

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT BEREISHET-NOACH · 5772 · 2011 · VOL. 19 NO. 2

SPECIAL SUCCOT ISSUE

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Bereishet

THE SUN AND THE MOON

“And G-d made two great luminaries” (1:16)

Nothing is more dissimilar than the sun and the moon. The sun is immense. The interior of the sun could hold over 1.3 million earths. It is incredibly hot. In its core, the temperature is 15,000,000 degrees Celsius. The pressure there is 340 billion times earth’s air pressure at sea level. Every second, 700 million tons of hydrogen are converted into helium ashes. In the process 5 million tons of pure energy is released.

The moon is an inert body, a mere 3,476 kilometers in diameter. It has a maximum surface temperature of 123 degrees Celsius, and a minimum surface temperature of -233.

You could hardly find two objects more different than the sun and the moon, and yet they share a puzzling similarity.

When viewed from the earth, they both seem to be the identical size.

Isn’t that strange? That of all the places our planet could be located in space, we just happen to be exactly where the sun and the moon look the same?

In the Talmud (*Chullin 60b*) Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi points out what seems to be a contradiction in this week’s Torah portion. One verse says *“And G-d made two great luminaries.”* The verse then continues, *“the greater luminary to dominate the day, and the lesser luminary to dominate the night.”* The verse starts with two great luminaries and then only one is great.

Behind the scenes of this seeming contradiction, there is a fascinating story¹.

At the dawn of Creation, G-d created the sun and moon of equal size and brightness. The moon said before the Holy One Blessed be He: “Master of the World, is it possible for two kings to use one crown?”

G-d said, “Go and diminish yourself.”

The Jewish People are compared to the moon. Every month the moon gets smaller and smaller until it disappears completely. And then, seemingly miraculously, it is renewed.

The Jewish People have seen times in their history when they seem to have vanished completely and then, miraculously, we are renewed.

This power of renewal is intrinsic to the Jewish People. For that reason, we count our calendar by the moon. The first mitzvah that the Jewish People received was the sanctification of the moon when G-d gave Moshe the precise measurement of the time of the moon’s orbit so the Jewish People could calculate for all time the exact beginning of the new month.

The Jewish year is measured by the lunar month. The word for month in Hebrew is *chodesh*² which comes from the same root as *chadash*, which means new, since every month the moon is new. It is renewed. The nations of the world mark the passage of time by the cycles of the sun, by the year.

In Hebrew, the word for year is *shana*, which comes from the same root as the word *yashan*, “old.” The sun is without renewal. It is always the same unchanging yellow orb.

We are not the largest of all the nations. In fact, the Torah calls us the smallest. We are the “People of the moon”. The moon has no light of its own. It is a reflector. And like the moon, the job of the Jewish People is to be a reflector. The reflector in this world of its Creator.

G-d’s light is concealed in this world. We don’t see it clearly and brightly. Similarly the Jewish People are not recognized as His emissaries. Thus, it is fitting that the moon is small and diminished.

When we look up to the sky, the moon and the sun look the same size to us. We know that one is millions of times the size of the other. But they look same.

Maybe this is a hint. A hint to a time that was. A hint to a time to come. When *mashiach* comes, the primeval light of Creation will shine again. There will be total clarity. One end of the universe will be visible from the other end.

And then the moon will resume its original radiance and it will shine again as it did at the beginning of time.

Footnotes:

1. A word of warning. This story is not allegorical. However, when we talk of the sun and the moon “speaking”, it means their essence was expressing itself to the Creator. In human terms this would be called speaking.

2. In English too, the word “month” is related to “moon.”

- How literal is the ban on cooking a *kid goat* in its *mother's milk*
- What benefit may be derived from the carcass of an animal that died not through *shechitah*
- Different proofs that the prohibition of mixing meat and milk applies to all animals
- The minority opinions of Rabbi Yossi Hagelili and Rabbi Eliezer
- Rennet and stomach linings of forbidden animals
- Buying eggs or cheese from a non-Jew
- Comparison of the prohibitions against consumption of *cheilev* (animal fat) and blood
- The ritual impurity caused by contact with dead animal
- The status of all parts of the carcass regarding such impurity
- Liquefying a solid or congealing a liquid in regard to forbidden foods

WHEN DRINKING IS EATING

“For anyone who eats the fat of animal species from which one may bring a fire offering to G-d – the *nefesh* that eats it will be cut off from its people.” (Vayikra 7:25)

The use of the term *nefesh* (literally soul) in describing the transgressor who consumes forbidden fat is understood by our *gemara* as an indication that the above-mentioned penalty of *karet* (extirpation) applies as well to one who dissolves the fat and drinks it, since this too is soul-satisfying.

