



שמע קולנו

“יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”



Parshas Noach

פרשת נח

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Free Birds - Dov Tuchman ('18)	1
Crime and Punishment - Shneur Agronin ('21).....	2
A Short Vort - Akiva Kra ('21).....	2
5 Minute Lomdus - Shimi Kaufman ('21)	3
Blind Faith - Akiva Kra ('21).....	4
Ravens and Doves - Avidan Loike ('22).....	4
Would Noach Be In the Hall of Fame Today? - Ezra Nenner ('24).....	4
The Elephant in the Room- Yisrael Dovid Rosenberg('23)	6
Chumash B'iyun - Rabbi Mayer Schiller.....	7
Torah From the Rosh Yeshiva - Rav Michael Taubes.....	8
Chassidus On The Parsha - Yeshurin Sorscher ('21).....	10
From The Editors' Desk	11
Halacha Hashavuh - Yosef Weiner ('23)	13
Parsha Puzzlers	14
Gedolim Glimpse: Piaseczna Rebbe - Meir Morell ('22)	15

Free Birds

Dov Tuchman ('18)

In honor of Shema Koleinu's 25th anniversary, we are proud to present articles throughout the year from past editors of the publication. This week's article comes from Dov Tuchman the editor in chief of the 2017 - 2018 editions. He went to Yeshivat Gush Etzion and is now learning Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg's shiur at YU.

This week's *parsha* describes one of the most iconic and well-known occurrences in all of *Tanach* – the *mabul*, or the Flood. Towards the end of the story, as the flood is starting to recede, and Noach and his family are floating on the open sea, Noach does something which is puzzling. He opens the window and lets out first a raven, then a dove, and then a dove again. There are a few questions raised by this behavior. The first question we run into is why didn't Noach wait for God to tell him to leave the *teivah*? It is stated explicitly in the *posuk* that God told him to enter the *teivah* more than once, as well as warning him about the whole situation well beforehand. So why did Noach feel the need to check if the flood was over on his own? Another question, brought by the *Ha'emek Davar*, is where did he get these birds from? If they were part of the pairs of birds, then how did he have permission to ostensibly risk their lives by sending them out into the destruction?

To answer the first question, we have to look at Noach in the context of his genera-

tion. Rashi comments that the reason that Noach was commanded to make the *teivah* so far before the actual Flood was so that people would walk by and ask him what he was doing, and through that more people might repent of their ways. It is possible that having to wait so many years to reach the flood, not being granted children until he was 500 years old, and being trapped alone on a boat just made him tired, and he just wanted to be done with the whole thing. It is also possible that Noach was practicing the *middah* of *zerizus*, being hasty to fulfill a *mitzvah*, and wanted to get to repopulating and recreating the world in God's image.

The question still remains, however, as to where the birds came from. Surely Noach was not willing to jeopardize the repopulation of the earth and allow two different species of birds to go extinct!? The *Ha'emek Davar* answers that in fact, the raven and dove that Noach sent out were his own personal birds, which he brought with him when he entered, separately from the other animals. This neatly answers where he got the birds from, but raises another issue – how did he know to bring them with him? Surely he didn't think so far ahead as to assume that he would need them when the waters began to settle – if he was aware at all that the water would take time to settle. So how did he know to bring the birds?

The Ramban comments on an earlier *possuk*,

when God tells Noach to enter the *teivah*. The *possuk* states "*atah vikol beisecha*", you and all your household. The Ramban says that this included the various animals that God told him to bring for *korbanos* and other things. When you step back and think about it for a moment, this is an incredible insight! God told Noach to bring these extra birds simply so that, when he was missing dry land, he could send them out to try and gain some hope.

This is very similar to a very prominent concept in Judaism, that no matter what challenges you might face, you will be able to overcome them, since God has already given you the tools that you need. Just like God gave Noach the birds so he could have hope when there was none, so too we should remember that God will always give us a way to prevail over the challenges that he gives us, so long as we believe in Him.

Crime and Punishment

Shneur Agronin (21)

Upon Noach's and his family's long-awaited departure from the ark, *Hashem* blesses them as the progenitors of all mankind to come. In so doing, *Hashem* warns them specifically against the high crime of murder, describing the ultimate fate of one who kills in the famously poetic *possuk*, "He who spills the blood of man, by man shall his blood be spilled, for in the image of God did

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Kra (21)

In this week's *parsha*, the *possuk* says:

וַיְהִי הַמַּבּוּל אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיִּרְבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת-הַתְּבֵרָה

"The Flood continued forty days on the earth, and the waters increased and raised the ark"

Many wonder how Noach was able to keep his sanity during the flood. After all, he was locked in a wooden box, with every animal in the world one floor below him, and lots of garbage two floors below him, for forty days.

Rabbi Avraham Elimelech Bederman answers that not only did Noach not go crazy, but he was actually extremely happy. This, he says, is because Noach realized that if he wasn't in the ark, he would be much worse off.

Noach appreciated every situation he was in, because he always knew that *Hashem* had guided him to the place he needed to be. We too, should always be thankful to *Hashem* even if we are in a bad situation. We should realize it could be worse, and *Hashem* purposefully put us in this situation.

[Hashem] create man” (*Bereishis* 9:6). While the beginning of the *passuk* seems reasonable - after all, Hashem does mete out punishment and reward *middah keneged middah* (measure for measure - see *Sotah* 1:7 and *Sanhedrin* 90a) - the conclusion appears somewhat mistifying. What relationship exists between the heavenly death penalty and the origins of man? On another level, how could Hashem curse a murderer to such a fate - that would imply that Hashem intends for someone else to make themselves guilty of the same crime by killing the original murderer! If so, would this not constitute a violation of Hashem’s command **by Himself?**!

One may resolve this apparent logical difficulty by focusing on the words of the verse themselves. Reading literally, one might come to believe that Hashem sentences one who murders to death at the hands of a similar criminal. On the contrary, *Targum Onkelos* renders this *passuk* quite differently in Aramaic: “He who spills the blood of man, **by witnesses and the court** shall his blood be spilled”. Evidently, as Rashi explains, the *Torah* teaches us that murder warrants the legal death penalty, **not** the condemnation of the guilty party to an untimely slaying at the hands of an equally guilty person. While this grants a clearer understanding of murder’s ramifications and consequences, still, what connection can one draw between the *Tzelem Elokim* (the image or likeness of Hashem, in which He created man) and Jewish jurisprudence? In other words, what is so significant about mankind’s divine spark that execution at the hands of a court differs at all from homicide? If anything, the fact that even the murderer was created in the Divine image should further protect him from judgment at the hands of his peers!

