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Noach 5763 (2002)

Quote for the day

"Noah was a righteous man in his generation" (Genesis 6:9). There are those amongst our sages who interpret this verse as praise: [if he was righteous in his wicked generation,] how much more so would he have been in a generation of righteous people. And those who interpret it as a condemnation: in accordance to his generation he was righteous; but if he would have been in Abraham's generation, he would not be regarded as anything.

(Rashi)

Daily Thought

Loss

We don't like it when we lose something. We think, "What gain could there be in loss?" But loss, too, is a way of growth.

Much of growth is simply learning to let go, to loosen the cord that ties you to your "stuff" -- to your material things. Such as this thing you are missing.

Only once that is achieved can you emerge onto a higher plane, a plane open wide enough to contain more light and life than before. The divine energy that before brought a loss, can now bring -- openly and clearly -- a blessing and much gain.

This magazine contains sacred Torah material. Please do not discard.

COMMENT

Sons of Noah

"Noah was a righteous man in his generation" (Genesis 6:9). There are those amongst our sages who interpret this verse as praise: [if he was righteous in his wicked generation,] how much more so would he have been in a generation of righteous people. And there are those who interpret it as a condemnation: in accordance to his generation he was righteous; but if he would have been in Abraham's generation, he would not be regarded as anything.

(Rashi on verse)

Everything about Noah can be seen in a positive light, and in a negative light.

Noah built the famous lifeboat that saved him and seven other humans (his wife, his three children and their wives) from the Great Flood. So you can thank him for saving humanity, or you can criticize him (as the Zohar does) for not saving the rest of his generation.

The Torah tells us that Noah did not enter the ark until the very last minute, when the rains were already falling. You can laud his optimism, or you can point out (as Rashi does) that he was a "small believer" in G-d's words.

The Torah also relates that even after the waters of the Flood had receded and the earth had dried, Noah still would not leave the ark until G-d expressly commanded him to. You can call him timid, or you can admire (as do our sages) his obedience: G-d had commanded him to enter the ark, so in the ark he remained until G-d told him to come out.

The first thing Noah did to develop the newly barren earth he found upon emerging from the ark, was plant a vineyard, make wine and get drunk. You can be dismayed by his fickleness, or applaud his determination to infuse some joy and merriment into a desolate world.

Noah lived 950 years — enough time to do everything wrong and everything right.

We are all descendants of Noah. Noah is descendent of Adam, so we're all sons of Adam, too. But the term used by the Talmud and Halachah (Torah law) for humanity as a whole is *B'nei Noach* ("sons of Noah"). The seven universal laws of morality that are binding upon every human being (prohibiting idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, adultery and incest, and cruelty to animals, and mandating the establishment of courts of justice) are called "The Seven Noachide Laws" — even though six of them were actually commanded to Adam.

Adam was the first man. Noah was the first human being.

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STORY

Herschel Goat

When the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom DovBer Schneerson (1860-1920) was a young child, his father (the fourth rebbe, Rebbe Shmuel) woke him one morning and asked him if he had dreamed anything. The boy thought for a minute, then began trembling with fear and answered that he dreamed that several awesomely holy men had visited him and that one of them told him a Torah idea and a story.

He described them and his father identified the one who had spoken as Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (the founder of Chassidism, 1698-1760).

The Torah idea that the Baal Shem Tov said was:

> It is written in *Ethics of the Fathers* (4:1): "Who is strong? He who conquers his selfish inclinations." It does not say "who *breaks* his selfish inclinations" but rather "who conquers...", true might lies in conquering and transforming one's selfish drives in order to use *them* to serve G-d as well.

The story that he told was as follows:

When I was a young man of twenty, recently after being accepted as a member of the society the hidden *tzaddikim*, several of us came to the city of Brody. [Translator's note: The "hidden tzaddikim" were a group of unusually gifted and devoted Jews who, disguised as simple people, dedicated their lives to improving the plight of their Jewish brethren both spiritually and materially.]

It was there in Brody that I saw the most amazing thing. I was standing in the market place speaking to a large group of locals when I noticed from the corner of my eye an older man walking in the distance, bent under the burden of a large sack he was carrying on his shoulder. His face was covered with sweat and there was nothing unusual about him except for the fact that over his head floated a brilliant pillar of spiritual fire!

Obviously none of the other townspeople saw it. A few of them even yelled jeeringly, "Keep going Herschel Goat" and, "Carry, Herschel, Carry!" And he called back with a smile "Thank you! G-d bless you!"

I could not believe my eyes. I called two of the elder tzaddikim who were with me, Rabbi Yechezkel and Rabbi Ephraim. They, too, saw the pillar but also couldn't explain it. For all appearances this Herschel was just a simple old Jew trying to make a living. What connected him to such a great revelation?

