

LAMPLIGHTER

30 Tishrei
Parshas
Noach/Rosh
Chodesh
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20 October
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read the second portion of the Torah, Noach (Noah). In describing the virtue of Noah the Torah states: "Noah was a righteous and wholehearted man in his generations." Our Sages emphasize that Noah was considered righteous in comparison to his own morally depraved era, but not in comparison with other generations. The Zohar specifies three generations in which, had Noah lived at that time, "he would have been considered as nothing": the generation of Abraham, of Moses, and of David.

Why were these three particular generations chosen for the comparison?

With each of these generations, a new phase began in the world's development. Abraham, the first Jew, initiated the stage in which the Jewish people started to fulfill its Divine mission. Moses brought the Torah to the world, which marked the beginning of the ability to sanctify and refine physical reality. King David initiated the era of sovereignty, the ultimate objective of which is to establish G-d as King over the entire world.

Noah, too, lived in a time of new beginnings: the world as it exists after the Flood. The Midrash tells us that when Noah went out of the ark "he saw a new world," and began to establish the foundations on which to rebuild it. Nonetheless, because Noah's service was on a very low preliminary level, his contribution is considered "as nothing" in comparison to the service of Abraham, Moses and David.

In truth, Noah's righteousness was mainly in comparison with the wickedness of the generation of the Flood. The people of his time were extremely corrupt in the way they dealt with each other. But righteousness in interpersonal relations is not enough to bring the world to its G-dly perfection. While certainly a prerequisite, it merely allows the world to function the way it should.

For this reason Noah's service is considered "as nothing" in contrast to that of Abraham, Moses and David. Their service went beyond the social realm; they actually connected the world to G-dliness. Abraham disseminated the belief in One G-d; Moses received the Torah at Mount Sinai; and David built the infrastructure for the Holy Temple in which the Divine Presence would rest.

Another difference: Noah's service was primarily motivated by fear; his warning to the people of his generation was connected to the threat of the imminent Flood. The Midrash even states that "Noah was lacking in faith; had the water not reached his ankles, he would not have entered the ark."

By contrast, the service of Abraham, Moses and David stemmed from a deep and inner recognition of G-d's greatness, which enabled them to set the "ground rules" for the world's perfection - a process that will be completed by Moshiach, speedily in our day.

Where Bin Laden Went Wrong

By Sholom Lew

It's a safe bet you've not traveled to Hadhramaut, never mind heard of the location. Yet it does exist, though it may not feature high on the list of places to visit before you die. Hadhramaut is an ancient region, located somewhere in the hardscrabble deserts of eastern Yemen. Its name, according to many linguistic scholars, stems from the Arabic words for "death has come." An old fable related to this name would suggest a locale with a morbid fascination with death.

I learned of all this, and a lot more, from a book I recently read. A book dedicated to tracing the origins of a well-known family that hails from this region: the Bin Ladens. A seemingly well-suited name for the native land of a person who has wreaked havoc and destruction, and caused an untold number of deaths.

Interestingly, the Torah mentions a locale with a similar name, which may very well have been the inspiration for the name of this region, or may even be the region's original name.

In describing Noah's offspring born after the flood, the Torah (Genesis 10:26) speaks of an individual named Chatzarmavet—or "Courtyard of Death."

It would seem to be very poor judgment on the part of parents to name their child "Courtyard of Death." Imagine the psychological effects on a child in a playground setting saddled with a name like this! What is even more curious about this narrative is that according to our tradition, the father of this child, Joktan, was a fine fellow, not to mention a humble and upstanding citizen!

Our sages address this question by teaching that Chatzarmavet was not the given name of Joktan's son, but the name of the location where he settled. And it is a testament to the profound effect this person had upon his community that he earned the accolade of having an entire region named for him.

The citizens of Chatzarmavet were known for their inclination to forgo the instant gratification of transitory consumerism that plagued the milieu they lived in—favoring instead a life of enduring value and infinite existence. These were a good, simple folk, unfazed by credit crunches, toxic debt, or loss of equity and monetary value. These people lived a simple and austere lifestyle, eschewing a life of glitz and glamour in favor of a thrifty but happy existence.

They personified the teaching of our sages (Talmud, Shabbat 153a), "Repent one day before you die." Since we never know when that day will come, we must always be repenting . . . They always contemplated death—i.e., that since life is so fragile and temporary, it is foolish to waste time on acquiring, or worrying about, possessions that are of fleeting value. Instead they chose to focus on permanent and lasting ideals, those that will be of enduring value long after the soul departs the body.