Tosefot raises the question as to why it is necessary to derive this from the term *nefesh* in this passage when we already have the following source for drinking being considered as equivalent to eating. In *Mesechta Shavuot* (23a) the *gemara* deduces this from the passage (*Devarim* 14:22) which

speaks of *eating* the second tithe before G-d (in Yerushalayim) and mentions *wine* as one of the items consumed.

The resolution of Tosefot is that the source in *Shavuot* is applicable only to such liquids like wine which it is normal to drink, while our *gemara* deals with fat which it is normal to eat and not to consume in melted form.

Another approach is suggested by Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayos in his commentary. The amount of eating required for the *karet* penalty is *kezayit*, while for drinking the amount is the greater quantity of *revi'it*. According to the source in *Shavuot* that drinking is equivalent to eating, the amount to be liable for the penalty would be a *revi'it* like all drinking. But the term *nefesh* used in our *gemara* indicates that we view the melted fat as actually being eaten, and therefore even a *kezayit* of it would qualify for the penalty.

• Chullin 120a

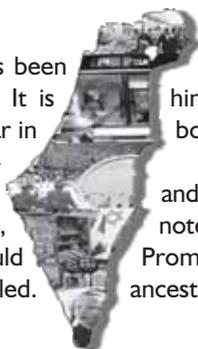
LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

ERETZ HAMLUVTACHAT – THE PROMISED LAND

“The Promised Land” is a name which has been popularly associated with Eretz Yisrael. It is interesting to note that it does not appear in Tanach, but is based on an of-repeated Divine declaration.

The Creator promised the Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, that their descendants would inherit the land in which all three of them had dwelled.



He repeated this promise to Moshe when He sent him to liberate His chosen people from Egyptian bondage and to lead them to the Promised Land.

It should be noted that in some American folk songs and spirituals the term Promised Land sometimes connotes the afterlife of Heaven. For Jews, however, the Promised Land is the Heaven on Earth promised to our ancestors.

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This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

- The definition of *alal* mentioned in the first mishna of the *perek*
- When does meat of a slaughtered animal become susceptible to ritual impurity
- Which skins are considered like flesh in regard to ritual impurity and *pigul*
- The skinning of a slaughtered animal and the intended use of the skin
- Contact with animal skin with some meat on it
- Contact with the bone of a dead person or dead animal
- The ritual impurity resulting from being under the same roof with a contaminating agent
- The eggs of a reptile and a strange species of rodent
- Animal life on land and in sea
- The status of a limb removed from its place in an animal but still hanging on

OF MEN AND MOLES

“Hearken to this, all nations, hearken all who inhabit the *cheled*.” (*Tehillim* 49:2) Thus begins the psalm which is traditionally recited after the prayer service in the home of a mourner. Its message is that life on earth is short and that man cannot rely on his wealth to escape death.

This is obviously directed to all of mankind but what is the meaning of the word *cheled*?

Rabbi Zeira offers an interesting interpretation: *Cheled* is the earth and it is so called because of its resemblance to the word *chulda*. This rodent (commonly translated as a mole) can only be found on land, and, unlike all other ani-

mal life, has no counterpart which can survive in the water.

But why should the psalmist choose to refer to the earth in such a manner?

Maharsha explains that this is a warning to man that his survival, like that of the *chulda*, is limited to the land, and that if his sins bring upon him the punishment of flood waters he cannot rely on his wealth to save him. He adds that in a certain way man is inferior to animal life, for the flood can destroy the human species totally, while even if the *chulda* cannot survive in the water other animal life can.

What a powerful *mussar* lesson this is in the house of a mourner!

• *Chullin* 127a

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- The different stages of *shechitah*
- Susceptibility to ritual impurity of flesh of dead animal
- Loose limb of a human in life and in death
- The animal parts which must be given to the kohen
- The nine gifts to the kohen and the four to the poor
- When the animal belongs to a kohen or a non-Jew
- If the animal is the product of crossbreeding

- If the flesh of the animal can be consumed before its special parts are given to the kohen
- The reluctance of the Sage to receive these gifts
- The problem of teaching an unfit student
- The animal of a convert
- Relationship of these gifts to the heroism of Pinchas

THE RELUCTANT RECEIVER

“The foreleg, the jaw and the maw” These parts of an ox or sheep slaughtered for a Jew must be given to a kohen. (*Devarim* 18.3)

Although these “gifts”, which are the subject of the tenth *perek*, are due to the kohen, we find reservations in regard to acquiring them.