In truth, this question is asked by the *Be’er Mayim Chayim*, a later commentary to the *Torah* by Rabbi Chaim of Chernowitz, with strong foundations in *Chassidus*. He begins by relating this matter to the previous verse: “For surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man’s brother, will I require the life of man” (*Bereishis* 9:5). Meditating upon this verse, one may mistakenly conclude that on-

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

ותשחת הארץ לפני האלהים ותמלא הארץ חמס:

“And the Earth was corrupted before Hashem, and the Earth was filled with robbery” (*Bereishis* 6:11)

Q. There is a famous *Medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 31:5) which explains that the sin of the *dor hamabul* (generation of the flood) was that they would steal items worth less than a *shavah perutah*, the smallest amount of money which *halachah* considers to have value (roughly 3 cents). Since the courts cannot legally extract payment for such a theft, these sins propagated, until it became the norm. The Rambam (*Hilchos Geneivah* 1:1) rules that theft of less than a *shavah perutah* is still *assur*, since it is included in the category of *chatzi shiur* (lit. “half an amount”), which is deemed *assur* but not punishable. However, the Rambam elsewhere (*Hilchos Malveh Uloveh* 6:1) rules that the prohibition of *rivis*, taking interest on a loan, applies to any amount of interest, even less than a *shavah perutah*, and that such *rivis* can constitute a court case. (In truth, the *Lechem Mishnah* and the *Perishah* (*Yoreh Deah* 161) both seem to say that the Rambam only holds that interest of a *shavah perutah* or more would warrant a court case, similar to the *halachah* by theft. However, the plain reading of the Rambam implies that any amount of *rivis* would be punishable by *beis din*. Why is *rivis* subject to the dictates of *beis din* even for an amount less than a *shavah perutah*, while theft can only be taken to court if a *shavah perutah* or more was stolen?

A. The primary motivation behind the *issur* of *rivis* is that the act of lending should be one of *chessed*, kindness, and not a *business* transaction. In other words, the reason for the *issur* is that the lender should give the money without any ulterior motive. Any amount of interest, even less than a *shavah perutah*, takes away from the act of lending as an act of pure *chessed*, and as such, it is subject to the prohibition of *rivis*. Theft, however, is primarily about the victim. As such, for less than a *shavah perutah*, which most people are not particular about, we do not bring the violator to *beis din*.

Source: *Mishmeres Chaim Chelek I*, “*Gezeilah*” 2

ly *Hashem*, in His omniscience, possesses the authority to put those who He sees fit to death (as emphasized by the repetition of the phrase “*I will require*”). How could a mere man, whose knowledge is infinitely limited in comparison, carry out the same task? Thus, the following *possuk* elucidates the matter, indeed extending permission to just men to legally execute one guilty of murder - through what justification? Just as *Hashem*, in His nature, is capable of judging sinners, so too are men, **who are created in the Divine image**, similarly able to mete out justice by making use of their Divinely-rooted attributes

The *Be'er Mayim Chayim* continues to explain that commensurate with our God-given investment is our responsibility to behave accordingly. The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 154b) tells us that animals cannot hold true authority over man thanks to our uniquely Divine properties. Yet, should we debase ourselves like animals, our inherent Divine image no longer proves effective in protecting us against actual wild beasts. Consequently, while the manner of our creation grants us the ability to perform much more spiritually and intellectually sophisticated actions than those of animals, perhaps we should remember that with such great power comes equally great responsibility.

Blind Faith

Akiva Kra (21)

In this week's *parsha*, Noach is commanded to build a *teivah* (ark). He is told the specific measurements, animal classifications, and dietary needs that he will have to deal with in preparation for the flood. After being commanded, he carries out the instructions. Twice in the *parsha* (6:22 and 7:5), the *possuk* states that Noach did everything that he was commanded. What is never mentioned in the *parsha* is Noach asking for an explanation for this task. There are many questions that Noach could've asked: Why does he need to spend 100 years building the boat? How will all the animals fit on the boat? Why is *Hashem* destroying the world through a flood? How should he stay mentally sane locked in a wooden box? And yet, he didn't ask any of these questions, or any others. Why?

The answer, as simple as it seems, is in the beginning of the *parsha*: "God said to

Noach...*'Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch*". When one has a commandment from *Hashem*, they have to do it! There can be many aspects to discuss in regards to anything *Hashem* says, but that can be done when studying it after it happened. If anyone has a commandment, all the more so one who has it directly from *Hashem*, not only should they do it immediately, but it's disrespectful and shows a lack of faith if one delays. It is for this reason that many commentators criticize Moshe for talking back to *Hashem* when he was told to rescue the Jews from Egypt.

What Noach displayed was complete belief in *Hashem*. Elsewhere, the *Ba'al Haturim* teaches that the *gematria* of the word *ve'eschanan*, prayer, is equivalent to that of *shirah*, singing. This is because a person should trust in *Hashem* so much until he sings to *Hashem*, even before the salvation and answers to all our questions actually arrives. Additionally, in last week's *parsha*, we read: *Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim vi'es ha'aretz* - in the beginning, *Hashem* created the heaven and the earth. This can be translated as "heaven and earth were created for *reishis*". What is *reishis*? There are several explanations in Chazal and the *seforim*. The *Yesod Ha'avodah* says that the world was created for the *tzaddikim* who are constantly repeating to themselves "*Bereishis bara Elokim*", that *Hashem* created the world. In other words, *Hashem* created the world for the Jews who have *emunah*. May we all be able to have belief in *Hashem* and His commandments, and to do them even when we don't know the answer.

Ravens and Doves

Avidan Loike (22)

What was the reason that Noach used a raven and a dove to see that the *mabul* was over rather than any other bird? Why did Noach send a raven? Why a dove? Why two different birds?

The *Chizkuni* writes that the reason that Noach used an *orev* (raven) was because it is a scavenger. This means that the raven would search for dead animals to eat, so if there was dry land, it would find the animals that died in the flood.