Thus they were named "Courtyard of Death." They eschewed the temporal "life" that so many pursue.

But from Hadhramaut comes one who chose to be defined by the literal meaning of the name of his ancestral home; hence a 9/11 atrocity is conceived and executed, resulting in the wanton murder of thousands of innocent people.

From Chatzarmavet, however, comes an idea of personal responsibility, of an ethos that ensures the perpetuation of a people focused on values that reject temporal materialism and the flavored soundbites of mass consumerism—in favor of a more difficult, yet ultimately more rewarding task of spiritual and moral growth, ensuring that we will overcome Hadhramaut with Chatzarmavet.

Slice of LIFE

Growing Up in the Shadow of the Holocaust

By Sari Blum

A hush fell over our noisy 11th-grade classroom as our principal walked in. She informed us that we would have a guest speaker the following day, the grandmother of one of our classmates, who would share her Holocaust experience with us. It was clear from my peers' responses that they were quite eager to hear her story. I found their quiet anticipation somewhat perplexing . . . didn't they all know their own grandparents' Holocaust stories? What was so exciting about hearing one more? When our native Yiddish speaker arrived the next day, I could tell that many of my friends were hearing a survivor's story for the first time. This was a shocking revelation for me! Not everyone's grandparents were survivors? Didn't all grandparents come from Europe and go through the war? And if all four of my grandparents were survivors, did that make my background unique?

Growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust, my siblings and I inevitably — although unintentionally — triggered traumatic memories for my grandparents. I recall one such episode when I was 9 or 10; I tried on my newest Shabbat attire for one of my grandmothers. "Ich!" she said, to my surprise. "Yellow is a terrible color. We don't wear yellow." And with that response she walked away with a look of sheer disgust. I stood there speechless, with tears starting to gather in my eyes. My mother quickly came to my rescue and explained, "Sari. Don't worry, you look very pretty. It's just that in Europe your grandmother had to wear a yellow star, and since that time she cannot tolerate the color yellow." How could I have known that I was upsetting her with my yellow dress? I quickly went back to my room to change, and that was the last time I ever wore yellow.

For most of my grandparents, tears were an unavoidable part of every family event or occasion. As I got older, I learned

that the tears meant different things for each grandparent. My zaide felt guilty that he survived and merited to have Yiddische nachas (Jewish pride from one's children and grandchildren) while the rest of his family perished. Bubby couldn't experience any happy occasion without being reminded of all the suffering she went through to reach that point. My other bubby cried tears of gratitude to G-d for allowing her to survive. And my fourth grandparent, my maternal grandfather, did not display any emotion at all; it was always hidden behind an impenetrable wall. The only time I ever saw him cry was when his older sister died when he was in his 80s. He felt that as the last remaining member of his nuclear family, he was now truly alone.

I recall being given a third-grade assignment to write about a hero we knew, someone we wanted to emulate. I chose one of my bobbies, explaining that she was an expert at recycling, washing even her disposable plastic cups and cutlery for future use. Although my teacher didn't make any overt comments, I recall that she didn't seem impressed, and in my third-grade mind I didn't understand why. It was only years later that I realized this behavior wasn't normal; it was a result of a scrimping mentality many survivors struggled with. Never mind that later in life Bubby had no financial concerns, and walked around with jewelry that cost enough to cover my family's living expenses for half a year; that scrimping mentality, which was typical of many Holocaust survivors, never left her.

I once brought a friend over for a Shabbat meal at Bubby's house. Had I realized my friend was a picky eater, I might have chosen to bring along a different guest, or at least warn my friend of my bubby's background. But I realized my mistake too late. When my friend left the crust of the challah on her plate, eating only the soft white center, she was given a lecture about wasting food. My friend was clearly embarrassed. I never brought another friend along with me to Bubby's for a meal.

I once went with Bubby to her doctor's office for a routine appointment, only to find out they had made a mistake in the scheduling and didn't have room to see her that day. As it was a considerable effort for us to get there—having hired a

driver to take us back and forth—she was none too pleased. The secretary apologized for causing her so much anguish, to which Bubby told her, "You call this anguish? This is an inconvenience. I went through the Holocaust, and that was real anguish."

The secretary was so surprised that she ran to tell the doctor what Bubby had said. The doctor himself came out, saying, "Mrs. Blum, did you really survive the Holocaust? I have never met a survivor before."

I don't remember if he agreed to see Bubby that day, but I do recall that Bubby found the entire incident quite comical later on.