The Sage Abaye, who was a kohen at first, had the custom of taking the initiative of seizing these portions as a way of demonstrating his love of the mitzvah. When it was brought to his attention that the Torah states that the owner of the animal “shall give to the kohen”, he understood that it was improper to simply take these gifts on his own initiative. After further introspection he even stopped asking for them, and even refused to accept them lest he be considered a glutton.

The only time he did accept these gifts was on the day before Yom Kippur in order to ensure that it will not be forgotten that he was a kohen.

But why did he particularly choose this day for such a purpose?

Tosefot explains that since this was such a special day, as we learned earlier in our *mesechta* (83a), many of the above-mentioned gifts were available and *kohanim* assembled to receive them. His abstinence at such a time would have aroused suspicion that he was not a kohen.

But why couldn't he simply have raised his hands to bless the people and thus show he was a kohen?

The *gemara's* answer to this is that Abaye, as a great rosh yeshiva, was frequently involved with teaching his disciples when people gathered for prayer and was unable to take a break from such a responsibility in order to bless them.

• *Chullin* 133a

WHAT THE Sages SAY

“When the Torah mentions that ‘Yehudah sent the kid of the goats (*Bereishet* 38:15)’, this is a message that only here does goat refer specifically to this species, but that everywhere else where the term goat is used it refers to animals in general.”

• *Rabbi Elazar - Chullin* 113a

“You have great creatures in the sea and great creatures on land. If those in the sea come on land they die and if those on land go down to the sea they will die – ‘How great are Your Creations!’” (*Tehillim* 104:24)

• *Rabbi Akiva - Chullin* 127a

“A kohen who has in his vicinity a Torah scholar in dire need may relay to him his rights to the gifts of animal parts.”

• *Rabbi Yosef - Chullin* 133a

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THE SUCCOT EXPERIENCE

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

When is a house not your home? On *Succot* of course. The Torah commands us to move out of our houses on the fifteenth day of the Month of *Tishrei* and to make *succot* (popularly translated as “booths” but better defined as shelters) our homes for seven days.

The revealed reason for this commandment is the Torah’s explanation that dwelling in *succot* will remind us of the supernatural protection against the harsh climate of the desert which G-d so graciously provided for our ancestors when He brought them out of Egyptian bondage. But, as is the case with all of the *mitzvot*, there are many lessons to be learned from analyzing and performing this mitzvah of making a *succah* our home for a week.

Perhaps the most elementary lesson of all is the sense of “temporariness.” Although we are certainly expected to make every effort to dignify this mitzvah by making the *succah* as attractive as possible and to truly fulfill our Sages’ guideline that “you shall dwell in them as you live in your own home,” there is no escaping the feeling that this is only a “temporary dwelling.” When dining room, living room and bedroom all become combined in an area equal in size to only one of these units, and when furniture is kept down to a bare minimum, the dwellers of the *succah* are keenly aware that this is not a permanent situation.

The value of such an experience emerges from the classic tale of the Jew who came to visit the famous Torah giant, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, *zatzal*, (the Chafetz Chaim) in his humble abode in the Polish town of Radin. “Where is your furniture?” asked the astonished visitor of the saintly Sage when he saw how barely furnished the room was. “And where is yours?” was the Chafetz Chaim’s response. “I have no furniture with me because I am only passing through,” explained the visitor. “I, too, am only passing through this world,” said the Chafetz Chaim, “for our lives here are only a preparation for the real world, the World to Come. For merely passing through this corridor of time I have enough furniture.”

In our pursuit of creature comforts and a higher standard of living we inevitably become ensnared in the illusion that we are here to stay forever and must therefore try make the most of it in terms of enjoyment. A week in a temporary home where there is only room for the bare essentials of survival restores our focus on the transient nature of our entire existence and provides us with at least a part of the transcendent perspective of the Chafetz Chaim.

Another vital lesson of the *succah* was colorfully summarized by a great Chassidic leader who said, “The mitzvah of *succah* is the only one you can immerse yourself in even with

your boots.” There are 248 positive commandments, but all of them require only a portion of our physiology for their performance: e.g., for *tefillin* we utilize the arm and head; for prayer; the *Shema* and Torah study our mouths and brains; for waving the four species on *Succot* our hands. Only when it comes to the mitzvah of dwelling in the *succah* do we totally immerse ourselves in the fulfillment of the command.

