



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Noach

October 8, 2021

A Taste of Torah Personalized Service

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

Is righteousness relative? This week's parsha provides some insight. The Torah describes Noach as "a righteous man in his generations." (Bereishis 6:9) Rashi, in one approach, comments that while Noach was indeed a righteous man, it was only in his era, surrounded by so much evil, that he was considered righteous. If, however, Noach had been living in the same generation as Avraham, he would not have been considered anything special.

Rashi's commentary begs an explanation, however. Why would the Torah go out of its way to speak disparagingly about Noach, who, despite his shortcomings, was still clearly a righteous man who carried out the words of Hashem correctly?

The *Nesivos Shalom* (1911-2000) provides an explanation that has a profound message for each of us in our daily lives. He explains that there are two basic ways in which to serve Hashem: *ahava* and *yirah*, love and fear. Serving Hashem out of awe and fear is the first, most fundamental way of serving Hashem that must be done prior to anything else. Once fear of Hashem is achieved, one is able to serve Hashem with love, which is the highest level of serving Hashem.

After Adam and Chava (Eve) ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and created a new reality that required Mankind to reclaim the original spiritual level that had been lost, the world needed to focus on the first step of achieving *yirah*, serving Hashem with fear. Only after the basic foundation of fear of Hashem

was reinstated was Avraham able to begin the process of serving Hashem with *ahava*, love, in subsequent generations.

The task of securing this foundation fell on Noach, who served Hashem with the method of *yirah*. The verse (ibid.) describes Noach as "walking with *Elokim*," which is the name of Hashem that refers to His attribute of *din*, judgement, and the awe and fear that it engenders.

It is for this reason that the Torah describes Noach as being "righteous in his generation," as he was the perfect *tzaddik* in completely fulfilling the particular service that was needed of him in his generation, which was the suppression of evil through fear of Hashem. That is not to say that had Noach lived alongside Avraham, he would have amounted to little. Rather, the Torah is saying that during the generation of Avraham, the proper service of Hashem had already moved ahead to *ahava*, serving Hashem with love. This was possible due to the fact that the first, most basic approach of serving Hashem with fear had already been accomplished. Therefore, serving Hashem with fear during the generation of Avraham would have been considered a step down. When performed perfectly by Noach in his generation, however, it was exactly the work that was needed at that time.

We can further explain how Noach's method of serving Hashem with fear, technically the less ideal approach, was exactly what was required. Noach lived during a time of extreme moral

Stories for the Soul

Hats Off

Rabbi Yaakov Salomon, a Brooklyn resident, once purchased a hat, but forgot to have his initials embossed on the inner band of the hat so as to make it identifiable.

He returned a week later and asked the proprietor if he would add his initials to the hat.

"Certainly," came the reply, "but let me ask you, when did you purchase this hat?"

"Last Tuesday," replied Rabbi Salomon, puzzled as to why the information was relevant.

The owner handed him a five-dollar bill, explaining that last Wednesday, he had received a letter from the hat manufacturer apologizing for inadvertently overcharging him for the hats he had obtained from them; they would be returning the extra money.

The hat prices in the store were based on the manufacturer's prices; he was now attempting to return the difference to those who had paid the inflated price.

Our Sages tell us that the decree of the *Mabul*, the Flood, was sealed due to the dishonesty that was rampant in that generation. As Jews, we must go to great lengths to ensure that we are people of integrity.

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Kollel Happenings

RABBI YOSSI EPHRATHI NOW TEACHING LEARN 2 LEARN GESHMAK

You may have limited experience learning Talmud. You may think that you don't enjoy serious Talmud study, that it's just not for you. But you haven't tried Learn 2 Learn Geshmak. A gemara program crafted to give you the satisfaction and joy of learning, Learn 2 Learn Geshmak is now being taught by Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Ephrathi, and is beginning a new topic. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

AVOS UBANIM ON SHABBOS AFTERNOON CONTINUES

The Kollel's Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the West Denver Kollel Torah Center. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and raffle. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

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Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: How is it possible for one to recite *hamotzi* and eat bread, yet recite separate blessing for the other food during the meal and not recite *Birkas Hamzon* after the meal?

Answer: If a person eats less than a *kezayis* (olive's volume) of bread within a time span known as *kidei achilas pras* (between 2 and 9 minutes; for practical purposes in this case, about 3-4 minutes), he does not recite *Birkas*

Hamazon. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 168:9) In addition, according to some opinions, other foods eaten during the course of the meal would not be exempted by the *hamotzi* blessing and would require their own blessing (see Magen Avraham 177:1 and Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 4:41). **This week's question:** How would one's appetite affect his obligation to recite *Birkas Hamazon*?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XX

It was at this gathering that Rabbi Shapiro was recognized as a major force. He delivered a major speech at the gathering where he demanded that rabbis could no longer simply serve in a scholarly capacity in serving their communities. Rather, he said, they must become activists. The speech propelled Rabbi Shapiro into becoming a leader of the Jewish world of Poland.

Within days of Rabbi Shapiro's electrifying address, he was offered the position of rabbi of Warsaw. Warsaw featured one of the largest Jewish

communities in Poland – indeed, in the world – at that time. On the eve of World War II, some 375,000 Jews lived there, one third of the city's population. Warsaw had not had an official rabbi for more than 40 years. With such a huge Jewish population, there were numerous factions, both religious or otherwise, and getting them all to agree was a daunting task. It is a testament of how well Rabbi Shapiro was able to connect with people of all stripes and backgrounds was that he was offered this position.

A Taste of Torah

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corruption. When the world is so filled with impurity, there is no choice other than to serve Hashem with fear. Fear tends to limit and restrict a person, and fear of Hashem prevents a person from disobeying His commandments. At the same time, such an approach requires isolating oneself from the evil around him, focusing on maintaining rules and principles. During a time when *kedusha*, holiness, is more available, love of Hashem can be used, translating into the spreading of Torah and kindness to others, as is evident from the outreach and hospitality that Avraham displayed.

On an individual level, as well, there

are times when the Evil Inclination rises up against a person with tremendous strength. At these times, using *ahava* to propel oneself forward will be insufficient; rather, one must utilize the approach of *yirah* to hold strong.

There is a broader lesson to be learned from the story of Noach, as well. Each generation, and each individual, has its own unique and special way of serving Hashem. Each of us is charged with our own specific tasks, based on our own unique circumstances and strengths. Our job is to use the strengths that Hashem has given us to serve Him in the best way possible.

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