Being what they called "greenhorns," my grandparents greatly valued education and getting ahead in American society. In fact, the only valid excuse my sister and I had for getting out of household chores was studying for exams or writing school reports. When I graduated college, I had no interest in attending my graduation, which consisted of many hours of monotonous speeches. But Bubby was horrified when she heard this, telling me, "But I want to attend a college graduation!" Of course, I then had no choice, and went in order to give my grandparents the nachas they felt they deserved. I think Bubby was one of the few people who stayed awake for the duration of the program, later quoting some of the dean's "brilliant words" at our Shabbat table.

Recently, when my mother broke her wrist and needed surgery, my grandmother called me up. "Sari, I think your mother is not telling me the truth, and hurt herself more than she is letting on. What really happened?"

This phenomenon of my parents shielding their own parents was a game I grew up with. I always struggled when put in situations like this; after all, didn't my grandparents have a right to know what was going on? But perhaps my parents understood their own parents' vulnerabilities better, and it was not my place to tell the truth? Ultimately, my siblings and I were trained to ask: "Do the grandparents know about this, and what should we tell them if they ask?" Of course, there were times when we slipped and revealed things we shouldn't have. Most people think the Holocaust ended in 1945. But for survivors and their descendents, even generations later, its impact is still being felt.

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Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

A Positive Conversation

By the Grace of G-d
Purim, 5704
[March 9, 1944]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

There are several approaches to the endeavor of influencing one's fellow and bringing him closer to Torah and the observance of mitzvot. Generally speaking, there are two basic methods:

a) To describe to him the lowliness of man, the abhorrence and despicability of evil, the punishments of purgatory, etc. In other words, the emphasis is on what should be avoided. Basically, this is the approach of Mussar.

b) To explain and expound upon the greatness of the Creator, the immensity of His works, the immeasurable loftiness of Torah and mitzvot, and the like. In other words, the emphasis is on what it is that one should bring oneself closer to. Basically, this is the approach of Chassidism.

One of the differences between these two approaches:

When one's efforts to influence one's fellow concentrate on matters of the first category—how terrible and bitter is the lot of the sinner, how lowly is the person who lusts after the pleasures of the material world, and the like—the only positive aspect of the discussion is the hope that this might cause one's fellow to resume the right path. Aside from this hope, the discussion of these matters is not, in and of itself, a mitzvah.

On the other hand, the discussion of the concepts of the second category—understanding the processes of creation, "Know the G-d of your fathers," appreciating the unity of G-d—is itself a mitzvah, independently of its potential to influence one's fellow . . .

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Religion Is Squashing My Dating Life!

Question: My Jewishness is making it harder for me to find love. The more I get involved in Jewish life, the fewer options I have for girls to date. To be honest, it is making me hesitate before becoming more observant. What should I do: take on more Judaism and limit my options, or keep my options open and put the Jewish thing on hold?

Answer: It depends what you are looking for. If you are just after a partner, any partner that suits you, then it is a simple numbers game. If you have a wider pool of potential partners, the odds are higher that you will be successful in your search. In this equation, the vaguer you are about yourself, the more potential partners you'll find.

But that's only if you are merely looking for a partner. If you are looking for your soulmate, it's another story entirely.

Your soulmate is the other half of your soul, the missing part of your very being. You can recognize your soulmate only if you first get to know your own soul. When you know where you're going in life, when you're clear about your own identity, when you know who you really are, then and only then are you equipped to identify the other half of your soul.

Some people have it backwards. They think that when it comes to describing the type of person you're looking for, you need a long and detailed list of specifications, but when it comes to describing the type of person you are, you are better off being vague and general. The opposite is true. Know yourself and your own soul. Explore your Jewish identity and become comfortable with it. You are not limiting your options; you are refining your search.

A WORD

from the Director

"A tzadik in Peltz" i.e., a righteous person in a warm, fur coat. This is one way of describing Noah, whose story we read about in this week's Torah portion. There are various ways to warm oneself when in a cold room. One way is to build a fire (or turn up the heat). A second method is to bundle oneself up warmly.

If one builds a fire, the entire room becomes warm and all of the people in the room benefit. If, however, he just wraps himself up all cozy and snug, he is the only one who profits.

The Zohar explains that one of Noah's greatest faults was that, though his own behavior was righteous, he did not try to influence others. In Noah's generation, everyone except his own family, was totally immoral. G d informed Noah that He would destroy the entire world with a flood, saving only Noah's family. Yet, Noah did not argue with G d. Instead, he withdrew into his own little world, building the ark and continuing in his own personal righteous ways. Only when people approached and asked what he was doing, did he tell them about the impending disaster.

