Points to Ponder

Noach 5782

**נֹ֗חַ אִ֥ישׁ צַדִּ֛יק  Ish Tzaddik (6:9)-** What does it mean to be a man, a Tzaddik? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explains that one who is able to control himself is called an Ish -- which is how man distinguishes himself from an animal. It is this distinction that begets a Tzaddik -- none of the other distinguishing differences can take man and make him into a Tzaddik.

**בְּדֹֽרֹתָ֑יו In his generation (6:9) - Rashi** famously contrasts Noach with Avraham. Rav **Kook ztl.** noted that the contrast is also found in those who walk with Hashem who are only concerned with their own generation’s incremental movement toward perfection. Walking in front of Hashem, as Avraham did, involves thinking about the future generations as well. Hence Avraham and not Noach is the father of future generations.

**קֵ֤ץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ בָּ֣א לְפָנַ֔י The end of all life is coming to me (6:13)** - What was the main sin of the people in the generation of the Mabul? The **Slonimer Rebbe (Nesivos Shalom)** explains that it was Taava -- and illicit relationships while **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky ztl.** says that the ultimate Avaira was the theft. Still he remains troubled since the Midrash says that it was the violation of the 3 cardinal sins. Why then does the Torah say that it was because of Chamas? Rav Yaakov answers that when theft becomes so commonplace that it became the law of the land, that was Avoda Zara -- the people were living in a foreign lifestyle.

**קִנִּ֖ים תַּֽעֲשֶׂ֣ה אֶת־הַתֵּבָ֑ה Make the Teiva with compartments (6:14)** - The midrash compares the compartments of the Teiva to the purification of the Metzora. **Rav Sternbuch Shlita** explains the comparison is not haphazard. The Metzora is secluded from society for speaking disparagingly about it. This will motivate him to change. Similarly, Hashem was telling Noach that when the society is dangerous, the person noticing is in danger and needs to be secluded in order to protect himself from being vulnerable to popular opinion.

**וַיִּגְוַ֞ע כָּל־בָּשָׂ֣ר | הָֽרֹמֵ֣שׂ עַל־הָאָ֗רֶץ בָּע֤וֹף וּבַבְּהֵמָה֙ וּבַ֣חַיָּ֔ה וּבְכָל־הַשֶּׁ֖רֶץ הַשֹּׁרֵ֣ץ עַל־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְכֹ֖ל הָֽאָדָֽם: And all of the animals and the birds died (7:21)** - Why were the animals doomed in the Mabul? **Rashi** explains that they contributed to the decay of the moral fiber of the world. **Rav Schachter Shlita** added in the name of the **Midrash (Koheles Rabba)** that when mankind sins so all of those who serve him need to be destroyed as they exist only to serve him. Rav Schachter added that the entire atmosphere needs cleaning in these situations -- hence even the solar year was opened for destruction and the Mabul lasted a full year.

**וַיִּזְכֹּ֤ר אֱלֹקים֙ אֶת־נֹ֔חַ And Hashem remembered Noach (8:1) - Rashi** explains that Elokim is Midas HaDin and through prayer of Tzaddikim it was changed to Rachamim. **Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** noted that this means Noach was saved because he davened. Rav Reisman added that although he was not able to daven to save his generation, Noach was able to up his Tefilla while in the Teiva in order to save the survivors. We therefore recall him on Rosh Hashana as we daven perhaps not because we are flawless but because we are not giving up.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה Took the garment (9:23)** - Why were they rewarded in 2 different ways if they did the same thing? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl**. noted that they were motivated by 2 different motivations -- that of ethic (Shem’s motivation) versus that of etiquette (Yefes’s motivation). Hence they were rewarded in kind. **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl**. added that one did the Mitzva with energy while the other merely followed. The first was rewarded with zest and life. The other merited a good end as he ended the action.

Haftara:

**פִּצְחִ֨י רִנָּ֚ה וְצַֽהֲלִי֙ לֹא־חָ֔לָה Break out in glad song (Yeshayahu 54:1) - Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** notes that when Moshiach will come, the Jewish nation will rejoice because the painful experience of Galus will have made the people stronger than its ancestors had been in good and tranquil times. When people need to overcome adversity, they become better.