There are three reasons that Noach sent the dove. One reason is because the raven said to

Noach “if I die, then my species will be taken away from the world” (because there were only two of every non-*kosher* animal). “However, if you send out a *kosher* bird and it dies, it doesn’t matter” (because there were seven of every *kosher* animal). Noach gave in to the raven because *Hashem* told him that ravens will play a vital role in the future, when they would give Eliyahu food when he was hiding from Achav [Rabbeinu Bachya]. One reason that Noach specifically sent a dove was because doves have a very good sense of direction, and a dove has the ability to find land much more easily than most other animals. People used to take doves on voyages with them, because if they got lost, then they would release the dove, and whichever direction it flew, they would know that is where land is and follow it there. Noach was hoping that the dove would not return, and that way he would know that there was dry land. On the other hand, if the dove did not find dry land, because of its navigational skills, it could easily come back to the ark. The Ramban also says that a reason Noach sent a dove specifically is because doves don’t dwell on mountaintops like where Noach landed; as such if the dove wouldn’t return, then that would mean it found dry land below the mountains.

Would Noach Be in The Hall Of Fame Today?

Ezra Nenner (24)

If one were to take a look at the record books of Major League Baseball, they might notice something a bit strange. The record in question is one of utmost importance: career home runs. The current leader in that statistic is none other than Barry Bonds, with 762 home runs in his long career, beating out Henry “Hank” Aaron’s previous record of 755. Of course, this isn’t the only record Bonds holds. He also has the most homers in a single season, he has been walked more than anyone, yet here is the aforementioned odd thing: he is yet to be inducted into the MLB Hall of Fame. The reason for this is quite simple: Many baseball enthusiasts believe that when the name of Barry Bonds is seen in a record book, right next to his name should be an asterisk.

Up until 1998, Barry Bonds led an illustrious career, until his career became too illustrious. His trainer led him to believe that he was taking medicinal oil, while he was in fact using steroids, a

drug that is illegal in the MLB, and he was soon viewed as a fraud and a cheater. Nevertheless, he got into all of those record books and broke all of those records, but he is to this day believed to be a “fraud” with respect to his records. This is not the only the only time a player was thought to deserve an asterisk next to his name. In the year of 1961, Yankee Roger Maris broke the record for home runs in a single season, a record once held by Babe Ruth. Maris had 61 home runs in the season, while Ruth only had 60 in his historic 1927 season. Although there was nothing fishy about Maris breaking the record, some found it illegitimate due to the fact that by 1961, the Major League schedule contained 162 games, eight more games than Ruth had the chance to play. Because of this, many think Maris would not have broken the record in just 154 games, which is why he has an ‘asterisk’ next to his name as well. Oddly enough, these two stories fit into this week’s *parsha*, *Parshas Noach*, extraordinarily well.

In the very first *possuk* of the *parsha*, Rashi has something to say about Noach. His question is this: what does the *Torah* mean when it says that Noach was a *tzaddik* “in his generation”? Why not just call Noach a *tzaddik*? There are two theories as to what the answer is. The first answer, that some of Chazal believe, is that Noach was on a very high spiritual level, but if he was surrounded by other *tzaddikim*, he would be on an even higher level. This is why the *possuk* adds the qualifier “in his generation”, to stress that even in his corrupt era, Noach was still righteous. The other answer is much less favorable to Noach, and interprets the term as a subtle clue that maybe Noach was not such a *tzaddik*, just the best person in the world by comparison. In this way, Noach is a lot like Roger Maris. He had more home runs than Babe Ruth in a single season, just because Ruth was never a part of a season with so many games. In this sense, Noach may not have had the honor of building the *teivah* if Avraham or Moshe were alive, because their righteousness was timeless. Maybe Noach, Roger, and Barry are all in the same boat (no pun intended). Noach was a good person, but his environment limited him to a certain spiritual level. This made him not as much of a *tzaddik*, but rather, someone who would have been an “average Jew” in the times of Avraham. Realistically, Noach had many flaws, which would have made him nothing special in a more

righteous generation. That is one of the many lessons of this week's *parsha*: to not only strive in the comparison of those who are wicked, or those who had less opportunity than you, but to push for timeless excellence, and to be an undisputed *tzaddik*. Noach, Barry Bonds, and Roger Maris were not able to achieve such things, and because of that, they forever have an asterisk attached to their names. We should strive to be great by our own standards, not just those of the people around us.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Yisroel David Rosenberg (23)

Bye, Bye Birdie

"וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָעֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא וַיָּצֵא וְשׁוֹב עַד יְבֹשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ"

"And he sent the raven, and it went out, going back and forth until the waters dried up from upon the earth" (Bereishis 8:7)

When Noach first wants to see if the flood waters have subsided enough to leave the *teivah*, he puts the raven out of the window. The word "*vayishalach*" in this *possuk* can either mean "sent", that the raven had a mission, or simply "released". This is the debate between Rashi and the Rashbam*. Rashi comments on the words "*yatzo vashov*," the raven "went and came". He describes this as the raven's refusal to perform the mission he was sent forth to do, and its circling back around the *teivah*. Rashbam, on the other hand, explains "*vayishalach*" as allowing the bird to go on its way. He argues that, grammatically, the word to represent that the raven was sent with a mission would be "*vayishlach*", which is not the word used.

Returning to Rashi, his first comment on the *possuk*, which is based on a *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (108b), views the raven in a negative light. The raven suspects Noach of sending him away with foul intentions towards its mate, and that is why it does not want to complete the mission Noach has given it. However, in Rashi's next comment, on the words "*ad yevoshes hamayim*", he quotes a *medrash* that the reason why the raven remained circling the *teivah* was because it was already reserved for a different mission. The raven was waiting for the "drying of the water", the drought caused by Eliyahu *Hanavi* in the days of Achav. At that time, when Eliyahu was hiding in Nachal Krit, "the ravens brought him bread and meat" (*Melachim* 17:6). This comment is a bit kinder to the raven than Rashi's first.

*There is no commentary from the Rashbam on this part of the *Torah*. However, the website alhatorah.org has a reconstructed version of the Rashbam from quotes of other commentaries. In this case, the *Chizkuni* is the one to quote the Rashbam.

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CHUMASH B'YUN

Apostasy or Error?