(*Yishuv Eretz Yisrael* is another mitzvah in which a Jew can totally immerse himself but it is limited by geography, whereas *succah* provides this opportunity wherever a Jew lives.)

This is a crucial perspective for every Jew to develop. His religious life is not limited to the time he spends in the synagogue or when he is fulfilling one of those 248 commands. He is expected to serve G-d when he eats, sleeps and is involved in the pursuit of his livelihood.

The key to this approach is the Biblical guideline of “know Him in all your ways”, which our Sages have interpreted as a challenge to dedicate even our most mundane acts “*leshaim Shamayim*” — for Heaven’s sake. If you eat, sleep and work in order to have the physical and economic well-being required for performing *mitzvot* you are considered as serving Him all of the time. How effectively does the *succah* home, with its enveloping of all our daily functions in the sanctity of Divine service, bring home this important message to our minds and hearts.

One more dimension of the *Succot* experience is based on our preference for the translation of “shelters” rather than “booths.” The nuclear age in which we grew up fostered a certain sense of doomsday, with grim visions of someone on the other side of the world pressing a button and unleashing a deadly storm of missiles capable of destroying a significant portion of the human race. Even with the collapse of such a threat from a Cold War escalation into a hot one, there still lurks the awful menace of suicidal terrorists blowing themselves up along with so many others and the access that such mass murderers have to nuclear weapons sold to the highest bidder.

The most depressing aspect of this doomsday feeling is that there is no salvation in any shelter designed by man. The *succah* reminds us that when Jews in the desert faced the dangers of a blazing sun or merciless cold they were provided with the shelter of pillars of cloud miraculously placed above and around them by Divine Mercy. It is this concept that Heaven will provide shelter against every danger - natural or man-made - which gives us the confidence to joyfully go on living our lives and dedicating every moment of them to G-d Who will envelop us in His love and protection just as we envelop ourselves in the sanctity of the *succah*.

Riding the Apocalyptic Wave

The Flood, the Destruction of Sodom, and the Succah

BY RABBI RICHARD JACOBS

The flood: the end of the world. The waters rage, turmoil covers the surface of the globe. Perched on top of the waves lies a fragile wooden construction – a *teiva* – an ark, containing and protecting the only survivors, human and animal.

One of the more curious things about the construction of the ark is the discussion of the nature or the *tzohar* on the upper level. What is this *tzohar*? There are two explanations: a window and a precious stone. What's the difference?

Looking to a different destruction: When Lot is fleeing from the annihilation of Sodom he is instructed not to gaze behind him; because someone who is not being saved in their own merit is not permitted to witness the demise of others, and Lot was being saved in the merit of his uncle, Avraham.

When we are introduced to Noah for the first time he is described as a righteous man in his generation. Our Sages discuss the meaning of this. Was Noah righteous in and of himself, regardless of whichever generation he lived in, or was he righteous only in his generation, but were he to have lived in the time of Avraham he would not have been considered righteous?

Perhaps these two discussions are related, and the opinion that holds that Noah was objectively righteous holds that the *tzohar* in the ark was a window through which Noah was able to witness the destruction, whereas the other opinion (that Noah was righteous only relative to his own generation) holds that it was not fitting for him to see the downfall of mankind and needed a precious stone to provide illumination within the ark.

Today too the world is in turmoil. The headlines assault

our senses with a persistent barrage. Tension soars in the international arena and we have no idea what will be.

On *Succot* we shelter in our *teiva*, our ark – the *succah*. The *succah* is named after the *schach* — the branches and leaves which form an impermanent roof. On *Succot* we leave the shelter of our homes and for an entire week live in this temporary dwelling, casting ourselves unambiguously into the arms of G-d, living in the shadow of faith.

The *succah* also has other connotations. Our Sages explain that the laws and structure of the *succah* contain allusions to the mitzvah of learning Torah. The minimum number of walls for a *succah* is three, hinting to the three sections of Tanach — Torah, Prophets and Writings; the minimum height for a *succah* is ten *tefachim* (80 – 100 cm), hinting to the Ten Commandments; the minimum width of seven *tefachim* (56 – 70 cm) hints to the seven wisdoms of the Torah; and the word *succah* itself is related to the word *yascheh* (see) which is used to describe Sarah's power of vision with *ruach hakodesh* (Divine inspiration).

The questions I would like to suggest we ask ourselves are: who are we? And with the ark in mind, as we sit in our *succah* this year, should we gaze through windows at the world outside, or is it more fitting for us to use the mitzvah of *succah* and its connection to learning Torah to bring light to our world?

