

This issue is dedicated by Mr. & Mrs. Ron and Barbara Kloor L'iluy Nishmas her father
Reuven Michael ben Asher z"l (Yahrzeit, 5 Mar Cheshvan)

Parshas Noach

by **Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim**
Rosh Yeshiva

We Can Take It With Us

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi and Antoninus the Greek Emperor had a close relationship, sharing many discussions about Hashem and the way of the world. In the end, Antoninus converted. One such discussion involved whether Hashem places the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) inside a person at birth or at conception.

The Gemara¹ says that Rebbi thought it was from conception, but Antoninus contended that it must be from birth, because if it was from conception, the baby would kick inside the mother's womb and cause the mother to miscarry. Rebbi deferred to Antoninus!

The Midrash² supports Antoninus' view based on a pasuk in Parshas Noach: "*Ki yetzer lev ha'adam ra mineurav* - the inclination of man's heart is evil from when he is young."³ The word *mineurav* means "from his youth", but it is spelled without a letter *vav* and can be read as *miniurav*, "from the moment he is shaken out" from his mother's womb.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe⁴ notes that the concept that the *yetzer hara* could not be placed inside a person from conception is teaching us that the fundamental focus and goal of the *yetzer hara* is to kick, reject, and rebel. The *yetzer hara* does not want to submit itself to the rulership of anyone else. It is a force that strives to be independent at any cost, even if it means its own demise.

We find the same idea at the end of Parshas Bereishis when Hashem saw the sins of the generation of the flood. The Torah says, "*Vayinachem Hashem ki asah es ha'adam ba'aretz* - Hashem took comfort in the fact that He had created man on Earth."⁵ Rashi explains that had man been located in the upper worlds, he would have caused the upper worlds to rebel against Hashem!

This force expresses itself even in the best of men. When Noach came out of the Teivah (ark) he planted a vineyard, grew grapes, made wine, and got drunk. The pasuk says "*Vayachel Noach*."⁶ Rashi says that the word *vayachel* derives from the word *chullin*, mundane; Noach made himself mundane. What does that mean?

Rav Wolbe⁷ explains that Noach had good intentions; he wanted wine for making Kiddush. Subconsciously, however, what he wanted was to leave the "Noach of the Teivah" behind. When he was living in the Teivah, he was involved 24/7 in taking care of the animals, doing chesed. When he came out of the ark, he had an inclination to let go of the incredibly high level of chesed that he had achieved, which had required tremendous effort on his part. He wanted to let loose by drinking some wine and being mundane, a regular person.

We all experience this inner inclination. Even when we sincerely want to do what is right, the *yetzer hara* finds a way to subtly express itself. When Yom Kippur ends, we may feel not only hungry but also relieved. Subconsciously, a person may think, "I put in the time and effort; now I can relax and return to my usual self." The Torah teaches that this attitude reflects the rebellion stirred by the *yetzer hara*.

We've just completed the time period of the Yomim Noraim and Sukkos, in which we achieved higher levels in Torah and mitzvos. The natural reaction of our *yetzer hara* is to rebel and say, "It's too difficult; let it go!"

The way to help ensure that our spiritual level remains high is to "take it with you". The Shulchan Aruch⁸ says that immediately after davening, before leaving shul, a person should learn. Quite simply, we shouldn't just walk away from what we achieved with our davening. We should take a concrete step to lock in the good we achieved. Otherwise, the *yetzer hara* would succeed in implanting the subconscious message that "inside shul I am a Jew, but outside I do what I want".

The same concept holds true on Motzei Shabbos. On Shabbos, we have a *neshamah yeseirah* (extra soul), so the influence of our *yetzer hara* is much less. But when Shabbos is over, people often feel a desire to go out and let loose. To preempt this desire on Motzei Shabbos, one should do something right away to take the benefits of Shabbos and bring them into the new week. That is the whole concept of having a Melaveh Malkah after Shabbos, a meaningful way to bid farewell to the "Shabbos Queen" and carry its holiness into the upcoming workweek.

Let us try to take every good act we do, every mitzvah we perform, and keep it in our consciousness going forward. Our good actions have changed us for the better and give us the opportunity to bring this added holiness into our journey ahead!