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

The eight *pesukim* describing the *dor haflagah* (Generation of the Dispersion) and its attempt to build the Tower of Bavel (*Bereishis* 11: 1 – 8) are most elusive, and yield many contradictory understandings in the major *meforshim*. Essentially there are those who view the construction as a form of rebellion against (or denial of) God, while others adopt the view that it was simply a misunderstanding of some aspect of the Divine Plan for mankind and the world. As the *Midrash Rabbah* quotes R. Elazar, “*Achodim* [a word used to describe the generation in the first *possuk*] means veiled deeds, for the deeds of the generation of the flood are explicitly stated, whereas those of generation of the dispersion are not explicitly stated.” (*Midrash Rabbah, Bereishis* 38:6). Let us explore these two positions and their motivations in the context of the *Chumash* text.

The starting point for this fundamental disagreement is found in comments made on the very first *possuk*, which reads, “The whole earth was of one language and unified words (*udevorim achodim*)” (*Bereishis* 11:1). Rashi here cites three *Midrashim* in explanation of these two words, two from *Bereishis Rabbah*, and one from the *Tanchuma*. Let us first quote them as they appear in our Rashi's text. As usual, we must also explore the original *Midrashim*, as Rashi's editing of those original texts is often of significance.

Rashi: “They came with one counsel and said, 'It is not His right to choose the celestial spheres for Himself. Let us ascend to the heavens and wage war against Him.' Another interpretation: (They spoke) against the One of the World. Another interpretation: 'of one speech,' They said, 'Once every 1656 years, the firmament collapses as it did in the days of the flood. Come, let us make supports for it.’”

To express this in *peshat* terms: the first explanation is that their speech was of oneness, that is one unified “advice.” The second explanation sees the “oneness” as referencing the One (G-d). The last *peshat* understands “oneness” in the sense of time, that is, words describing a “once” in a certain time period event.

Actually, the first explanation Rashi offers is found in far lengthier form in the *Midrash*, and seems to be saying that their behavior was more virtuous than we might think. Rashi's selective quotation is fascinating. Here is the full text (*Midrash Rabbah, Bereishis* 38:6, paragraph 3): R. Elazar said, “Who is worse – the one who says to the king, 'Either you or I will dwell in the palace,' or the one who says, 'Neither you nor I will dwell in the palace'? Surely the one who says, “Either you or I.’ Similarly, the generation of the flood said, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? (*Iyov* 21:15), whereas the generation of the dispersion said 'It does not rest with Him to choose the celestial spheres for Himself and assign the terrestrial world to us. Come rather, let us build a tower at the top of which we will set an idol holding a sword that it may appear to wage war with Him.

Yet, of the former not a remnant was left, whereas of the latter a remnant was left! But because the generation of the flood was steeped in robbery, as it is written, “they remove the landmarks, they violently take away the flocks and feed them” (*Iyov* 24:2), therefore not a remnant of them was left. And since the latter, on the other hand, loved one another, as it is written, “and the whole earth was of one language”, therefore a remnant of them was left.”

The *Midrash* is favorably comparing the generation of the dispersion to that of the flood, first because the tower builders were willing to share the Heavens with God and the flood generation denied Him entirely, and also because of the interpersonal sins of the *mabul's* victims.

Rashi, though, seems to limit his quotations in such a fashion as to omit the *Midrash's* favorable understandings. Rashi also quotes in his comments to *possuk* 8 that the generation of the dispersion loses their portion in the next world. In fact, on *possuk* 9, Rashi does bring part of the *Midrash*, and he adds that the

dor haflagah had “love and friendship”, and were thus spared destruction. According to Rashi, the generation of the dispersion were guilty of “war” against the Divine, thus meriting the loss of *olam haba*, but were also spared this worldly destruction because of their love of each other. A fascinating combination of traits.

The *Ohr Hachaim* (and to some degree the Ramban) see the sin of the Tower's builders very differently. He begins with two questions against Rashi's *peshat*. First, in the simple reading of the *pesukim*, there is no mention of any denial of God. Second, the punishment of merely dispersing them seems insufficient for the crime of denial of God in some antagonistic manner.

He, therefore, concludes that their sin was just their attempt to all dwell in the same place. This was in defiance of *Hashem's* plan that humanity should settle at the least a third of the world. Thus, their punishment was to make them unable to communicate with each other, thereby forcing them to scatter and populate the whole world. This explains why the punishment was, in effect, nothing more than forcing them to conform to the ultimate Divine plan. And this *peshat* fits with the fact that no mention is made in the simple reading of the *pesukim* of any graver sins.

A problem with the *Ohr Hachaim* is why, if this is the full extent of the generation's evil, did they lose the Next World? And, of course, according to Rashi, the lack of a terrible punishment seems a strong question.

Perhaps, speculatively, we may suggest that the defiance of the Divine plan to settle the earth was a form of apostasy in its rejection of God's plan for the world. The sharing of Heaven may be a metaphor for sharing a plan for the world. Thus, conceivably, the two approaches can co-exist. Yet, the loss of *olam haba* still seems to demand a better explanation.

TORAH FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

Rav Michael Tabubes

The Torah tells us that prior to the deeds perpetrated by the people of the *dor haflagah* who tried to build a giant tower in order to fight against *Hashem*, all the people on earth spoke one language (*Bereishis* 11:1). Rashi, in his commentary on this *possuk* (*d"h safa*), indicates that this one language was *Lashon Hakodesh*, which we call Hebrew. This opinion is found as well in the *Yerushalmi* in *Megillah* (1:9), where this universally spoken language is also identified as *Lashon Hakodesh* and as the language spoken by *Hashem* Himself. This latter point is a reference to the fact that *Hashem* created the world by speaking in Hebrew, as noted by the *Pnei Moshe* (*d"h viacharina*) and mentioned as well by Rashi earlier in the *Torah* (*Bereishis* 2:23 *d"h. lizos*), citing the *Midrash* in *Bereishis Rabbah* (*Parsha* 18 *Siman* 6). It also refers to the fact *Hashem* spoke to *Bnei Yisrael* in Hebrew when giving them the *Torah*, as noted by the *Korban Haeidah* (*d"h bilashon*), and stated as well by the *Midrash* and by the *Gemara* in *Berachos* 13a and in *Sanhedrin* 21b. The *Gemara* in *Chagigah* 16a adds that Hebrew is the language spoken by the *Malachei Hashareis*, the ministering angels, in Heaven.