Sources:

Sefer Eidut Yosef quoted in *Torah L'Da'as* vol. 1

Gemara Succah 2a

Rabbenu Bachaye in *Kad haKemach*

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New Beginnings

Words of Chizuk for Shabbat Bereishet

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

It is customary in many *shuls* and *yeshivot* around the world to make a special *kiddush* on Shabbat Bereishet. The question is – Why? Why is making a special *kiddush* on this particular Shabbat such a widespread custom?

Those readily partaking in the *kugel* and *cholent* might just say “Why not?” — but there must be more to it than just indulging in gastronomical pleasures.

Some might posit the reason as a connection to Simchat Torah, or the ending and restarting of the Torah cycle. However, those events were already celebrated on Simchat Torah. If so, what is the deeper meaning of celebrating on Shabbat Bereishet?

I would like to preface the answer with a story I recently heard from Rabbi Yaakov Minkus, a Torah scholar and teacher in Yeshivat Beit Yisrael.

Once during the Simchat Torah *hakafot*, the Rabbi of a certain *shul* noticed two congregants just standing in the back schmoozing away the time. Concerned, he approached them and asked them to come join in the traditional dancing. They politely refused. “Rabbi”, they told him, “This dancing is not for us. For you, as the Rabbi, to dance with the Torah makes perfect sense. But not for us! You see, to tell you the truth, we didn’t learn anything this past year, nor did we set aside any specific time to learn Torah. Any time we had the chance to learn, we spent the time schmoozing and wasting time. So on Simchat Torah we are doing the same. We have no right to dance with the Torah.”

The Rabbi replied, “You are right and you are wrong. As you know, there are two different honors that are given out on Simchat Torah: that of the *Chatan Torah* and that of the *Chatan Bereishet*. The *Chatan Torah* is the *aliyah* where we celebrate the concluding of the Torah. This is customarily given to the Rabbi or another *Talmid Chacham* who has made great strides in his Torah learning over the past year. According to your own admission you are correct, you do not have much to dance for.

But there is another aspect to our dancing on Simchat Torah, and that is of the *Chatan Bereishet*. This is the *aliyah* where we celebrate the starting anew of the Torah. Anyone can receive this *kibbud* honor. So for this aspect of Simchat Torah you should also join in! It’s a new cycle, a new starting point. So even if last year you fell short, now is the time to pick yourselves up and get dancing for all the Torah you *will* learn over the next year!”

This starting point, this new beginning is now – Shabbat Bereishet. We see it clearly in this week’s *parsha* – Bereishet.

Aside from reading about the actual creation of the world from nothingness, which in itself is an excellent example of a new start, there is also the story of Kayin and Hevel (Cain and Abel).

After Kayin murders Hevel in cold-blood, G-d confronts him about his crime. After first denying any wrongdoing or even knowledge of the murder (“Am I my brother’s keeper?”) G-d then metes out sentencing, and Kayin finally admits to the crime. He says just three words: (Gen. 4:13) “*Gadol Avoni Minso*” – meaning that “this sin is too great for me to bear”.

We then find something astounding. G-d reduces his sentence in half! In verse 12, Kayin’s sentence is that of “*Na v’Ned*” – wandering and exile in seclusion. Yet, after his admittance, in verse 16 it states that Kayin settled in the land of Nod – meaning exile and seclusion. What happened to the decree of constant wandering?

Chazal explain that we see that Kayin’s *teshuvah* — even though it was half-hearted and was done only when confronted, and after he at first denied any wrongdoing, and even though he committed such a despicable act causing the potential for mankind for all time to be halved — nevertheless caused his punishment to be mitigated! Not only that, he merited to see seven generations of his own offspring! (One of whom, Na’ama, was a *tzaddeket* – the wife of Noach, through whom mankind propagated after the Flood.)

All due to those three words he said.

This is an powerful lesson to take from *Parshat Bereishet*. The power of renewal and new beginnings.

This is the message we can glean, even from a *kiddush* on Shabbat Bereishet.

Even if last year we didn’t accomplish as much spiritually as we could have or even should have.

Even if Elul didn’t work out as well as we would have wanted.

G-d is giving us now a chance for a new start, potential for renewal. That is the reason *Klal Yisrael* celebrates on Shabbat Bereishet.

May everyone merit to utilize this message for the upcoming year, and on next Simchat Torah may everyone be able to say that the reason they are dancing is due to their own personal *aliyah* in learning, and are therefore worthy of being the *Chatan Torah*!

