

Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

October 2023

Parshas Noach

פרשת נח

חשון תשפ"ד



Dear Parents,

I wanted to share with you a message that a Rebbe shared with his talmidim.....

Right now Am Yisrael is in an Es Tzara, fighting a war against our evil, murderous enemies. What are we supposed to do? Part of the answer is there are many, many opportunities for chessed to help. These have been publicized on various whatsapp groups and the like.

The other part of the answer is, we are supposed to help through better Tefillah, more Tehillim, and personal kabalos. Hashem runs the world, and when a Jew takes a step forward in avodas Hashem and in ruchniyus, and he has in mind the hatzlacha of someone, then the impact of that step forward affects how Hashem governs the world up in Shamayim. We have to accept upon ourselves kabalos, which, b'ezras Hashem, will help the soldiers who are fighting. Furthermore, we want extra Siyata dishmaya for the political leaders that they should make proper decisions. "Lev melachim b'yad Hashem." The hearts of the Jewish leaders are in the hands of Hashem. They will need extra siyata dishmaya in the coming days and the coming weeks.

Rav Nevenzahl shlit"א points out the following: On Rosh Hashana, we mention 'malchus' literally hundreds of times, over and over and over again. Why? Why such an emphasis on malchus? We say, Hashem's the king; He's the melech ha'olam, and then we say it once, twice, ten times, fifty times, hundreds of times. Why? The answer is, Rav Nevenzahl explains, that during the year we follow the news, and we become convinced that who really governs the world? People like President Biden. It's not true. Hashem runs the world. "Lev melachim b'yad Hashem." And we need the day of Rosh Hashana to deprogram ourselves of this constant yearlong absorption of the other view: as if the politicians run the world. That's why we emphasize and over-emphasize and over, over-emphasize on Rosh Hashana that Hashem is the King.

Rav Nevenzahl says that when a person makes a kabala and has in mind that it should help, then he's not just following the news, he's *affecting* it. He's changing it. That's what we can do.

One source for Rav Nevenzahl's idea is in *parshas VZos Habracha*.

In Moshe's *brachos* to the *shevatim* before his death, he says, "ולזבולון אמר: שמח זבולון בצאתך ויששכר באהלך" "And to Zevulun he said: Rejoice, Zevulun, when you out and Yissachar in your tents" (*Devarim* 33:18). Rashi there quotes the famous *ma'amar Chazal* that Zevulun and Yissachar made a partnership:

זבולון לחוף ימים ישכון ויוצא לפרקמטיא בספינות ומשתכר ונותן לתוך פיו של יששכר, והם יושבים ועוסקים בתורה. לפיכך הקדים זבולון ליששכר, שותרתו של יששכר על ידי זבולון היתה. **שמח זבולון בצאתך** – הצלח בצאתך לסחורה. **ויששכר** – הצלח בישיבת אהליך לתורה....

"Zevulun dwells by the seashore" (*Bereishis* 49:13); he goes out in ships to do business, and he earns money and uses it to provide for the needs of Yissachar, who sit and learn Torah. For this reason, Moshe mentioned Zevulun first, as the Torah of Yissachar was a result of Zevulun. **Rejoice Zevulun when you go out** – succeed when you go out for commerce. **And Yissachar** – succeed when you sit in your tents learning Torah...

According to Rashi, Moshe's *bracha* is that both *shevatim* should be successful in their respective endeavors, as part of their partnership. Zevulun should be successful in his business, and Yissachar should be successful in his Torah learning.

The Netziv, however, interprets the phrase “שמה זבלון בצאתך” differently. He writes that it refers to going out to battle. The Netziv explains that whenever *Am Yisroel* fought wars, they always set aside a significant number of people to learn Torah and *daven*, in the hope that they would be victorious in battle in the *zechus* of the Torah learning and tefillah. Thus, the *pasuk* means, “Zevulun, you can be happy when you go out to war because Yissachar is in the tents, the tents back in the camp where they are learning Torah and *davening*.”