Given this unique significance and status of the Hebrew language, is there any *mitzvah* to study and master or speak Hebrew? The *Yerushalmi* in *Shabbos* (1:3) lists among the attributes which describe one who is guaranteed to be worthy of *Olam Haba* the fact that he speaks *Lashon HaKodesh*; the *Korban Haeidah* (*d"h umidbar*) notes that speaking this language leads to spiritual purity. This does not, however, mean that there is a *mitzvah* to speak Hebrew. It is also obvious that knowledge of Hebrew and its grammatical and linguistic rules is sometimes necessary for proper understanding of an expression in the *Torah* which has Halachic ramifications, as is made clear, for example, in the *Gemara* in *Yevamos* (13b; See *Tosfos d"h keivan*) as well as in the *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah* 3a, and as is elaborated upon by Rashi (*d"h kidiReish Lakish*). This too, however, does not necessarily mean that there is a specific *mitzvah* to speak Hebrew, or that the study of Hebrew is even considered to be a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *Talmud Torah*.

It would appear, however, that according to at least some authorities, there is some kind of *mitzvah* associated with speaking and learning Hebrew. The *Sifrei* in *Parshas Eikev* (*Piska* 10, *Devarim Piska* 46) states that when a child first begins to talk, his father should speak to him in Hebrew and teach him *Torah*, implying that this will guarantee the child a long life, and that failure to do so will unfortunately assure the opposite. The same idea is found in the *Tosefta* in *Chagigah* (1:3), though with a slight variation; this source states that when a child knows how to talk, his father should teach him Hebrew. It could be argued that according to the latter source, it is insufficient to simply speak to the child in Hebrew, thereby familiarizing him with the language in a general sense; rather, it is necessary to teach the child Hebrew so that he becomes fluent in it. In either case, it is clear that Chazal considered it important for children to be exposed to Hebrew at some level starting at a very young age; apparently, there is value in knowing the language and, presumably, in being able to use it as an adult.

The clearest formulation which identifies learning Hebrew as *mitzvah* is found in the *Peirush Hamishnayos* of the Rambam, commenting on the *mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos* (2:1) which says that one must be as scrupulous regarding a "*mitzvah kallah*" – a minor *mitzvah* – as one is with a "*mitzvah chamurah*" – a major *mitzvah*. As an example of a *mitzvah kallah*, the Rambam cites studying – or teaching – Hebrew, along with rejoicing on *Yom Tov* (which is clearly a *mitzvah* from the *Torah*), adding, as the *mishnah* itself seems to suggest, that these "minor" *mitzvos* are in fact more important than people tend to think. The Rambam here clearly considers studying Hebrew to be a *mitzvah*, one which is perhaps more significant than one may think.

The difficulty is that although the Rambam's view is clear in the *Peirush Hamishnayos*, he does not codify this *mitzvah* to learn or teach Hebrew in his *Mishneh Torah*, nor does such a requirement appear in the *Shulchan Aruch*. The *Torah Temimah* in *Parshas Eikev* (*Devarim* 11:19:52) refers to a separate essay which he wrote about the obligation and the importance of learning Hebrew, and questions why the *poskim* omitted any reference to the requirement to learn Hebrew. Although he suggests a possible answer, he concludes that the difficulty remains. It is worth noting, however, that among others, the *Chavos Yair* (*Siman* 124) writes that it is important and indeed necessary to study Hebrew grammar, and the *Vilna Gaon* as well spoke of the need to be thoroughly familiar with grammar, as reported by his sons in their introduction to his commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Hakdamas Bnai HaGra* 1: *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim*). Moreover, Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Shu't Igras Moshe, Even Haezer* vol. 3 *Siman* 35) actually states clearly that there is a *mitzvah* to speak in Hebrew, although he asserts that there is certainly and obviously no prohibition to speak in any other language.

The *Pardes Yosef* in *Parshas Ki Sisa* (*Shemos* 30:13) quotes an interesting suggestion as to the source of this *mitzvah* to study and know Hebrew, linking it with the *mitzvah* of "*Hakhel*," a *mitzvah* which obligated every Jew to assemble in Yerushalayim once every seven years (on the *Sukkos* following the *Shemittah* year) to hear the king publicly read certain sections of the *Torah* (see *Devarim* 31:10-13). The *mishnah* in *Sotah* (32a) says clearly that these sections had to be read by the king in Hebrew, a ruling codified by the Rambam (*Hilchos Chagigah* 3:5). The *Gemara* in *Chagigah* (3a) implies that it was necessary for the people to understand what the king was reading; there may therefore be a *mitzvah* to learn Hebrew in order to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*. One could suggest by extension that since the *Torah* and most other major Jewish works are written in Hebrew, there may be a *mitzvah* to learn Hebrew in order to more thoroughly master these works, especially in view of the fact that the Ramban in *Parshas Ki Sisa* writes that Hebrew is in fact called *Lashon Hakodesh* precisely because it is the language used in the *Torah* and other holy works. It is interesting to note that in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Rama (*Orach Chayim* 307:16) rules that whereas it is inappropriate to read certain types of stories, books, and literature on *Shabbos*, if they are written in Hebrew, they may be read on *Shabbos*. The *Magen Avraham* (s.k. 24) explains that this is because the language itself has *kedushah*, and one can learn *Divrei Torah* simply by reading books and even letters written in Hebrew. The *Taz* (s.k. 13) disagrees with this last point, citing the fact that the *Shulchan Aruch* rules elsewhere (*Orach Chayim* 85:2) that one may speak in Hebrew about ordinary topics even in a place like a bathroom where *Torah* learning would be forbidden, but it should be noted that the *Magen Avraham* (s.k. 2) quotes from the *Sefer Chassidim* (*Siman* 994) that it is indeed a sign of piety to avoid speaking Hebrew in such places.