PUSHY PRAYER

From: Reuven

Dear Rabbi,

If a man wants to marry a particular woman, even if she is dating someone else, is he allowed to pray to marry her instead? My assumption is that a person can always ask for G-d's mercy for anything, regardless of what that is. Thank you for your thoughts and feedback.

Dear Reuven,

The Talmud (Mo'ed Katan 18b) records a teaching of Shmuel saying that one may engage a woman on Chol Hamo'ed in order that another not precede him by engaging her first. The question arises, How can another precede him since the zivug, or soul mate matches, are from G-d? The Talmud suggests that he may precede him in prayer. This implies that one may pray to marry a woman "designated" for another man and that such prayer can work.

The Talmud continues to relate how Rava heard a man praying that a certain woman be designated for him. The Rabbi reprimanded, "Don't pray like that! If she's for you she won't slip away; if she's not for you, your prayer will cause you to deny G-d". Later, after the man's prayers were not answered and he lost hope, Rava heard him praying that either he or the woman should die before her marriage to another. Rava reprimanded him, "I told you not to pray about this!"

The commentators differ as to Rava's objection. Rashi

explains that Rava was concerned that the woman would die, from which we see that nothing can be done to change a zivug.

One of the Tosafot (a talmid of Rabbi Yechiel of Paris, in Nimukei Yosef) posits that prayer can alter the zivug but it will eventually end in disaster in order that the true zivug take place.

Ritva is of the opinion that prayer and extraordinary deeds can change one's zivug without harm and the reason that Rava discouraged him was because he saw that it would not be a good match.

All would agree, however, and this is the accepted approach, that one could pray that if a particular woman is his zivug, that G-d enable the match to take place at the best time and in the best way possible. Therefore, even though the above-mentioned cases are dealing with a man praying to marry an available woman, it seems to me that theoretically, if a man felt that a particular woman is his zivug and that she is "mistakenly" dating someone else, he could pray that, if in fact she is his zivug, that the zivug be realized when and in a way that G-d sees fit.

The Zohar (Vayechi 229a) states, "According to one's deeds G-d matches couples. If a man perverted his ways, his zivug is given to another, until he rectifies his ways. When he rectifies his ways and his time has come, the other man is pushed aside and he comes to take what is his. This is the most difficult task for the Holy One, blessed be He, to banish one man because of another". This suggests that in a case of what seems to be a "mistaken" match, one's primary effort should be expended in teshuva and making oneself righteous while waiting for G-d to decide if he is in fact the right one and whether he is meritorious enough to deserve the woman he thinks is his zivug.

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Question: I live in a religious neighborhood of Jerusalem and whenever I stand in one of the bus shelters provided by the municipality I am shocked to see its walls disfigured by all sorts of private announcements advertising sales, services or events. Is it right to exploit public property for such private purposes?

Answer: The municipality's attitude towards this behavior can be seen in the campaign recently launched by the religious mayor of the city to clean up all the polluted bus shelters and to enforce the ban on posting material on them. It seems that the major offenders who have been using these city shelters for their advertising are the professional sign

hangers who work in conjunction with the printers and have assumed that since they were not prosecuted for doing so (despite the obvious disclosure of their identity), there was tacit permission granted by the city authorities. Add to this the standard excuse that "everyone else is doing it" and you have a pseudo-moral basis for causing so much ugliness.

A great Jerusalem Sage once wisely remarked that the "posters hold up the walls of Jerusalem buildings". Important as they may be, however, these posters should not be placed where there is an objection from the owner of the space. What you and other citizens should do is petition the city for more public bulletin boards and discourage your neighbors from placing their posters and signs anywhere else!

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

WHY HE STAYED OVERNIGHT

One of the many touching stories told about the late, great Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *atzal*, deals with the mystery surrounding the reason why this Torah giant was in Tel Aviv, away from the sacred Jerusalem where he was born and lived all his life.

It was on the occasion of the wedding of his nephew, an orphan from both parents, who became his charge. Rabbi Auerbach led him to the *chuppa* which took place in Tel Aviv and stayed overnight in that city. The nephew, who later became the rabbi of the Ramat Chen community in Tel Aviv, did not understand why his uncle did this very uncharacteristic thing until the day that he himself arranged a wedding

for an orphaned *chatan*.

"I hope you will conduct yourself with this orphaned *chatan* as I did with you," cautioned his uncle.