We have to understand that the soldiers who are fighting, they don't have the free time to talk on their cell phones and relax. During the Second Lebanon War, Rav Chaim Malinowitz zt"l, urged his kehillah to take upon themselves extra learning at night to be an added *zechus* for the soldiers fighting. And he said, turn your cell phones off. The soldiers aren't answering their cell phones. They're fighting. So you have to fight with your learning. And he said that I expect the beis medrash to be filled like “on Shavuot night” when everyone comes.

Now is the time that we have to test ourselves. Do we really believe that Hashem runs the world? Well, if we do, then we have to do what we can to not just follow the news, but affect it.

אלה תלדות נח

Parshas Noach begins, “אלה תלדות נח, נח איש צדיק,” “These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a righteous man” (6:9). Rashi is bothered by the fact that the *pasuk* does not seem to flow properly. It begins by stating that it will enumerate Noach's offspring, but instead goes on to list his praises. Rashi explains (in his second explanation): “ללמדך שעיקר תולדותיהם של ללמדך שעיקר תולדותיהם של,” “This teaches that the main offspring of the righteous are their good deeds.” The Torah is teaching us that the main offspring of Noach – “תלדות נח” – were his good deeds – “נח איש צדיק.” This is how the first half of the *pasuk* connects to the second half.

Rav Moshe Feinstein ztz"l writes that we can learn an important lesson from the Torah's comparison of one's good deeds to his children: “One should love his good deeds in the way that one loves his children, and one should not perform his good deeds as if he is forced and with great difficulty.” Just as a person clearly loves his children, he should love his *ma'asim tovim*. One should be excited to do *mitzvos*. A person should not feel that he does not want to do the *mitzva*, but he has no choice. That is not how he views his children! Rather, one should love the performance of *mitzvos* and be *b'simcha* about it.

Rav Moshe writes elsewhere that this was actually one of Noach's special qualities. At the end of *Parshas Bereishis*, the Torah writes, “ונח מצא חן בעיני ה',” “But Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem” (6:8). The *gemara* writes that the decree of the destruction of the *Dor HaMabul* originally also applied to Noach, but Noach was saved because “he found favor in the eyes of Hashem.” What exactly is the nature of this חן that Hashem found in Noach? Rav Moshe explains that חן refers to a quality of happiness. When you think of a person with חן, you think of a smile, that the person is happy to see you. Noach performed *mitzvos* with חן, with great *simcha*. That is why he found favor in the eyes of Hashem and was saved from the *mabul*.

This is an important lesson. A Jew must realize that the ability to perform *mitzvos* is a great privilege, and he should try to do *mitzvos* with excitement, with great *simcha*.

This message is particularly relevant at this time of year. We have just finished the celebration of Sukkos. When the Rambam describes the celebration of the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eva*, he writes that it was a religious duty to make this rejoicing as great as possible. He concludes his description of the celebration with a general comment about the performance of *mitzvos*:

Rejoicing in the fulfillment of the commandment and in love of *Hashem* Who has prescribed the commandment is a supreme act of Divine worship. One who refrains from participation in such rejoicing deserves to be punished, as the *pasuk* states, “תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב,” “Because you did not serve *Hashem* with joyfulness and with gladness of heart” (*Devarim* 28:47).

The Rambam tells us that there is a general obligation to rejoice in our performance of the *mitzvos*. He quotes a *pasuk* from the *tochacha* that teaches us that one of the reasons that *Hashem* brought destruction upon the Jewish People is that we did not perform *mitzvos b'simcha*. One of the lessons that we should take from Sukkos is to try to perform *mitzvos* with greater *simcha*.

Rav Hadar Margolin *shlit"l* has written several *seforim* on the topic of doing *mitzvos b'simcha*. In *B'Simcha U'Vetuv Levav*, he cites a number of *mekoros* that explain why we should be happy when doing *mitzvos*. Dovid HaMelech tells us in *Tehillim* (100:2), “עבדו את ה' בשמחה.” Rashi explains that one should rejoice when he performs *mitzvos* because he should think about the tremendous *sechar* he will receive in *Olam HaBa* for all the *mitzvos* he performs in *Olam HaZeh*. Similarly, the Ramban writes that there is a *mitzva d'oraysa* to say the *Birchas HaTorah* every day because “we are obligated to thank *Hashem* for the great good that He did for us when He gave us the Torah and He taught us the appropriate actions to serve Him, “שבהם ננחל חיי עולם הבא – for through them we will attain *Olam HaBa*.” In many of his writings, the Chofetz Chaim emphasizes the idea that one should consider the tremendous *sechar* one gets for *mitzvos*. This will help excite him and cause him to love doing *mitzvos*.