The above, of course, should not be understood as an all-encompassing permit to read on *Shabbos* any kind of literature which may happen to be written in Hebrew. Certain literature ought to be avoided, both on *Shabbos* and during the week, regardless of the language in which it is written, because the content is inappropriate, both for *Shabbos* and in general. Moreover, it must be stressed that there may be important distinctions that have to be drawn between modern, spoken Hebrew and the *Lashon Hakodesh* referred to by the above sources. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the *Midrash* in *Vayikra Rabbah* (*Parsha 32 Siman 5*), among other places, states that one of the meritorious deeds of our ancestors in *Mitzrayim* was that they maintained their own language – Hebrew. Although this may not mean that they spoke exclusively in Hebrew, it is clear that they considered it important to know Hebrew fluently, and this was one of the things which made them worthy of redemption.

CHASIDUS ON THE PARSHA

Peshurin Sorscher (21)

There are many levels to being a righteous person. Understanding these levels can shed some light on how we are supposed to act and how we should achieve our goals. There are those who spend their time solely dedicated to *Hashem*, making sure that their service to the One Above is complete. We are introduced to that level of righteousness with Noach. Noach spent his days developing his relationship with his Maker. Yet this type of righteousness is not complete; part of being righteous is making sure that *Hashem's* glory is revealed to everyone, and not just a few, elite individuals. (The Arizal writes that because Noach did not help other people, he was punished and Moshe was tasked to complete his job as Noach's *gilgul* (reincarnation). Moshe was successful in his job and consistently tried to help the Jews in the desert.) The highest level of *tzidkus* (righteousness) is where a person not only makes sure that he is serving *Hashem* completely, but also encourages others to do the same. The paradigm of this *tzaddik* is Avraham Avinu, who made it a priority to help others draw close to *Hashem* while still maintaining his own exalted spiritual level. The *Kedushas Levi*, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev (1740-18090), writes that based of this we can explain the statement of Chazal in *Kidushin 40a* (The interested reader, who is inclined towards several of the 70 faces of the *Torah*, should look at Rav Aharon Lichtenstien's book "By His Light", specifically the essay "Being Frum And Being Good: On The Relationship Between Religion And Morality" (pg.89) for further reading.) that "there is a *tzaddik* who is good to the Heavens and to Creation." The Berdichever explains that when someone serves *Hashem*, he is good to the Heavens, and when he encourages others to do the same, he is good to Creation.

The Rebbe continues to explain that based on this we can understand why the *Torah* tells us in the beginning of the *parsha*, "This is the lineage of Noach ... and Noach had three children", whereas by Avraham, the *pesukim* make no such mention of 'This is the lineage of Avraham.' Since Noach only cared about his own spiritual growth, he was limited to his biological children, and his descendants were only three children. Avraham on the other hand, who made it his mission to help others connect with *Hashem*, was not limited by his own biological children. We know from the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin 69b*) that anyone who teaches someone *Torah*, it is as if he gave birth to him. Thus, all the people that Avraham had influenced with his teachings are attributed to him as his own progeny. So, it would not be possible to say that this is the line of Avraham, as Avraham descendants are too numerous to count. As the *Torah* that he taught spread, it caused a chain reaction, influencing multitudes of people.

We all have an incredible opportunity in today's trying times. So many of our fellow Jews are struggling with so many issues. We don't even realize how much a simple text to someone who you know is going through a difficult time can do. We can not only help ourselves; we have an obligation to *Klal Yisroel* to care for every single *yid*. So, dear reader, I ask that as you finish reading this *dvar Torah*, you spend two minutes thinking what you can do to help someone you know. In this merit, *Hashem* should have mercy on all of us, and send us a salvation. Good Shabbos!

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Social Darwinism And The Dor Haflagah

In his speech accepting the Illinois Republican Party's nomination for state senator, future President Abraham Lincoln famously declared that "a House divided against itself cannot stand. The "house" which Lincoln was referring to was the United States, which at that point was on the verge of disunion over the issue of slavery. In this week's *parsha*, we can apply this quote far more literally.

Towards the end of the *parsha*, the *pesukim* describe the story of the *Dor Haflagah*, who plotted to build a large tower which would reach *Hashem* in the Heavens. The *meforshim* differ regarding what the intention of this tower was, but it is clear that the plan constituted some form of attempt to oppose *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. In response to this rebellion, *Hashem* punished the people in a unique way; the *posuk* describes that *Hashem* was "*balal sfas kol ha'aretz*" - mixed up the languages of the whole land (*Bereishis* 11:9). Rashi explains that the intent of this was to cripple the efficiency of the project by causing the builders to be unable to communicate with one another. He gives a scenario: "one person would ask for a brick, and the other would give cement. This would cause the first person to [get upset] and kill the other one". Conceptually, this Rashi makes a lot of sense - *Hashem* decided to make the people speak different languages, so that they would not be able to complete their rebellious tower. The house divided against itself, or tower in this instance, could not stand. However, why did Rashi need to go so far as to say that they would kill each other? This appears to come completely out of left field, and it is completely unnecessary to understand the logic behind what *Hashem* did. What motivated Rashi to make this claim?

In 1859, Charles Darwin published his magnum opus "On The Origin Of Species". In this book, he argued for the theory of evolution, which was based on the concept of "survival of the fittest". Essentially, this means that whichever animals were most "fit" to survive in a certain environment would thrive and have children, leading to more animals with those same traits. Those animals which were not fit, however, would die out, since they were not optimized for the environment. For example, since giraffes eat fruits from the tops of trees, the giraffes with longer necks would be at an advantage in getting fruit. The theory states that giraffes evolved longer necks over time, as the ones with longer and longer necks continued to get the food. This phenomenon is called "natural selection", and has since been proven to occur in natural environments.

About 50 years later, thinkers such as Herbert Walker and Thomas Malthus began to advocate for a policy of "Social Darwinism". Essentially, this philosophy attempted to apply Darwin's rules to human society. People who were poised to succeed in society were considered to have achieved their position by virtue of them being innately better. Those who were most fit and able to contribute to larger society were said to automatically thrive based on their usefulness, while those who could not would be swept away. The thought process often took on a divine nature - proponents would claim that the weakest members of society were destined by God to die out, to make way for those who were stronger. This argument was used to dissuade social programs designed to help the weakest members of society, such as the sick, elderly, and poor. After all, Social Darwinists would claim, if these people are not helping to advance society forward, it is impractical to waste resources on them!