When the nephew failed to comprehend the hint, his uncle explained. A *chatan* and a *kalla* receive many beautiful gifts at their wedding, and one of their happiest moments is when they can show off the gifts to their parents. Since the orphaned *chatan* had no parents to whom he could show those gifts, his uncle, with the proper sensitivity of a great Torah scholar, stayed overnight so that he could provide the newly married couple with this special *simcha*.

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Noach

STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS

“From each bird according to its kind, and from each animal according to its kind” (6:2)

Recent world events have shown that anti-Semitism is alive and well and living in all those centers of civilization in which it was considered extinct half a century ago.

The existence of a Jewish state, the 19th century Jewish intelligentsias ultimate panacea against anti-Semitism, has failed to prevent the emergence of an anti-Semitism as potentially virulent as any strain to date with the ultimate irony that we are now dubbed the new “Nazis”!

What is all this supposed to teach us?

The existence of the Jewish People is an other-worldly phenomenon. The “unhistory” of the Jewish People has perplexed historians and left them either wanting to change their professions or fudging the facts. Logically, they say, we shouldn’t be here at all. And in a sense, they’re right. We don’t belong here. We occupy this world as a piece of rented real estate. This is not our place. We are an other-worldly people.

The Jewish People is likened to a bird. In its natural element, the bird can soar to the heights, leaving its earth-bound cousins far below. However, when you enclose a bird in a cage, not only does it no longer soar, but its very advantages become its weaknesses. Its feet are not suited to walking around. Its wings atrophy. Its plumage wilts.

In this week’s Torah portion, when the animals entered the ark, the Torah lists the birds before the land animals: *“From each bird according to its kind, and from each animal according to its kind.”* However, after the entry to the ark it mentions the land animals before the birds: *“And the animal that is not kosher, or the birds.”* And when about to leave the ark, the order reverts to the birds being mentioned before the land animals: *“Every living thing that is with you of all flesh, of birds, of animals.”*

Why did the Torah change the order?

The ark was a microcosm of the world. Just as the world as three levels of holiness, so too the ark had three levels. Just as the world has a sun that radiates light to it, so too the ark had a precious jewel fixed in the ceiling that radiated light to it.

Outside the ark, the birds can fly. They are pre-eminent. However, when they are cooped up in an ark, they become the least of the animals.

We are a nation that has been designed to soar to the skies, but if we choose to lock ourselves into an ark of physicality we will find ourselves as sprightly as a Dodo.

- Sources: Midrash, Maharal, Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter, Ariel Hershkowitz

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Noach

It is ten generations since the creation of the first human. Adam’s descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and G-d resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth’s inhabitants except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth. G-d instructs Noach to build an ark. After forty days and nights, the flood covers even the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days the water starts to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noach sends out a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later Noach again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After another seven days Noach sends the dove once more; the dove does not return. G-d tells Noach and his family to leave the ark. Noach brings offerings to G-d from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose. G-d vows never again to flood the entire world and designates

the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. Noach and his descendants are now permitted to slaughter and eat meat, unlike Adam. G-d commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibition against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder, eating meat torn from a live animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system. The world’s climate is established as we know it today. Noach plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Cham, one of Noach’s sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yafet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave. The Torah lists the offspring of Noach’s three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended. The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in G-d fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parsha concludes with the genealogy of Noach to Avram.

PARSHA Q&A?

