Points to Ponder

Noach 5783

**בְּדֹֽרֹתָ֑יו In his generation (6:9)** - The midrashim compare and contrast Noach’s leadership with Moshe and Shmuel. Yet **Rashi** compares him to Avraham. Why? Furthermore, according to Seder Olam Rabbah, Noach and Avraham lived at the same time, during the Dor Haflagah, which was the time that Avraham was thrown into the כבשן האש. What is the message of the comparison? **Rav Ari Kahn** suggested that perhaps the idea is that Rashi is trying to highlight the fact that Noach was on the sidelines watching Avraham being thrown into the furnace and he did nothing about it, and this was his hallmark.  This also explains the midrash comparing him to Moshe. The **Arizal** notes that מחני and מי נח are the same letters. While Moshe was prepared to sacrifice himself for the people, Noach was happy to get onto the teiva without fighting for the people.

**כִּי־מָֽלְאָ֥ה הָאָ֛רֶץ חָמָ֖ס מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם Because the land has become filled with thievery (6:13)** - With all of the Aveiros that the people were doing, why was the thing that sealed their fate that of theft (See **Rashi** based on Sanhedrin 108a)? **Rav Yaakov Bender** noted that while there were other Avairos, it was the one of Gezel that displayed a culture of Gezel. Creating that culture makes people think that even the small things (like stealing less than a Perutah) don’t matter and that leads to a culture of lawlessness and destruction of society as a whole.

**מִפְּנֵ֖י מֵ֥י הַמַּבּֽוּל Because of the waters of the Mabul (7:7) - Rashi** says that Noach was מקטני אמנה .. מאמין ואינו מאמין. How is this possible? **The Steipler** suggests that intellectually, Noach knew that mabul was going to take place. However, emotionally, he wasn’t ready to accept that the world would be destroyed. His emotions prevented him from getting on the teivah. We all encounter situations where we know intellectually the right thing to do and yet our emotions get the better of us. Our job is to train our emotions to be in sync with our intellect.

**מִפְּנֵ֖י מֵ֥י הַמַּבּֽוּל Because of the waters of the Mabul (7:7) - Rashi** comments that Noach was מקטני אמונה, he only went into the teiva because of the flood. This is difficult to understand given that defied his whole generation and dedicated his whole life to build the teivah. **Rabbi Baruch Simon quotes the Kedushas Levi** that this means that he had little faith in himself. He had emunah in HaShem, but he didn’t think that he could influence the rest of the generation. He didn’t think that he could rebuild after the mabul. This paralyzed him every step of the way and this is why he hesitated before he entered the teivah.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה Shem and Yefes took the coat (9:23) - Rashi** notes that the word VaYikach means that Shem rushed ahead and showed more fortitude than Yefes. The problem is that both did the action so why does Shem get more reward? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** explained that one who shows more fortitude gets the Mitzva called on his name. The word L’Hitametz means to put in one complete effort and might differ from person to person but one thing remains consistent. Namely that one utilizes every moment toward spiritual growth and brings the people along with him.

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**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן I put my rainbow in the cloud (9:13)** - Why is the Rainbow the sign from Hashem that he will not destroy his world again? **Rav Chaim Amsallem** suggests that the generation of the flood was destroyed because of Chamas which means corruption. That is, the disparate parts of the world could not, and did not, function appropriately in society. Thus, Hashem had no choice but to destroy the society and create a new one that, by being stuck on a Teiva together, would need to function together and co-exist. The Rainbow is the sign that disparate things (colors) can come together by reaching in disparate ways toward the sky (heavens) and reach up, link up and enlighten the world. **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik** once pointed out that we need to understand the depth of the colors of the rainbow and yet, at the same time that they represent but one aspect of the human being and his experience. Man (and particularly his soul), said Rav Aharon, is like a white light and how he refracts that light and what he chooses to highlight as his primary colors helps him identify the stronger areas of his identity and personality.

**Haftara:**

**כִּי־יָמִ֥ין וּשְׂמֹ֖אול תִּפְרֹ֑צִי For you will burst out to the right and to the left (Yeshayahu 54:3) - Rav Dovid Feinstein** explained that because the population will grow so rapidly they will need a broadened tent alluding to the promise made that Bnei Yisrael will spread like the dust of the earth.