- 1 Sanhedrin 91b
- 2 Bereishis Rabbah 34:10
- 3 Noach 8:21
- 4 Alei Shur II p.72
- 5 Bereishis 6:6
- 6 Noach 9:20
- 7 Rav Wolbe on Chumash
- 8 Orach Chaim 155

PTI Chabura will be learning
Sixth Perek of
Maseches Berachos
Monday-Thursday
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
followed by Iyun Shiur given by
Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM

Gemara Brachos
Perek Keitzad Mevarchin
Chabura Led by
Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim
Monday & Wednesday
Seder 8:30 PM - 9:45 PM
Shiur 9:30 PM
to join please contact
Rabbi Bodenheim
862-371-3186 rbbodie@gmail.com

Abudraham¹ writes that the *Haftarah* for *Parshas Noach* is from *Yeshayahu*², beginning with the *prophesy* of *R' Eker*. *Levush*³ explains that this selection was chosen because it contains the *pasuk* לִי נֹחַ זֶה הָאִישׁ, which references *Noach* and the flood. *Abudraham* indicates that the *Haftarah* continues through the *prophesy* ending פֶּאֶרְךָ כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל. *Elyah Rabbah*⁴ rules accordingly, and so is the *Ashkenazic* practice as indicated in standard *chumashim*. However, according to *Sephardic* tradition, the *Haftarah* only includes the first *prophesy* of *R' Eker*, ending with the words 'אמר מרחמך ה' before the *prophesy*:

The *Navi* in this chapter provides two different metaphors to depict the exile and promise of redemption. The first, *R' Eker*, which contains the *Noach* reference, is of a barren lady who is given the hope of bearing many children; the second, *Eניה סערה*, describes *Yerushalayim* as an afflicted, tormented and unconsolated city that will be rebuilt to wealth and glory. Seemingly, the *Navi's* beginning the *Eניה סערה* section with a new metaphor is an indication that they are two separate and distinct prophetic visions of exile and redemption. Indeed, these two prophecies are divided, even according to *Ashkenazic* tradition⁵, as two separate *Haftarahs* of the *שב* דנחמא, the seven *Haftaros* of consolation, that are designated for the seven weeks after *Tisha B'Av* as prescribed by the *Pesikta*⁶. Furthermore, even in years that *Rosh Chodesh Elul* falls on *Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* and the special *Haftarah* for *Rosh Chodesh* is read⁷, in which case *Magen Avraham*⁸ quotes *Levush*⁹ that *R' Eker* and *Eניה סערה* are combined together and read for *Parshas Ki Seitzei* (as is the common practice¹⁰), those were the two specifically chosen to be combined only because, as *Levush* writes, they are juxtaposed in the *Navi* but not because of any thematic connection between the two prophecies that would suggest that they are one unit. In fact, *Mahari*¹¹ writes that even in such a scenario, the two are not read together. If so, why is the separate *prophesy* of *Eניה סערה* included together with *R' Eker* to comprise the *Haftarah* of *Parshas Noach*?

Perhaps we can answer based on an understanding of the central *pasuk* of the *Haftarah*, the reference to *Noach*:

The *Zohar*¹² contrasts *Moshe* with *Noach* and notes that while *Moshe* *davened* on behalf of the Nation to spare them from destruction after their worship of the golden calf, *Noach* did not do the same for his generation. Therefore, continues the *Zohar*, *Noach* was held accountable for the death of all those who were killed, and the flood is attributed to him as our *pasuk* refers to the flood as *מי נח*, the *waters of Noach*. Furthermore, the *Gemara*¹³ teaches that *Noach* was also decreed to perish in the flood but was only saved because, as the *pasuk*¹⁴ says, ונח מצא חן בעיני ה', and *Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem*. *Torah Temimah*¹⁵ suggests that he deserved to perish despite his virtues because he didn't *daven* for his generation to

be spared as *Avraham* did for the people of *sedom*. Indeed, *Pardes Yosef*¹⁶ quotes *Mahari Mintz*¹⁷ who explains that *Noach* was not worthy of being saved but was nonetheless spared for the sake of the perpetuation of mankind, and this is our assurance that we will ultimately be redeemed despite our not necessarily being worthy. Accordingly, the intention of our *pasuk*, he explains, is to provide the *נח* as a paradigm for our redemption as *Hashem* assures us that just like *Noach's* flood, which He promised never to bring upon the world (despite *Noach's* unworthiness), so too, He commits not to act against us in anger. Thus, the theme of the *Haftarah* and connection to *Parshas Noach* is the covenant between *Hashem* and the Jewish people that He will never forsake us even if we are not deserving.