BEREISHET

1. Why does the Torah start with the account of Creation?
2. What happened to the light that was created on the first day?
3. Why isn't the word "good" associated with the second day?
4. How were the trees supposed to taste?
5. On which day were the sun and moon created?
6. G-d blessed the birds to be fruitful and to multiply. Why did He not do so with the beasts?
7. In whose likeness was man fashioned?
8. What kind of food did Adam eat?
9. Why is "the sixth day" written with the definite article?
10. At the end of the sixth day what was the world still lacking?
11. Why was man made from dust gathered from the entire earth?
12. How is man superior to the animals?
13. Why was it not good that man be alone?
14. Where do we learn that one must not add to a commandment from G-d?
15. What does it mean that Adam and Chava "knew that they were naked"?
16. Why did Hevel choose to be a shepherd?
17. What was the marital practice of the generation who lived before the flood?
18. What did Tuval-Cain invent?
19. Why did Chanoch die at a young age?
20. What was the sign that Shem was born with great propensity for righteousness?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Bereshet's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:1 - So that when the nations accuse us of stealing *Eretz Canaan* from the Canaanites, we can respond that G-d, as Creator, has the right to give the land to whomever He sees fit, and He gave *Eretz Canaan* to us.
2. 1:4 - G-d saw that the wicked would be unworthy of it so He hid it for the righteous.
3. 1:7 - Because the work with the water wasn't completed until the third day. Anything that is incomplete is not "good."
4. 1:11 - The wood was to have the taste of the fruit.
5. 1:14 - They were created on the first day and suspended in the firmament on the fourth day.
6. 1:22 - He did not want the serpent, who was to be cursed, to receive a blessing.
7. 1:26 - In the likeness of the angels.
8. 1:30 - Vegetation.
9. 1:31 - "The" in Hebrew is the letter *hey*, which has a numerical value of five. G-d created the world on the condition that it will endure only if the Jewish People accept the Five Books of the Torah.
10. 2:2 - Rest.
11. 2:7 - So that wherever he might die, the earth would receive his body.
12. 2:7 - He was given understanding and speech.
13. 2:18 - If he were alone, he would appear to be a god. The creation of woman emphasized man's dependence.
14. 3:3 - From Chava. G-d commanded not to eat from the tree but she added not to touch it. Because she added to the command she eventually came to transgress it.
15. 3:7 - They had been given one commandment and they had stripped themselves of it.
16. 4:2 - Since the ground had been cursed he refrained from cultivating it.
17. 4:19 - They married two wives, one with whom to have children. The other one was given a potion which prevented her from bearing children.
18. 4:22 - Murder weapons.
19. 5:22 - Though he was righteous, he was easily influenced. Therefore G-d took him before his time to protect him from sinning.
20. 5:32 - He was born already circumcised.

PARSHA Q&A ?

NOACH

1. Which particular sin sealed the fate of the flood generation?
2. Why did G-d tell Noach to build an ark, as opposed to saving him via some other method?
3. The ark had three levels. What function did each level serve?
4. What indication do we have that Noach was familiar with the Torah?
5. Why did G-d postpone bringing the flood for seven days?
6. Why did the first water of the flood come down as light rain?
7. What did people say that threatened Noach, and what did G-d do to protect him?
8. What grouping of creatures escaped the punishment of the flood?
9. How deeply was the ark submerged in the water?
10. What did the olive branch symbolize?
11. How long did the punishment of the flood last?
12. A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
13. When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
14. What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
15. Why does the command to “be fruitful and multiply” directly follow the prohibition of murder?
16. Name two generations in which the rainbow never appeared.
17. Why did Noach curse Canaan specifically? Give two reasons.
18. Why does the Torah call Nimrod a mighty hunter?
19. The sin of the generation of the dispersion was greater than the sin of the generation of the flood. Why was the punishment of the former less severe?
20. Why was Sarah also called Yiscah?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Noach’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 6:13 - Robbery.
2. 6:14 - So that people would see Noach building the ark and ask him what he was doing. When Noach would answer, “G-d is bringing a flood,” it might encourage some people to repent.
3. 6:16 - The top level housed the people, the middle level housed the animals, and the bottom level, the refuse.
4. 7:2 - G-d told him to take into the ark seven of each kosher-type animal, and two of each non-kosher type. “Kosher” and “non-kosher” are Torah concepts.
5. 7:4 - To allow seven days to mourn the death of Mesushelach.
6. 7:12 - To give the generation a chance to repent.
7. 7:13,15 - People said, “If we see him going into the ark, we’ll smash it!” G-d surrounded it with bears and lions to kill any attackers.
8. 7:22 - The fish.
9. 8:4 - Eleven amot.
10. 8:11 - Nothing. It was a leaf, not a branch. (The olive leaf symbolized that it’s better to eat food “bitter like an olive” but which comes directly from G-d, rather than sweet food provided by humans.)
11. 8:14 - A full solar year.
12. 8:14 - Eleven days.
13. 9:3 - After the flood.
14. 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal.
15. 9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.
16. 9:12 - The generation of King Chizkiyahu and the generation of Shimon bar Yochai.
17. 9:22,24 - Because Canaan is the one who revealed Noach’s disgrace to Cham. And because Cham stopped Noach from fathering a fourth son. Thus, Noach cursed Cham’s fourth son, Canaan.
18. 10:9 - He used words to ensnare the minds of people, persuading them to rebel against G-d.
19. 11:9 - They lived together peacefully.
20. 11:29 - The word “Yiscah” is related to the Hebrew word “to see.” Sarah was called Yiscah because she could “see” the future via prophecy. Also, because of her beauty, everyone would gaze at her.