



Parshat HaShavuah

נח

Noach

ד' חשוון תשע"ג

OCTOBER 20, 2012

A PUBLICATION OF



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

6:30

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:39

Sunset

6:47

Motzei

Shabbat

7:23



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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KASHRUT 2.0
RABBI BEN SUGERMAN

This year the Senior girls have the privilege of learning the laws of kashrut. Some of the laws can be somewhat intricate, and at times they can be complex. This week's parsha gives us a glimpse into the *hashkafa* of Kashrut. Let us examine...

In last week's parsha we were introduced to the story of creation. It is noteworthy that Adam and Chava are given only one commandment to comply with – a dietary restriction. Being that the first couple is limited to eating vegetation, their mitzvah is to abstain from eating from the עץ הדעת. Essentially the first and only commandment is that of kashrut. However, we quickly learn how difficult a challenge it is and we see the results of their failure to comply.

If we fast forward to this week's parsha. Following world devastation, Noach and his family emerge from the *teivah* to a world that is a shell of what it once was. Humanity is now given a second chance, and with that Hashem gives this new society a new diet. Noach and all subsequent generations are permitted to eat meat, but Hashem also instructs the world at large to comply with seven laws known as the Noachide laws. One of these laws is taught in this week's parsha "אך בשר בנפשו דמו לא תאכלו" (9:4). Bnei Noach are not to eat the limb from a live animal. The Ramban notes that this is obviously a new mitzvah correlating to the new diet of humanity.

R' Yaakov Kaminetzky, in his sefer *אמת ליעקב*, adds the following point. If one carefully looks at the six other Noachide laws, there is an intuitive nature to them. They are primarily necessary to maintain a compatible and working civilization.

Not to kill, steal, blaspheme, worship idols, commit adultery, and keep a legal system – are rules that promote a civil and monotheistic society. By adding the dietary restriction, Hashem has now repeated the same genre of prohibition he does for Adam and Chava. The question is obvious: what makes dietary restrictions such an integral part of the fabric of creation that both times when humanity begins Hashem instructs mankind to be selective of what we eat?

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Rabbi Sugerman continued

Furthermore, there is no logic to this restriction, as seemingly there is no inherent value to this particular mitzvah, unlike the other basic Noachide laws which promote civility and a basic belief in Hashem.

Eating is a most basic need. At its most basic level eating provides fuel and energy to our body, so that we can operate. But if eating were that simple, we would never feel the need to eat more than necessary, and yet so many of us struggle with moderating the amount that we eat.

We clearly see eating as more than functional evidenced by the time and focus we give the culinary art of preparation and presentation. It is not for naught that Susie Fishbein has become a household name. Food is a natural battlefield and every time we eat, we are on the front lines. It is there that Hashem has instructed us to be selective of what we eat; it is at the most basic human function that we are told that we must be conscious of what we ingest. Hashem provides us an opportunity with every meal, snack, and drink, to exercise mastery over temptation and further bind ourselves with our Creator.

JUST DO IT!

YISRAEL WEISS ('13)

When Noach completes his building of the *teivah* the pasuk states: ויעש נח ככל אשר צוה אתו אלקים: "ויעש" – "And Noach did so; in accordance with all that Hashem commanded him, so he did" (6:22).

The Ramban asks: Why is this pasuk repetitive? The beginning of the pasuk states that Noach does what Hashem commanded him to do – why does the pasuk need to end with the extra phrase of, "ויעש", "so he did"? The Ramban explains that the repeated verse is inserted to emphasize that Noach performs everything that Hashem tells him to perfection, following every specification to the last detail. However, later on we find a discrepancy; Rav Mordechai Gifter points out that when Noach enters the *teivah*, the pasuk above is quoted almost verbatim, but without the last phrase, stating only, "And Noach did so; in accordance with all that Hashem commanded him." Why, Rav Gifter asks, is the phrase of "so he did" omitted here?

Rav Gifter answers with a beautiful insight. The phrase "so he did" teaches that not only is the commandment fulfilled to perfection, but it is completed with the purest motivation, to fulfill the will of Hashem. In building the *teivah*, Noach is focused entirely on fulfilling the desire of Hashem for no reason other than that it is the desire of Hashem. However, when Noach enters the *teivah*, his motivating factor is not to fulfill the word of Hashem. As the Torah explicitly states, he enters because of the rising floodwaters.

This explanation is troubling. Of course Noach does not enter the *teivah* until the floodwaters rose. Why would he have entered the *teivah* before the flood began? Rav Gifter answers that had the pasuk said "And Noach entered when the waters forced him to," there would not have been any lack of faith. But, the use of the word "because" shows that Noach does not have complete faith! Because the water compels him, he does not serve with complete faith, and so the phrase of "so he did," a status only achieved by acting with the purest motivation of fulfilling Hashem's will, is not applied to his entering the *teivah* as it was to his building the *teivah*.

