

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 472 | PARASHAS NOACH

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026 | 5 CHESVAN 5787

life

LESSONS

IT'S UP TO YOU

Reproduced from "Living Kiddush Hashem" by Rabbi Shraga Freedman, with permission of ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications

In *Parshas Vayeitzei*, Rachel arrives at the well with her father's sheep, and Yaakov Avinu rolls a huge boulder off of it. On the surface, this does not seem significant. Rashi comments that this is "to teach that his strength was great."

In *Tefillas Geshem*, we describe Yaakov as having "focused his heart and rolled the stone off the well of water." Why should this be considered a source of merit?

In truth, Yaakov's physical strength was average. His actions had a different source. When a person is in desperate need of strength, such as when his life is in danger, the body responds with adrenaline. But while everyone feels that when facing a bear, not everyone feels it helping a family member.

Yaakov's display of strength came about because he felt it was urgent to help Rachel—just as urgent as escaping a bear. To experience this, one must feel that a *mitzvah* is his responsibility—that he, no one else, can take action.

When a person feels solely responsible, he can summon strength he never imagined. A fundraiser said, "When someone comes to me with an idea, I listen. If they say these words, I know it will be successful, no matter what. The words are, 'This is where my heart is.' As soon as they say, 'Don't worry, Rabbi, 'This is where my heart is,' I know it will be successful."

When we have a chance to bring Hashem honor—by inviting a Jew for a Shabbos meal, connecting with a struggling child, or anything else—we must recognize that it depends on us. If we feel that urgency, we will be filled with energy and drive to accomplish—and that, in itself, will bring us success.



gem

OF THE WEEK

WORLD DIVERSITY

Based on excerpts from the commentary of Rabbi Shmshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher

After the animals left the *tevah*, Noach built an altar to Hashem, and brought offerings. The *Mizbeach* is a man-made structure through which the earth ascends to *shamayim*. We are commanded to *build* the altar, in direct contact with the ground, and it must not stand on pillars or arches.

Therefore by building a *mizbeich* to Hashem on the earth, Noach consecrated the whole earth, and made it a sanctuary, and the deeds of man will join stone to stone, until the entire earth becomes Hashem's consecrated mountain. Our offerings are directed to the aspect of Hashem's rule that desires not destruction, but life. One does not offer up an animal; instead offers up himself through the animal.

The animal world is assigned as food for man; the animal soul may not be assimilated into the human body — *ever min hachai*; man's physical existence belongs to Hashem and may not be harmed. After the *mabel*, the human species was to increasingly multiply in diversity upon the earth. The *Noachides* are given the mission to spread out all over the world, and they are to become men in the true sense of the word, and to develop the character traits common among men.

This was, as it were, Hashem's new plan, the diversity will avert the need for another cataclysmic flood, compensate for shortcomings, and thus pave the way to progress toward the goal.

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER



MODIM ANACHNU LACH: LIFE IN
YOUR HANDS

In *Modim*, we thank Hashem for the endless kindness He showers upon us, and *al chayeinu hamesurim b'yadecha*, for our lives that are given into His hands. Every moment we are alive is a gift. Hashem protects us from tragedy all the time, in the street, in the car, and at home. Remember when a reckless driver cut you off in traffic? Sometimes we don't even realize how close we come to disaster. Chazal say: *ein baal haneis makir b'niso*—the person to whom a miracle happens is often unaware of it.

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

Coming soon! Save the dates: Nov 7th & 14th 9:00 - 10:15 **מוצאי שבת**

Two-part Webinar with Rabbi Sapirman: Filling in the Blanks (vital issues that have been overlooked)

Details to follow

(To sponsor a weekly newsletter for \$147 please email: amfmainoffice@gmail.com)

LIVING IN THE DOR HAMABUL

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Rav Shvadron z"l asks a piercing question. Noach was busy building the *tevah* for one hundred and twenty years. Hashem wanted that the people should ask him why he was building such a big boat. He would respond that Hashem had informed him that a great flood was coming to destroy all mankind.

Only *teshuva* would prevent this calamity. The people paid no attention at all. Finally, the time was up and it began to rain. The people weren't perturbed. What's a little rain! But it rained and rained until the water entered their houses and they went upstairs to the next floor.

Soon, out of desperation, they swam up to the top of the mountains, hoping that the rain would stop. As the rain continued, they now realized that this was indeed the flood Noach had been predicting all along. So the question is, why didn't they do *teshuva* now?

The answer is that the very thought of living a decent, moral and honest life was so foreign to them that it didn't even enter their minds. To them, life was all about pursuing their lusts and their greed.

Let me add a *mashal* to illustrate this. Imagine a *yungerman* in *kollel*, with seven children, all living in a cramped two bedroom apartment. He has a great uncle who is a billionaire. The uncle proposes an amazing deal to him. He will provide him with a luxurious ten bedroom home, with a maid and a butler. Rent free for life, including all utilities and other expenses.

There is just one stipulation. The nephew, who wears a size 11 shoe, must agree to always squeeze into a size 8 1/2. What he is offering is fantastic, but the nephew can not accept it. The shoe just doesn't fit.

So, too, with people to whom life means nothing more than indulgence, they can not contemplate altering their life style, no matter how much they can gain from the deal.

This is actually a picture of the world we currently live in. Most people are so engaged in pursuing their whims (and their lusts) that the idea of living the life style of a *frum*, Orthodox Jew is so foreign to them that they could not imagine doing so, no matter what the gain would be.

continued from previous page

Every people is attached to, and longs for its original homeland, even if the conditions in that land are most difficult and not ideal; his spiritual development suffers on foreign soil. Man thinks that he is master of the soul, but in reality he himself is affected in many respects — his feelings, intellect, and speech — by the ground at his feet.

The sin of the *dor haflagah* is not explicitly stated (Bereishis Rabbah 38:6). In our *parasha*, it says that Hashem "descended to investigate" the tower being built before making His judgment. This means there was nothing wrong in the act of the building a tower per se. The people's sin, then, was in the purpose for which they built and in the attitude that accompanied their actions. Everything turned on their stated aim: let us make a name for ourselves!

This statement can be directed against two parties: against Hashem, Who is over mankind; and against the individual, who is subordinated to mankind — for mankind as a whole has no equal. When we consider the meaning of this, we realize that we are standing at the threshold of world history.

The whole community gathered in a plain, where they sought to manufacture the needed materials by their own strength and ingenuity. They came to realize the great power of community: If all join forces and work together, man can overcome and master nature.

They decided to create a structure that would be an everlasting monument to the power of community and its preeminence over the individual. Truly, the community complements the individual, but only if the community assumes the same attitude toward Hashem; if it subordinates its will to Hashem.

An individual realizes his powers are limited, whereas the community may easily come to see itself as the highest goal — as though the individual has value only through the community; as though their purpose were not to complement the individual, but rather, the individual were nullified by the community.



wonder WORLD

A DOG EAT DOG WORLD



How do animals protect themselves from predators?

The wild world is full of animals, each more dangerous than the next. While human beings have intelligence and various instruments with which to protect themselves, animals do not. Instead, Hashem has equipped them with natural weaponry.

Skunks can shoot a suffocating stench at their enemies, while porcupines can transform their backs into a field of javelins. Snakes can inject poison with teeth that resemble hypodermic needles, and squids can release clouds of ink. Eels generate an electric current that shocks their pursuers, while fireflies can switch their bellies on and off at will. And these are just a few examples!

Adapted from the writings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l