For these reasons, the flood is referred to in the Bible as the "Waters of Noah." Noah could have averted the disaster if he had reached out to his fellow man. But he clothed himself warmly in his righteous deeds, unconcerned with the bitter "cold" from which his generation suffered.

When we see another Jew in the cold, we must not just bundle ourselves up even more warmly. Rather, we must invite him in and build a fire helping fan the spark within every Jew into a burning flame.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Who's the Thief?

Three angry men presented themselves in King Solomon's court.

"Your Majesty," said the first, "the three of us are business partners. We went together on a business trip with a large sum of money."

The second picked up the story. "Shortly before Shabbat, we hid the money in a pit we'd dug, planning to dig it up right after Shabbat."

King Solomon listened attentively.

"But when we went for it, it was gone!" said the third. "No one knew about it but us. One of us is a thief! My lord, I'd like for you to have each of us swear that he didn't steal the money. That way we'll find out which of us is the thief!"

But King Solomon was in no hurry to do that. He knew that the man who stole the money would also lie and swear falsely. How could he find out which of them was guilty?

"Return to me tomorrow," he told the three.

When the partners presented themselves the next day, King Solomon said, "I can see that you three are wise men. Before we discuss your case, I would like your opinion about a different matter."

King Solomon's flattery worked like magic, and they waited eagerly to hear his problem.

"A boy and a girl grew up together, and swore to each other that when they were old enough, they would become husband and wife. At very least, they decided, they'd ask the other's permission before marrying anyone else.

"Years passed. The girl, forgetting her oath, married someone else. Immediately after the wedding, she remembered her earlier commitment and told her husband about it. He said, 'We can't live as husband and wife until we find that boy and ask him to annul the oath that you swore to each other!'

"They took a large sum of money and set out to find her childhood friend. They found him and offered to pay him to annul the oath, but he was a good man, so he wished them a hearty mazal tov and refused the money.

"On their way home, the happy new couple was robbed. 'Please give us back the money,' the woman pleaded. She told the robber about how good her husband was, being so patient as to let her take care of her oath before they moved in together, and how good the boy she'd grown up with was for refusing to take the money. The robber was touched, and returned the purse."

King Solomon looked at the three men, who couldn't understand where all this was leading.

"My question is, which of the people in this story was the most praiseworthy?" asked the king.

(Stop for a moment and think. Reach your own conclusion before you read further.)

One of the partners said, "The wife is the most admirable. She kept an oath she made when she was just a girl!"

The second partner said, "Her husband is the most praiseworthy. Although he loved his wife, he left home right after his wedding to find that boy, and allowed himself to act as a husband to her only after she was released from her oath."

The last partner said, "It's true, both of them behaved in an exemplary fashion. But the boy was a fool! Why didn't he take the money when they offered it to him?"

"You are the thief!" King Solomon bellowed, pointing to the last partner. "When you talk that way about the boy, you show that you have an appetite for money even if you have no right to it. I'm convinced that you stole the money from your partners."

The last partner admitted his guilt, and the other two went home satisfied and impressed by the wisdom of King Solomon.

PARSHAS IN A NUTSHELL

G-d instructs Noah—the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption—to build a large wooden teivah ("ark"), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the water, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species.

Rain falls for 40 days and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat, and from its window Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of doves, "to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth." When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the teivah and repopulate the earth.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the rainbow as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah regarding the sacredness of life: murder is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the meat of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes drunk on its produce. Two of Noah's sons, Shem and Japheth, are blessed for covering up their father's nakedness, while his third son, Ham, is punished for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendants of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great tower to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their language so that "one does not comprehend the tongue of the other," causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into seventy nations.

The Parshah of Noah concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later Abraham), and the latter's journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the land of Canaan.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 20 - 21 October	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:24	8:24
Adelaide	7:16	8:14
Brisbane	5:40	6:35
Darwin	6:26	7:17
Gold Coast	5:39	6:34
Perth	6:14	7:10
Sydney	6:54	7:52
Canberra	7:05	8:03
Launceston	7:20	8:23
Auckland	7:24	8:23
Wellington	7:29	8:32
Hobart	7:22	8:25
Byron Bay	6:39	7:34

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NOACH/ROSH CHODESH • 30 TISHREI • 20 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA:	7.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.00 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.44 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.20 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.25 PM
	MAARIV:	8.10 PM