Many of the *meforshim* stress the fact that the *dor haflagah* was deemed better than the *dor hamabul* due to their great *achdus* (unity). Rashi himself comments that the *dor hamabul* was wiped out because they acted hostile towards one another, committing sins like theft and murder, while the members of the *dor haflagah* acted together, as a group. Perhaps, Rashi added his comment about the people killing one another to teach us that the *dor haflagah's* unity was not real; it was, in a sense, the unity of a Social Darwinist. The members of the *dor haflagah* acted with *achdus*, but only because they recognized that they would have to work together to create a tower powerful enough to fight God. When a person's usefulness became diminished, such as when he started speaking a strange language, it only made sense to kill him - he stopped being useful! In other words, Rashi stresses that the members of the *dor haflagah* killed one another in order to teach us that this was not such a far-fetched thing to happen. To the members of the *dor haflagah*, once their fellow man's pragmatic use had been stymied, it made no difference if he remained alive, since his life no longer had any importance.

The concept sounds absurd to us. Of course we recognize that people's lives have value outside of what they can do to sustain themselves and others! But while this may be true, a certain aspect of this mindset still remains in our psychology. How often do we depend on the support of others, while making ourselves unavailable when they need us? On an emotional, spiritual, and even physical level, how often do we ignore other people's problems, without reaching out a hand to help? Of course, the intention is never to harm the person, but why should I get involved? This can apply on a communal level as well. We may divorce ourselves from another part of the Jewish community because their suffering does not affect me personally. This is the mindset of the *dor haflagah* - the notion that those weaker than us can be left alone, without any obligation on our part to pay them heed. This is the same logic which led to murdering people who brought cement instead of a brick - the idea that if my friend's fate isn't directly tied to my own, his life is not important. We as *Klal Yisroel* must overcome this *middah*, and stand *ki'ish echad bilev echad*, as one man, with one heart.

Wishing everyone an amazing *Shabbos*,
Shimi Kaufman

Chamas vs. Geneivah

In this week's *parsha*, *Hashem* destroys the world with a flood, because "the earth [was] filled with robbery through them" (*Bereishis* 6:13). The word that the *Torah* uses for robbery here is not the far more common "*geneivah*"; rather, the *Torah* opts to use a less common word with a very different meaning, "*chamas*". Many of us may be aware of the *Medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 31:5), which explains that the word "*chamas*" in this *possuk* means that what the people stole was worth less than a *perutah*, an insignificant amount which no court could force them to pay back. The reason this was so terrible is because when they weren't able to rectify their sin by paying the victim back, it festered in them as a people and corrupted their character. The question remains, however, why this could serve as a cause for *Hashem* to destroy the entire Earth. We know human life is not the only life on this planet, so how could *Hashem* also destroy the plants and animals seemingly without cause?

The *Midrash Rabbah* explains the term *chamas* to mean that the earth itself was stealing from the people, by producing thorns instead of grain. The *Chasam Sofer* points out here that it is because humans had become unworthy of the Earth's crops that the Earth chose to commit this act of *chamas*. According to this, if the Earth's *chamas* was justified, why was it punished for

withholding crops? The *Chasam Sofer* answers that the Earth's mission is to provide food for the people; by opting out of that mission, the Earth was not fulfilling *Hashem's* will, and that was enough to cause its destruction. It is possible that the destruction of the top layer of soil was really a blessing in disguise, because by destroying the corrupted top, the inner core could be revealed as a new foundation for the world to build on post-flood. Perhaps this rebirth of the land was helped by Noach himself, who, as *Midrash Tanchuma* comments, invented the plow, which served to uproot the soil, and allowed it to be further torn up by the flood to make way for the new layer to emerge.

There is one more reason why the earth and the animals were destroyed. Rashi (*Bereishis* 6:12) explains that even the animals were corrupt, as they developed a tendency to mate with other species of animals. It is possible that this behavior and that of the soil was the cause of, and not a reaction to, the people's actions. The *possuk* itself seems to imply this when it says "the earth was filled with robbery through them", with the *possuk* first mentioning the earth and only then mentioning the people. Perhaps the animals and nature itself acting in a way outside of *Hashem's* normal dictation paved the way for the people to begin acting in ways that were also wrong. We should see the clear lesson, that despite what other people say or do, we have a responsibility to uphold *Hashem's* laws and our Jewish values even in a world that is crumbling around us. This explanation would also serve as an answer to the previously posed question of why *Hashem* also destroyed the plants and animals as opposed to only people. Since both the animals and the earth was corrupted by the people, or served as the source of corruption for the people, *Hashem* determined that they too needed to be destroyed in order for the earth to properly realign into a world that could have a *Torah* and a nation to uphold its laws.

Shabbat Shalom everyone,
Yisroel Hochman

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Josef Weiner (23)

At the conclusion of the Flood in *Parshas Noach*, *Hashem* famously displays a rainbow as a symbol of the *bris* to never again destroy the world. The rainbow is so significant that when one sees a rainbow, they should recite the *bracha* of *zechor habris* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* 229:1), which reads as follows:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם זוכר הברית נאמן בבריתו וקיים במאמרו

"Blessed are you Hashem, our God, King Of The World, who remembers the covenant and is trustworthy with His covenant and upholds His word"

The Rambam and *Tur* both write that one should say *vine'eman*, as opposed to "*ne'eman*" (*Mishna Brurah* 229:3). One may recite the *brachah* if they see a rainbow through glass (*Halacha Berurah* 229:3). The *Chofetz Chaim* in his *Biur Halachah* says that it is unclear whether or not one should make a *brachah* if they only see part of the arch of the rainbow. Rav Moshe Shternbuach takes the position that one should not make a *brachah* because of the principle of *safek brachos lehakel*, that we are lenient whenever there is an uncertainty regarding

brachos (*Teshuvos Vihanhagos* Volume 3 76:6). Likewise, Rav Chaim Kanievsky says one should not make a *brachah*. However, Rav Nissim Karelitz and Rav Elyashiv are of the opinion that one may make the *brachah* (*Dirshu Mishna Berurah* 229: footnote 2).

The *Gemara* says that since the rainbow is emblematic of *Hashem's* glory, it is improper to stare at it, and that if one does so, their eyesight will diminish (*Chagigah* 16a). Rather than looking directly, one should only glance at the rainbow, and then recite the *brachah* (M.B. 229:5). One may make a *brachah* on another rainbow even if 30 days have not passed since seeing the first one (M.B. 229:2). The *Ketzos Hashulchan* says that even if the original clouds have not dispersed, one can make a *brachah* on another rainbow (66:26) However, in *Habirchas Habayis* it says that one should not make another *brachah* within 30 days if the clouds have not dispersed.