HaRav Margolin also discusses the *simcha* that one should feel during *tefilla*. We should be happy about the fact that we are *zocheh* to be able to *daven* before *Hashem*. We have the privilege of talking to *Hashem* – and He listens! That is a great *simcha*. If a person were granted a meeting with the President of the United States or the Queen of England, he would be very happy and excited for the tremendous honor and privilege. And we are privileged to have this honor several times a day! Rav Margolin notes that this is one of the main themes of *Aleinu*, with which we close our *tefillos* – praising *Hashem* and thanking Him for giving us the opportunity and the privilege to bow down to Him and talk to Him.

We must learn to appreciate the *zechus* we have to perform the *mitzvos* so that we will perform them *b'simcha* and love them, just as we love our children.

Rav Avigdor Miller *ztz"l* often emphasize another important lesson from this *pasuk*. If we read the first four words of the *pasuk* straight, it reads, “אלה תלדות נח נח,” which literally means, “These are the generations of Noach – Noach.” The *midrash* teaches that the *pasuk* is telling us that a person's first descendant is himself. As Rav Miller puts it, the most important person you're raising is yourself.

Rav Gedalia Anemer *ztz"l* notes that Rav Hirsch emphasizes this point:

Not his children, but he himself is named as being his first *tolada*. This gives our sages the opportunity of remarking that the first product of a man, the first result of his work is his own character. This would be especially the case in a time like that of Noach, in which it would certainly require the highest amount of energetic working on oneself to save oneself out of the general depravity up to purity and goodness.

Noach worked on himself, and through his actions, he created himself. That is why he managed to remain above the people of his generation.

Rav Anemer points out that because we emphasize the *mesora* to such a great degree, one might come to the conclusion that he is merely a link in the chain. But you are not only a link in the *mesora* to the next generation; you're also your own person with your own obligations and responsibilities! Every person has a *chiyuv* to build and perfect himself to the best of his abilities.

Furthermore, Rav Anemer noted, if you are focusing on being a link in the chain, the best way to be a good link is to be a role model. The more you work on yourself, the better link in the chain you will be! If you build yourself first, you will be better able to build your other *toldos*, your children.

Rav Tzvi Kushelevsky *shlit"á* notes that the *midrash* cited by Rashi on the words “אלה תלדות נח, נח,” which explains that the primary descendants of *tzaddikim* are their *ma'asim tovim*, immediately precedes a famous *midrash* about the difficulty of learning Torah *SheBe'al Peh*. The latter *midrash* is also commenting on the words “אלה תלדות נח, נח.” Rav Kushelevsky suggests that the second *midrash* is coming to answer the same question as the first: Why doesn't the *pasuk* mention Noach's descendants after this introduction? One answer is that the *toldos* of *tzaddikim* are their *ma'asim*, and the second answer is that the *toldos* of *tzaddikim* are themselves. The second *midrash* discusses *talmud Torah* because the only way to build yourself is by working hard to learn Torah. By learning Torah, a person can create a new identity, a *metzius chadasha*. The main person you're raising is yourself.

The most important person in your life is you. You have to make yourself into a strong *oved Hashem*. That is the message of “אלה תלדות נח, נח.”

Shabbat Shalom U'mevorach

Chana Ginsburg

Thank you to our amazing teachers and special activity staff for going above and beyond to engage, teach and give *chizuk* to our girls during these difficult times. The younger classes had an 'activity' discussing how to enhance Shabbos and received a 'Shabbos Kit' to prepare and enjoy. The upper grades received their own Tehillim and have already put them to good use.







