baal tishaktzu". For example, if one is in the middle of giving a speech or is acting as a Shliach Tzibur, and feels that one really has to go to the bathroom, and it would be embarrassing to run out in the middle, one could wait. The Poskim point out that since we pasken "baal tishaktzu" is d'rabanan, it would be mutar in areas of refuah as well (even if one is not a choleh sheyeish bo sakanah). The **Shulchan Aruch** (Siman 92) goes into great detail about davening, and at what point in davening one would have to stop to go to the bathroom. One

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Language Barrier

By Josh Beer, 12th grade

In this week's parsha, we are introduced to the Dor Haflaga, the generation that built a tower to shamayim to rebel against Hashem. Regarding this event, the strangest aspect was the punishment given to them: the obfuscation and differentiation of their language. Why did Hashem choose to confuse their languages instead of giving a harsher, more forceful, punishment such as toppling the tower?

Hashem was trying to teach the value of speech. The power we humans have over our fellow creations is the ability to express ourselves through speech. Hashem was trying to convey that our mortality lies simply in the power of speech and the ability to communicate. We learn a very startling message from this experience of the Dor Haflaga: We can't take our power to speak for granted; we must take advantage of every word we say and always use this power for good. Have a great Shabbos!

(Mayer Adelman—Continued from page 1)

main mission in life was to spread the belief of monotheism to the masses. Noach, the prophet of doom, gets lost in his own world.

We all produce. The vital question we must ask ourselves is, "Who are we producing for?" Are we producing for the benefit of others, or are we only producing with ourselves in mind?

Noach had the opportunity to save many lives. He could have been recognized as the father of mankind, and perhaps, due to his prophetic status, he could have founded Judaism before Avraham ever had the chance.

Yet, despite Noach's greatness in his ability to overcome the high levels of corruption and immortality that, unfortunately, permeated his generation, Noach did not take full advantage of the opportunity he was provided with. He was not able to connect with any members of his generation in order to save them from impending flood. "And Noach remained alone." He became drunk. Avraham planted an orchard for the sole purpose of others. Avraham made men; Noach made wine.

Derived from Parsha Parables

(Chaim Alper—Continued from page 1)

Yet even considering these shortcomings, G-d settles with Noach, rescuing him and making him the father of all humanity.

We can take a refreshing lesson from this: G-d did not need an inspiring person like Avraham, nor a leader like Moshe, to fulfill His assignment, so He picked Noach. Noach was not a man for us to consider our role model, he was purely a good start. A man who represented a small improvement. Likewise, we do not have to make such a big change right away, it can be good enough to make the first step a small one. The real purpose is to keep improving, as G-d showed us by picking Noach.



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Before it Rains

In this week's parsha, the pasuk 7:1 states, "Hashem said to Noach, 'come into the teivah, you and your family. I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.'" On this pasuk, the Me'am Loez notes how it contrasts with an earlier statement from Hashem to Noach. Earlier, the Torah said in 6:9, "Noach was a righteous man, flawless in his generation; Noach walked with Hashem." When Hashem is speaking to him though in Perek 7, however, Hashem only calls Noach "righteous," and nothing else. Why does Hashem speak with so much less praise about Noach?

The Me'am Loez writes that the Torah is teaching us how to behave. When a person thinks very highly of a friend, he wants to praise him and tell of his good qualities and accomplishments. However, this praise can only be told over when the friend is not present; if his friend is present, only some of his accomplishments should be mentioned, not all.

Chazal also teach us that if people are discussing a certain person, they should not speak too highly of him, because excessive praise can lead to negative things being about him. For instance, people often speak of others saying, "This person is perfect in so many ways... it's too bad that he has some bad qualities though; if not for them, he would be perfect." We therefore see that too much praise can result in harm, which is why when Hashem was speaking to Noach, He only called him righteous.

(Ten Minute Halacha—Continued from page 3)

should realize that all those details are for when one reaches the point of baal tishaktzu. Typically, if a healthy person goes to the bathroom before davening, there is no reason why at any point during davening one should reach baal tishaktzu. Accordingly, one needs to be cognizant of the two different points - being physically able to go to the bathroom and experiencing the need to go to the bathroom.

