



Parshas Noach

October 12, 2018

A Taste of Torah Self-Educated

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

When it comes to educating children, there is a common misconception, for people tend to think that how they act personally is irrelevant. The only thing that is important, some believe, is that their children are raised with proper morals and attend the best schools and yeshivas. However, the opposite is true, as the best way to educate is through example. The more one works on oneself, the more influence one has on his children.

We find this concept in the opening verse to this week's parsha. The parsha begins with the verse (Noach 6:9), "These are the offspring of Noach - Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with Hashem." Rashi (ibid.) is bothered by the obvious question as to why the Torah begins discussing Noach's offspring's and instead lists his personal greatness. Rashi answers that the main offspring of a *tzaddik* are his good deeds.

Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa (1765-1827) offers another explanation. He suggests that the Torah is coming to show us that a person's existence should not be merely for his children; rather, one must focus on his own personal growth and attain achievements in his own life, as well.

Based on the idea we began with, we may add a twist on this explanation. Through one's personal growth, one can influence his children. The Torah

is thus teaching us that the secret of Noach's success in influencing his children was due to his personal growth and his good deeds.

There is a famous statement from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) which brings out this point. He was once asked why so many children left the path of the Torah during the early 1900s despite the great sacrifice many of their parents made in observing the Torah. This dedication was especially true when it came to Shabbos. Many jobs required working on Saturday, and numerous observant Jewish breadwinners lost their jobs rather than desecrate the holy day.

Rabbi Feinstein explained that while it's true they were willing to give up their livelihood for Shabbos, their reaction when they came home was their undoing. When they sat at their Shabbos table, instead of exulting that they had the privilege of sacrificing so much to remain true to the Torah, these unfortunate people said, "Oy, *es is shver tzu zain a Yid.*" ("It's difficult to be a Jew.")

It is very important that one work on himself and grow as a person. Additionally, it is not enough to merely fulfill the mitzvos; rather, we have to be enthusiastic in our performance of them. With this effort we will hopefully be successful in raising our children to be true servants of Hashem.

Stories for the Soul

Out of Sight, Not Mind

based on a story on revach.net

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941) was the head of the Baranovitch Yeshiva in pre-WWII Poland. In 1938, Rabbi Wasserman came to the United States to raise money for his yeshiva. During his time in America, Rabbi Wasserman was driven from place to place by a man named Shraga Block.

It happened that Mr. Block was driving Rabbi Wasserman through the streets of Manhattan. It was Rabbi Wasserman's practice to look down, so as to avoid seeing anything inappropriate, and he maintained this practice while in the car, as well.

Nonetheless, as the car passed through an area of Manhattan known for its promiscuous nature, Rabbi Wasserman asked Mr. Block where they were, exclaiming that this place was filled with *tumah* (impurity). Mr. Block quickly made his way out of the neighborhood, astounded that Rabbi Wasserman could sense the immorality of the vicinity.

The Torah tells us that due to the depraved state of humanity, the entire world, even wildlife, were negatively affected, and engaged in improper behavior, as well. What we do does not just affect us or those around us, it affects the very environment in which we live.

Kollel Happenings

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights, 8:15-9 pm, at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

SFAS EMES: A PIERCING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

It is one of the most widely-studied works of our time. Sfas Emes gives us a glimpse into the infinite depths of Torah and Jewish thought. Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky is an expert in this great work, and a master in bringing its timeless lessons into daily life. Join Rabbi Karnowsky on Thursdays, 8:15-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

THE LETTERS OF THE LAW: THE MELACHOS OF SHABBOS

Rabbi Shmuel Halpern received *semicha* (ordination) from Beth Medrash Govoha in 2016 and has spent the past four years receiving *shimush* (training in practical halacha) from Rabbi Micha Cohn of Lakewood. Rabbi Halpern now shares his halachic expertise in this weekly class that will help familiarize you with the laws of Shabbos. Monday evenings 8-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What is permitted on Shabbos but not weekdays?

A: I. There is a positive commandment to place *tzitzis* on a four-cornered garment, and one may not don the garment prior to doing so. If it is Shabbos (when tying *tzitzis* is prohibited), in cases of need, one is permitted to wear the garment. II. If one generally refrains from *pas akum* (bread baked by a non-Jew), but finds himself on Shabbos without other bread, he may nevertheless consume it. III. The Shelah (Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz, c. 1555-1630) ruled that one may recite a *beracha she'eina tzricha*

(unnecessary blessing) on Shabbos in order to complete the quota of 100-blessings-a-day. Later halachic authorities, however, disagreed.

Sources: I. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 13:3. II. Mishna Berurah 274:4. III. Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 215:6 and Mishna Berurah 46:14.

This week's question: At mincha on Shabbos, we read the beginning of the following week's portion in the Torah. When is there an exception to this rule?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part XV

Rabbi Sofer's efforts kept the Reformists from gaining a foothold in Pressburg during his lifetime, though they did make headway in the years after his passing.

As was noted previously in the realm of education, Rabbi Sofer's strong stance did not preclude him from allowing innovations into the community. Rather, his approach meant that he was constantly on guard for attempts by those who sought to erode traditional Judaism by slowly changing traditions to match the customs of the surrounding society.

In 1807, a fire swept through Pressburg, destroying a significant portion of the city, including many homes in the Jewish community. In 1809, Napoleon Bonaparte laid siege to, and eventually conquered, Pressburg. In 1810 and again in 1811, fires wrought great destruction upon the community.

All these terrible events traumatized the Jewish community. Besides the physical needs of inhabitants – homes, funds to rebuild and replace

possessions that had been destroyed, and the myriad other essentials that were lacking – a great deal of emotional and spiritual succor was required to support people and help them rebuild and move forward.

During this very trying period, Rabbi Sofer rose to the challenge, providing strong leadership in assisting those in need. Charitable funds were created, monies disbursed, and rebuilding commenced. Rabbi Sofer led the effort to get the community get back on its feet.

In addition, Rabbi Sofer wrote a journal of the siege of Pressburg by Napoleon's forces. This memoir was published as *Sefer Hazikaron* (Book of Remembrance), and it is available today in English, as well, titled *Pressburg under Siege*.

These tragedies and challenges that Rabbi Sofer faced were of a communal nature, but they were followed by a great loss in his personal life, as well. In 1812, Rabbi Sofer's wife Sara passed away, leaving Rabbi Sofer a childless 50-year-old widower.