

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויהיו בני נח היצאים מן התבה שם ודם יופת ... שלשה אלה בני נח ומאלה נפצה כל הארץ ונגו' (ט-ז)

This week seven years ago, 3 Marcheshvan 5773 (October 7, 2013), we mourned the passing of the great *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, **Chacham Ovadia Yosef ז"ל**. His brilliance in learning, his phenomenal memory, his decades of public service and his many scholarly works were equalled only by his great kindness and righteousness. May his merits serve as an everlasting protection on behalf of all of the Jewish people at this difficult time and for the future as well.

Chacham Ovadia once told his students a story that occurred more than sixty years ago, in order to demonstrate just how far-reaching a father's decision can be on his children and future descendants. At the time, *Chacham Ovadia* lived on *Rechov Elkanah* (near *Yirmiyahu* street) in Jerusalem. One *Shabbat* morning, just as he sat down with his family to eat his *Seudat Shabbat*, there was an urgent knock at his door. He hurriedly opened it to find a well-respected *Rav* from the Bukharian community in urgent need to speak with him. The *Rav* told him that he had just come from his synagogue, where they had just had a *Kiddush* following *davening* and he overheard one of his congregants telling another about his six sons and how he was enrolling them in the Moriyah Trade School. The *Rav* took the man aside and told him how he was concerned about the irreligious atmosphere and influence in the school and how it can do harmful damage to the spiritual nature of his children. The man refused to listen and said that he was more concerned that his sons will learn a trade and be able to support themselves in the future than the level of their spirituality. The man was adamant and could not be swayed.

Immediately, *Chacham Ovadia* grabbed his hat and coat and hurried out the door with the *Rav*. His family was in shock but he told them to continue the meal without him, as he had a very important *mitzvah* to see to at this exact moment. It was a cold and blustery day, but the two *Rabbanim* walked all the way to the Bukharian section of Jerusalem, directly to the man's house.

Chacham Ovadia knocked urgently and the door was opened by the surprised man himself. "To what do we owe this special honor and privilege," he inquired. The two *Rabbanim* came inside and were seated with great honor at the man's table. Without preamble, *Chacham Ovadia* launched right into his prepared words about the importance of a *Torah* education, and the harm to one's children, an education lacking in *Torah* can produce. The *Sephardic* man listened with great respect but he continued to maintain that without a trade or any sort of working experience, his boys will never be able to earn a livelihood and support themselves and their families in the future. The *Chacham* patiently explained again and again that his boys had great potential and it would be a shame to see their future scholarly abilities go to waste.

In the end, *Chacham Ovadia* managed to convince the man to enroll his sons in the local *Talmud Torah* and provide them with a *Torah* education. They can learn a trade in their free time, he reasoned. "However," said the man to the *Rabbanim*, with an air that seemed to indicate his firmness on this one matter, "my oldest son is already registered in Moriyah and has attended classes there. He is currently in an advanced level and I will not remove him from there." All entreaties to enroll this son in the *Talmud Torah* were in vain. Finally, the two *Rabbanim* thanked their host for his hospitality and left.

"This man had six sons," *Chacham Ovadia* later recounted to his pupils. "I kept track of them. The five boys who went to *Talmud Torah* each excelled with great diligence in their studies and each became a respected *Rav*. One is a Chief Rabbi. Another is an *Av Beit Din*. The third heads a prominent *Kollel*. The fourth leads a large *Kehillah* in *Rishon L'Tzion*, and the fifth is a well-known educator and *Rebbi* in the community. They all did well for themselves and earn a fine *parnassah* from their respective positions." Here, the *Chacham* shook his head, sadly. "And the sixth son, the oldest one who didn't go to *Talmud Torah*? He became an electrician. He keeps *Torah* and *mitzvot* but he is not fluent in *Torah*. He makes a living ... *nu*, it's not a bad thing ... but he does not even earn what his brothers make. So, what did this man accomplish with sending his son to earn a trade at the expense of *Torah* learning? All the boy knows is how to fix ovens and air-conditioners"

אשר נשבעתי מעבר מי נח עוֹד ... (ישעי' נד-ט)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

The *Haftorah* compares the final redemption to the pact *Hashem* made with Noach that he would never again bring a flood over the entire earth. **Rashi** quotes *Chazal* who say that although Noach was a *Tzaddik*, he was someone who was lacking *Emunah* (מקטני אמנה), believing *Hashem* would indeed bring the *Mabul* while at the same time not really believing - even waiting to enter the Ark until the waters forced him to. However, if Noach did believe that the *Mabul* would happen, then he was clearly not lacking in *Emunah*, and if he did not believe it would occur, then he was obviously lacking belief in *Hashem's* word. Both can't be true, so how then do we understand *Chazal's* statement?

R' Peretz Steinberg shlit"a (Pri Eitz HaChaim) quotes

the **Rambam** (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 8:1*) who explains, that one who bases his belief in Heaven on miracles, leaves room in his heart for suspicion. That nagging suspicion will more likely than not fester in his heart, and his belief would eventually give way to it. *Chazal* tell us that when Noach was preparing the ark, *Hashem* instructed him to gather animals of every species. At first, he tried to do it on his own, but when it became apparent that the task was too much for him, *Hashem* performed a miracle and the animals gathered themselves.

Therefore, says R' Peretz, even though he was extremely righteous, Noach believed that the flood would occur only because *Hashem* had "proven" Himself by performing miracles, and in doing so his basic *Emunah* became weakened.