Doing Mitzvot when one reaches baal tishaktzu

The **Biur Halacha** discusses performing mitzvot when one has to go to the bathroom. He mentions that he never found anywhere that it is assur to do mitzvot without a guf naki, so the same should apply when the person has to go to the bathroom. He says that we only find an issur beyond the general issur of "baal tishaktzu" by devarim shebikdusha, like learning and davening, but not by doing mitzvot.

The **Piskei Teshuvos** points out that one must understand that the ideas of Chazal on this issue may be very different than our own, since there are two significant differences between our times and the times of Chazal. The first difference is that in the times of Chazal, people had meals at set times and ate the same types of food every day. But nowadays people may eat on the run or simply inhale a snack. Therefore, in the times of Chazal, people relieved themselves in a more consistent fashion, and they were therefore more in tuned to when they can and cannot hold it in anymore. The second difference is that bathrooms were not readily available as they are today. The bathrooms were outside of the town, and walking there took a considerable amount of time. So most people would go once in the morning and once at night and that was it. Nowadays, we are not so in touch with our

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SYMBOL OF THE ARK

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The Ark, primarily enabling Noach to survive the Flood, is also rich in symbolic value, based on the Chasam Sofer. It represents the human body that houses the soul, just like Noach's Ark served as the repository for the innocent souls who survived the Flood. The Ark's light reminds us of the soul's function as a beacon of light to the human body. The Torah's emphasis on the Ark's peak, tapering to a cubit, is a subtle reminder that every mortal, despite his preoccupation with mundane concerns, should turn heavenward to seek his Creator.

The Ark's opening was placed at its side, a subtle reminder of the human body's ultimate destination: the open grave (Berachos 5a). If mankind forgets its Creator – if the light in the Ark, the soul, fails to turn heavenward – then the Ark's opening, not pointing heavenward, serves as a reminder of our ultimate end. The Ark's three compartments suggest different levels of sanctity to which one can aspire. Generally, one is best advised to strive for a middle road, to seek – at least initially – a balance between both extremes (Rambam).

Unlike sturdier cedar, the Ark's gopher wood was soft and pliable, perhaps to underscore the Rabbinical saying, "Better to be soft as a reed than hard as a cedar" (Taanis 20a). The ravaging Flood-waters were deflected most successfully by a soft substance. Similarly, the turbulence of our harsh world is often best met with a gentle disposition. However, another condition must be met: This gentle disposition must not be a mere facade. One who is superficially kind, but insensitive on the inside, violates the Torah's insistence of "cover it inside and out."

(Ten Minute Halacha—Continued from page 5)

bodies in knowing when we could and cannot hold it in, since bathrooms are always available to us. He then quotes the **Biur Halacha** (Siman 92) who teaches that if one has a safeik at all, one could be meikil in baal tishaktzu and not interrupt his davening. Then the Piskei Teshuvos points out that often it is the yetzer hara who convinces us to miss tefilah bitzibur.

Conclusion

One should go to the bathroom before one starts davening, and then there should be no reason for one to interrupt his davening to relieve himself. In general, it is difficult to be over on the the issur of "baal tishaktzu" when it pertains to refraining from relieving oneself in the restroom. It would only apply where one was unable focus on other topics and when there is no kavod habriyos issue. Typically, it is fairly avoidable unless one has a real stomach problem.

(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 8)

and my wagon off to meet their chief to decide my fate.

"While they waited for their chief to arrive, they questioned and cross-examined me in great detail, searched me and the wagon, and beat me, trying to elicit the secret of where I had hidden my money. I had nothing to tell them except the truth, and that they weren't prepared to accept.

"After hours of this torture, they bound me and threw me, injured and exhausted, into a dark cellar. I was bleeding from the wounds they had inflicted, and my whole body ached in pain. I lay there until the evening, when the gang leader came to speak with me.

"I tried to the best of my ability to describe to him the great joy of being in the Rebbe's presence, and how it was so important to me to get to the Rebbe by the start of the holiday that it was worth it to endanger myself by traveling at night.