How often do we perform certain mitzvot because someone or something compels us to? And by that logic, how often do we NOT do things because we are not compelled to? The message Noach teaches us is that sometimes one needs to reassess his motivations – sometimes the essence of a mitzvah is not to do it because the mitzvah makes sense or because some external force is making us do it, but solely because it is the will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.



CHECK MATE

COREY REICHENBERG ('16)

In this week's parsha in order to discern whether the flood receded Noach sends out a raven. The raven flies back and forth for not apparent reason. Why would the raven do this? The raven is sent only to serve as a scout for Noach, not to stretch its wings! Rashi quotes the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108b), which explains that the raven keeps checking on Noach to make sure he did not try anything with his mate. This explanation seems out of the ordinary. How do we understand it?

There is a story of a rabbi who spoke with a student about this very issue. The student was also troubled by the raven's behavior, to which the rabbi responded, "The fears of the raven were, of course, ridiculous...that's the whole point. Our sages were teaching us about paranoia."

Do you ever think that someone at school thinks he or she is too cool to hang out with you because of what you wear, or where you live, or even what you believe in? Or how about when a teacher seemingly grades you "more harshly" than everybody else, or calls on you more than others?

Paranoia actually stems from egotism. We assume that everything someone does relates to us in some way. Noach had more important things to worry about than the raven's mate, yet the raven was still fearful. We must all stop wasting our energy thinking about ourselves and what other people think, and instead rely on our own opinion of ourselves and direct our attention toward that which is truly significant.

ROLE MODELS

YOSEF ITZKOWITZ ('14)

Noach is introduced as a "righteous man in his generation, a man who walked with Hashem" (6:19). It seems unnecessary and superfluous to state "in his generation" to explain *when* he was righteous. Knowing that the Torah does not waste words, Rashi provides two explanations. His first justification is that the Torah wants to convey that Noach remains righteous, even though his entire generation is evil. Therefore, as the flood is taking place, Noach and his family are in the *teivah*.

However, Rashi also suggests a totally different way of understanding this phrase: that Noach is righteous in his time, but had he been alive in another generation, he would not have been considered a tzadik. Moreover, Noach is at fault because he keeps too much to himself and did not extend himself to correct those around him. Consequently, Hashem extends the building of the *teivah*, to allow Noach to recognize that he must tell people to repent. Likewise, Noach is faulted for having bad surroundings, though he does not even have a choice! While his whole generation is bad, it is his responsibility to try and change them.

From this we see the importance of associating ourselves with the right group of friends and the importance of reaching out to others. We need to realize how critical it is that the people around us do not bring us down, but rather, elevate us.

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Itzkowitz continued

And on the other side, we must make sure that we are not lowering anyone else spiritually and that we are only helping others. Thus, we must keep the mitzvot from the Torah, and by doing so, be a role model for others to see and follow.

DON'T STOP BELIEVING

CHAYA COHEN ('16)

This week we read about Hashem looking down at Earth and seeing great wickedness in the world. Disappointed and angry at the behavior of the nation He created, He brings forth a flood to wipe them out. However, one righteous man, Noach, finds favor in Hashem's eyes and is told by Hashem to build a *teivah*, on which he is instructed to bring with him species of every animal, as well as his own family.

The pasuk states, "And Noach did all that Hashem had commanded him... And Noach came and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons with him into the *teivah* because of the waters of the flood" (Bereishit 7:5-7). Rashi comments on this pasuk, saying that Noach is a "small believer." He knew that Hashem could create a flood but did not believe that Hashem would follow through with the threat. Noach, positive that the flood would not happen, stood outside the *teivah* until he was forced to enter due to the waves.

After reading this, one might ask: In what way is Noach a small believer? He spends 120 years building the *teivah*, making himself vulnerable to mockery from all others around him. The pasuk states, "Noach did all that Hashem had commanded him." So how can Rashi say that Noach is a small believer? A similar accusation is made against Sarah when she is told that she is to give birth to a baby when she is 90 years old. Rashi tells us that Sarah is rebuked for her disbelief that Hashem would bless her with a child at her age. But Sarah prays to Hashem for a child her entire life, so how can Rashi say that Sarah does not believe in the miracles Hashem could perform?

The Chofetz Chaim answers by giving an example to which we can relate. He says a Jew, who believes that one day he will be brought to Israel by the moshiach looks at the headlines in the newspaper and reads that his dream has come true, he will have disbelief. Even though he has been praying for and anticipating this moment, a large part of him will strongly deny it. The Chofetz Chaim explains that even though we have strong faith that certain events might happen, nevertheless human nature still bring forth a visceral feeling of shock and denial. All we can do is prepare for the eventual through study, prayer and good imagination.

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