If so, there is no connection between the pledge mentioned in the *R' Eker* section and the covenant referenced in the *Eניה סערה* section because the latter covenant requires our commitment as the *Navi* demands *הטו אזנכם* ושמעו ואתו, *turn your ear and come to me; listen and revive your sole*, and only then does the *Navi* guarantee *עולם ברית* ואתו, *and I will establish for you an eternal covenant*. Thus, the *R' Eker* unconditional promise and the *Eניה סערה* conditional covenant are fundamentally different and don't naturally fuse together as a single unit. Perhaps, this explains the *Sephardic* practice to end the *Haftarah* after the *R' Eker* section.

However, *Radak*¹⁸ understands that *Targum Yonason*¹⁹ has a variant text of that *pasuk* and therefore translates the phrase not as *just like the waters of Noach* but rather as *just like the days of Noach*. Indeed, the *Midrash*²⁰ interprets the phrase as *כימי* and associates the phrase with other instances in *Tanach* where the word *כימי* is used²¹. Commenting on the *Midrash*, *Eitz Yosef*²² explains that the "*days of Noach*" was an era during which *Hashem* was pleased with the offerings of man (*Noach*) as the *pasuk*²³ indicates *את ריח הניחוח*, and *Hashem smelled the pleasing aroma*. Accordingly, *Hashem's* promise in the *R' Eker* *prophesy* not to forsake the Jewish people with reference to his promise in the days of *Noach* not to destroy mankind after experiencing *Noach's* offering perhaps is a pledge that is contingent on our being deserving of His goodness. If so, the covenant mentioned later, in the *Eניה סערה* *prophesy*, which also seems to be dependent on our cooperation, is related and therefore included together in the *Haftarah* for *Parshas Noach* according to the *Ashkenazic minhag*. Indeed, *Rambam*²⁴ rules that the *Haftarah* ends after this *pasuk*, two *pesukim* shy of *פארך*, כי, the end of the *Eניה סערה* *prophesy*, perhaps indicating that the inclusion of *Eניה סערה* in the *Parshas Noach Haftarah* is only to connect the *pesukim* from the two separate prophecies that mention the promise / covenant but not because the *Eניה סערה* *prophesy* is intrinsically connected to the *R' Eker* *prophesy*.

- 1 ספר אבודרהם סדר הפרשיות והפטירות
- 2 ישעיהו נ"ד:א-נ"ה:
- 3 לבוש מלכות אויח ס' תכ"ח סעי' א
- 4 אליה רבה אויח תכ"ח סעי' א
- 5 אולם דעת האבודרהם לסיים כי פארך אף בפי' כי תצא
- 6 מובא בתוס' מגילה ל"א ע"ב ד"ה ראש
- 7 שלחן ערוך אויח ס' תכ"ח סעי' ב
- 8 מגן אברהם אויח ס' תכ"ח ס"ק א
- 9 לבוש מלכות אויח ס' תקפ"א סעי' א
- 10 ספר שערי אפרים שער א אות כ"ג
- 11 שו"ת מהרי"ל ס' ל"ט, שו"ת מהרי"ל החדשות ס' ל"ז
- 12 ספר הזוהר נח ס"ז ע"ב
- 13 סנהדרין ק"ח ע"א
- 14 בראשית ו:ח
- 15 ספר תוספת ברכה בראשית ו:ט

- 16 פרס יוסף החדש פרשת נח אות ב
- 17 דרשות מהר"י מינץ דרוש רביעי
- 18 פי' רד"ק ישעיהו נ"ד:ט
- 19 תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל ישעיהו נ"ד:ט
- 20 מדרש רבה ויקרא ז:ד, איכה ה:כ"א
- 21 ע"ע סנהדרין צ"ט ע"א
- 22 פי' עץ יוסף על מדרש רבה איכה ה:כ"א
- 23 בראשית ח:כ"א
- 24 משנה תורה אהבה: סדר תפילות כל השנה

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