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Dvarim Hayotzim Min Halev

(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 6)

"It seems that my words made an impression on him, or else he was persuaded by my adamancy even under torture. But whichever it was, thank G-d he released me from the handcuffs, saying:

"I sense that your faith in G-d is strong and your longing to be with your Rebbe is genuine and intense. Now we shall see if this is the truth. I am going to let you go, but you should know that the way is extremely dangerous. Even the most rugged people never venture into the heart of the forest alone, only in groups, and especially not in a storm and at night. You can leave and try your luck. And I am telling you, if you get through the forest and the other terrible conditions safely, unharmed by the ferocious wild beasts or anything else, then I will break up my gang and reform my ways.

"If you actually reach the outskirts of the city, then throw your handkerchief into the ditch next to the road, behind the signpost there. One of my men will be waiting, and that is how I will know that you made it.

"I then became terrified all over again. The hardships I had already endured were seared into my soul, and now even more frightening nightmares awaited me. But when I thought about how wonderful it is to be with the Rebbe at the menorah lighting, I shook off all my apprehensions and resolved not to delay another moment. My horse and carriage were returned to me and I set off on my way.

"There was total darkness all around. I could hear the cries of the forest animals, and they sounded close. I feared that I was surrounded by a pack of vicious wolves.

"I crouched down over my horse's neck and spurred him on. He refused to move in the pitch blackness. I lashed him. He didn't budge.

"I had no idea what to do. At that moment, a small light flickered in front of the carriage. The horse stepped eagerly towards it. The light advanced. The horse followed. All along the way, the wild animals fled from us, as if the tiny dancing flame was driving them away.

"We followed that flame all the way here. I kept my end of the bargain and threw my handkerchief at the designated place. Who knows? Perhaps those cruel bandits will change their ways, all in the merit of that little light."

It was only then that the Chassidim noticed that the Rebbe's Chanukah light had returned. There it was, burning in the elaborate menorah, its flame strong and pure as if it had just been lit.

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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: NETANEL YOMTOV

It was the first night of Chanukah. Outside a snowstorm raged, but inside it was tranquil and warm. The Rebbe, Rabbi Baruch of Mezhibuz, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, stood in front of the menorah, surrounded by a crowd of his Chassidim. He recited the blessings with great devotion, lit the single candle, placed the shammash ("servant candle") in its designated place, and began to sing HaNairot Halalu. His face radiated holiness and joy; the awed Chassidim stared intently at him.

The flame of the candle was burning strongly. Rebbe and Chassidim sat nearby and sang Maoz Tsur and other Chanukah songs. All of a sudden, the candle began to flicker and leap wildly, even though there wasn't the slightest breeze in the house. It was as if it were dancing. Or struggling. And then, it disappeared!

It didn't blow out, there was no smoke, it just was not there anymore. It was as if it flew off somewhere else. The Rebbe himself seemed lost in thought. His attendant went over to re-light the wick, but the Rebbe waved him off.

He motioned to the Chassidim to continue singing. Several times, between tunes, the Rebbe spoke words of Torah. The evening passed delightfully, and the Chassidim present had all but forgotten about the disappearing Chanukah candle.

It was nearly midnight when the harsh sound of carriage wheels grating on the snow and ice exploded the tranquility. The door burst

open and in came a Chassid who hailed from a distant village. His appearance was shocking. His clothes were ripped and filthy, and his face was puffy and bleeding. And yet, in stark contrast to his physical state, his eyes were sparkling and his features shone with joy.

He sat down at the table, and with all eyes upon him, began to speak excitedly. "This isn't the first time I came to Mezhibuz by the forest route, and I know the way very well. But there was a terrible snow storm this week, which greatly slowed my advance. I began to worry that I wouldn't get here in time to be with the Rebbe for the first night of Chanukah. The thought disturbed me so much, I decided not to wait out the storm, but to plod ahead and travel day and night, in the hope that I could reach my destination on time.

"That was a foolish idea, I must admit, but I didn't realize that until too late. Last night, I ran into a gang of bandits, who were quite pleased to encounter me. They figured if I was out in this weather, at night, alone, I must be a wealthy merchant whose business could not brook delay. They demanded that I surrender to them all of my money.

"I tried to explain, I pleaded with them, but they absolutely refused to believe I had no money. They seized the reins of my horses and leapt on my wagon. They sat themselves on either side of me to keep me under close surveillance, and then drove me

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