ואלה תולדת בני נח שם הם יופת ויולדו להם בנים אחד המבול ונגו' (נ-י)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

מחשבת הלב

The **Ramban** explains that although the sons of Noach were old enough to have children of their own, *Hashem* withheld that capability from them, so that their offspring wouldn't perish in the *mabul*. Rashi mentions earlier in the *parsha*, that Noach had a child at the age of 500 for a similar reason. Perhaps the message the *Torah* is conveying is never to question *Hashem's* divine plan. Can you imagine the pain and frustration Noach and family had to endure for years on end? But it all became clear in hindsight. Sometimes we are *zoche* to eventually recognize the plan and sometimes we may never see it. But the lesson we must internalize is to always accept it, never to complain about it, and equally important, to never give up.

In the aftermath of the *mabul*, *Hashem* tells Noach, "צא מן התיבה" - go out of the ark, you and your family "היצא אתך". Rashi explains that even if they don't want to exit, force them. It seems rather baffling that after the exhausting and tedious work in the *teiva*, they wouldn't want to be relieved from it. Rashi even says that Noach was sighing and coughing up blood from the intensive labor. My *machshava* is that sometimes we would rather suffer in a known situation than face and embark on a new frontier. Although the new world outside the *teiva* provided many new opportunities, they may have preferred the old life that they were familiar with. But *Hashem's* message is loud and clear: Get out there and try the unknown. Leave behind the current plight in search of a better opportunity. Never remain locked away. Always try new avenues in the hope of improving. This applies to business, relationships, learning and our entire *avodas Hashem*.

We must learn from Noach and the people who went out of the *teiva*, and realize, "כל מה דעבד רחמנא לטב עביד" - All that *Hashem* does is for the best. We must never give up and always search for new and real meaning in life, *be'eizras Hashem*.

משל למה הדבר דומה

וישאר אך נח ואשר אתו בתבה ... (ז-כג)

משל: A tale is told of a renowned speaker and educator who was giving a class to a group of students. The children were spellbound and the man weaved a beautiful mosaic of stories and educational information into his lesson. Everyone was concentrating so deeply on the man's words that nobody realized a cat had entered the room and finding the man's cashmere coat on a chair, it made itself comfortable on its smooth hem and went to sleep.

Now the teacher and the others were unaware of this cat, even though he continued to speak for the remainder of the lesson. For many hours, the cat slept on the hem of his coat, finding warmth and healing in the shadow of the classroom.

When the lesson came to an end, everyone realized what had happened. One student was about to wake the cat and

shoo him away but the teacher quickly stopped him. Slowly, without any sudden motion, he took a sharp knife out of his pocket and began to cut off the hem of his coat where the cat was sleeping. Carefully, his blade cut into the fine cashmere material until he had extricated his coat from under the cat. When he was finished, he simply took his coat and left the cat sleeping. In this way the teacher destroyed the most beautiful of garments, but left the cat undisturbed in its slumber.

משל: Compassion for others is a symptom of love for one's self. Noach saw to the needs of each animal in his ark, and even incurred injury and hardship when the animals took their anger out on him. He displayed such an other-worldly level of *rachmanus* towards other living creatures, that *Hashem* knew he was the man to rebuild the world after the flood. Even when we give up things we love to assist others, it is worth it for "the world is built (and rebuilt) on kindness."

שלוש מאות אמה אחד התבה המשיים אמה רחבה ושלישים אמה קומתה (ז-כג)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

Words are the building blocks of relationships. Unfortunately, words, even one word, has an equal power to destroy. If you were entrusted to carry around a grenade that had in it enough dynamite to blow up an entire city, would you be nervous? Would you handle that grenade with care, and make sure not to drop it? Well, our mouths have infinitely more power than the strongest ammunition in the world. *מית וחיים ביד הלשון* (*Mishlei 18-21*) - Death and Life are in the hands of the tongue.

If you examine the word LASHON, you will find something amazing. The root of "לשון" is *Lamed, Shin, Nun*. The *Lamed* is the tallest letter, the *Nun* (סופית) is the lowest letter and the *Shin* in the middle is the widest letter with three prongs. **R' Yossi Cohen shlit"a** explains that the middle prong in the *Shin* is YOU. You have the choice to move to the right or the left. This is the *bechira* that every person has. If you choose to use your *Lashon* properly, then you can be like the *Lamed*, you can raise yourself up to the highest place. But if you choose to say words that are negative, hurtful and improper, then you will move towards the "Enda Nun" and you will bring yourself down to the lowest place. The choice is in your mouth!

In fact, the **Maharal M'Prague ז"ל** discusses the power of speech when he speaks about the *Teiva* of Noach. The word "תיבה" means an ark, but it also means a WORD. He explains that just as Noach saved himself and his family from the waters of the flood that destroyed the entire world, we too, can save ourselves from the evil forces that take over the world, with the power of the WORD. By being careful how we speak, and by being an example unto others of kind and proper speech, we can insulate ourselves and our homes from all kinds of terrible calamities that come to the world, as it says in *Mishlei 21- 23*, "Shomer piv uleshono, shomer mitzaros nafsho." The *Maharal* goes on to say that if you examine the measurements of the *Teiva*, they correspond directly to the word LASHON. The *Teiva* was 30 *amos*, that's *lamed*, by 300 *amos*, that's *shin*, by 50 *amos*, that's *nun*. The measurements of the *Teiva* spell out the word *Lashon*. What a great lesson for us. If we wish to save ourselves from the world's calamities, (and we are experiencing one right now) we need to be extremely careful with our words.