An additional *halachah* pertaining to rainbows is that one should not tell a friend upon seeing a rainbow, because it is akin to relaying bad news (*Chayei Adam* 63:4). It is considered negative news because the appearance of a rainbow is a sign that the current generation is worthy of destruction. Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl adds that one should not make the *brachah*, loudly causing his friend to realize there is a rainbow (*BeYitzchak Yikarei* 229:1). Rav Yitzchak Zilberstien allows one to ask someone for the wording of the *brachah*, thereby alerting them to the presence of a rainbow (*Chashukei Chemed Berachos* 59a).

PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!
(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. Where are cannibals mentioned in this week's *parsha*?
2. In what three contexts does the number seven appear in this week's *parsha*?
3. Where in this week's *parsha* do we find the only instance where we recite *kaddish* after the death of a non-Jew?

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: PIASECZNA REBBE

Meir Morell ('22)



Rabbi Klonimus Kalman (or Kalmish) Shapiro, the Piaseczna Rebbe, (1889-1943), was born in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland, to his father Rabbi Elimelech Shapiro, the *Imrei Elimelech* of Grodzisk, a *talmid* of the Rhiziner Rebbe, Rav Yisrael Friedman. His grandfather was the third Kozhnutzer Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Mayer Yechiel Shapiro, the *Saraf* of Moglenitz. He was named after his maternal great grandfather, the *Maor Vashemesh*, Rabbi Klonimus Kalman Epstein. He descended from many distinguished *Rabbonim*, including Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk, the Chozeh of Lublin, and the Maggid of Kozhnutz. When he was only three years old, his father died.

In 1905 he married Rachel Chaya Miriam, daughter of his nephew Grand Rabbi Yerachmiel Moshe of Kozhnutz. His wife aided him in editing his *seforim*, as well as adding some of her own insights. The couple had two children, a son named Elimelech Ben Zion and a daughter named Rechil Yehudis, both of whom were murdered in the Holocaust. In 1909, he was appointed rabbi of Piaseczna, near Warsaw, where he attracted many *chassidim*. He was deeply focused on the education of children and young men, establishing the *Yeshivas Da'as Moshe* in 1923, which became one of the largest *chassidische yeshivos* in Warsaw between the wars. One of his goals as a Rebbe was to reverse the terrible trend of secularization which was prominent in Poland between the wars. These trends, the Rebbe argued, could only become worse with the traditional educational methods, firm discipline and rote learning, such as were often the practice of the day in *yeshivos*. Rabbi Shapiro argued for positive, psychologically sensitive, joyous educational methods.

The Rebbe's only son, his daughter-in-law, and his sister-in-law, were killed during the Nazi aerial bombing of Warsaw in September of 1939. After the invasion of Poland, the Rebbe was interned with a few of his *chassidim* in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he ran a secret *shul*. He invested much effort in maintaining Jewish life in the ghetto, including arranging for *mikveh* immersions and *kosher* marriages. Rabbi Shapiro was able to survive in the ghetto until its liquidation, avoiding the tragic deportations to Treblinka in the summer of 1942, because of the support of the Judenrat (the council representing the Jewish Community). Like other notables, he was given work at Schultz's shoe factory—a path to ongoing survival.

The Rebbe is especially well known because of a *sefer* he wrote while in the ghetto. The *sefer*, which is a compilation of weekly *shiurim* to his students, contends with complex questions of faith in the face of the mounting suffering of the Jews in the ghetto. When it became apparent to Rabbi Shapiro that the end of the ghetto and all its inhabitants was near, he buried the book in a milk canister, as part of the Ringelblum "*Oneg Shabbos*" Archive. This canister was found by a construction worker after the end of the war. The book, originally simply entitled "*Torah Innovations From The Years 5700-5702*," was published in Israel in 1960 under the title *Aish Kodesh*, which is now the title that Rabbi Shapiro is often given.



After the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was crushed in 1943, Rabbi Shapiro was taken to the Trawniki work camp near Lublin. Although offered the opportunity to escape from the concentration camp, he apparently refused. Following the Jewish uprising in the Treblinka death camp (August 2, 1943) and in Sobibor extermination camp (October 14, 1943), there was increasing concern among the Nazi authorities that there would be further outbreaks of violence at other concentration camps. For this reason, Aktion Erntefest (Operation Harvest Festival) was launched. During this operation, carried out on November 3, 1943 or 4 *Cheshvan*, 1944, all the remaining Jews in Trawniki, including Rabbi Shapiro, were shot to death.

Rabbi Shapiro wrote many books. Aside from his magnum opus, *Aish Kodesh*, and his famous *mussar* (ethics) *sefer Chovas Hatalmidim*, he also wrote *Hachshoras Ha'avreichim*, *Mevo Hasheorim*, *Tzav Vizir-uz*, *Bnei Machshavah Tovah*, and *Derech HaMelech*. *Hashem yikom damo*.

Parsha Summary

Noach, who was mentioned at the end of last week's *parsha*, is mentioned to be a great *tzaddik*, in contrast with the other members of his generation, who were incredibly corrupt. Because of this, *Hashem* determines to wipe out mankind with a flood. *Hashem* instructs Noach to build a *teivah*, a massive ship, upon which he is commanded to bring his wife, children, and two of every animal on earth. Noach builds the *teivah* for 120 years, at which point *Hashem* sends intense rains for 40 days and nights. At the end of a full year, the waters finally receded, and Noach and his family left the *teivah*. Noach became a farmer who worked with vineyards, and one day, he became drunk and sat in his tent uncovered. Cham, Noach's middle son, wanted to embarrass his father, while Noach's other two sons, Shem and Yafes, entered the tent to cover their father. As a result, Noach cursed Cham to be a slave to his brothers. Later, there was a group of people who decided to build a tower to Heaven, in order to fight *Hashem*. As a punishment, *Hashem* scattered them across the world and changed their languages, so that they could not communicate. The *parsha* ends with a list of the generations leading up to the birth of Avraham Avinu.

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