For several days I observed him and tried to understand the reason for this holy fire, but I still had no idea. The people told me that he was a widower, his wife having died some ten years ago. He earned his meek living by carrying things on his back and doing odd jobs, and as far as everyone knew he used all his money to feed a few goats he had because he loved goat milk. That is how he earned the name "Herschel Goat".

So I decided to fast the first three days of each week, only drinking water at night, until I understood what this man did that was so pleasing to G-d.

I had just finished the first three days and was leaving the Shul when by Divine providence, there was Herschel walking down the street. He had a big smile on his face as I approached him. I told him I was very weak from having fasted and asked if he could give me something to eat.

"Of course! Of course!" He said joyously. "Please, just follow me to my home! I'm so happy to help."

We walked for about an hour till we came to an old run-down hut near the woods. Nothing seemed unusual until he opened the door and we entered.

Suddenly four or five goats jumped from all corners of the hut at him. They lovingly licked his hands and literally pranced with joy about him.

I had never quite seen the like of it. Herschel quieted the goats told me to sit down, took out a large metal pail, milked one of them, and poured me a cup to drink.

"Nothing's more healthy than goat's milk! Here, have another," he said with satisfaction as he handed me a second cup.

When I tried to pay him he refused. "G-d forbid!

STORY

Herschel Goat

Money? No! No money, no money! It's my pleasure! I'm the one that benefits! What, I should take money too?" he said with a smile on his face.

Then he looked at me seriously and said, "I want to tell you a true story. You have no idea how happy I am that you came here. Please listen." He sat down opposite me waited a few moments collecting his thoughts, and began.

"My wife, of blessed memory was a truly righteous woman, always helping people. Any time anyone lacked anything she was there, doing everything she could to help. She collected money for charity, cared for people when they were sick; everything she did was for others. Shortly after she passed away, after the seven days of mourning, she appeared to me in a dream.

"She told me that after she died, instead of going through the painful and frightening purification processes of 'the slingshot' and 'the trashing of the grave,' she was received warmly by the souls of all those people she had helped and led directly to one of the highest heavens.

"She told me that nothing is valued in heaven more than brotherly love and beseeched me to also begin a life of charity and good deeds.

"That is why I bought these goats. I give free milk to whoever needs it and it has done wonders for people, simply wonders, and I am so happy I can help.

"Since then my wife never appeared to me again. It's been ten years since then, but today, just before I woke up, she came. She told me that this morning I would meet a holy man and he would change my life, and I'm sure she was talking about you. Please stay with me for a few days and teach me Torah."

I stayed with Herschel for several days and watched the way he lovingly cared for his goats and how he dispensed their milk to dozens of people that needed it, everything done with a simple, contagious joy and with no egotism whatsoever. But on the other hand he was a complete ignoramus and could barely read.

I discussed it with the tzaddikim and we decided to take him under our wing and teach him Torah. For three years we taught him the most basic books and then one day his mind simply opened. He suddenly understood and remembered everything we taught him, even the most difficult concepts in Talmud and in Kabbalah, but he never lost his simplicity.

After five more years he became a great hidden tzaddik and mystic in his own right, moved to the city of Ostropol, and for the next ten years helped and even saved hundreds of Jews with his prayers and blessings.

But the story has a strange ending. As fate would have it Herschel passed away on a cold rainy day. The burial society of Ostropol did provide ten Jews to escort him to his final resting place, but otherwise treated him like a simple pauper. This was not received well in heaven. After all, Herschel was a holy man and had helped myriads of people and deserved much more honorable treatment.

A decree was passed in heaven that the city of Ostropol should suffer terrible misfortunes because of their mistreatment of Herschel.

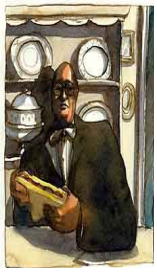
I and many others tried to avert the decree, but to no avail. It seems that disgracing a tzaddik, although they do not care about their own honor, is no small matter.

Until, suddenly, the soul of Herschel's wife appeared before the heavenly court.

All the accusing angels fell silent and she spoke. How could it be that the entire city of Ostropol would be punished because of her husband? Her husband had devoted his life to helping people. The greatest possible disgrace that could be done to him would be to cause anyone, no less an entire city, to suffer on his account. She demanded that the punishment be annulled.

"After short deliberation," the Baal concluded his tale, "her demands were met."

From the writings of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn; translation/adaptation by Tuvia Bolton, yeshiva@ohrtmimim.org



QUESTION

Why Do We Keep Kosher?

Question:

I have two questions regarding *kashrut* (the Torah's dietary laws). I understand that the sages explain that non-kosher animals have negative characteristics that we would absorb by eating their flesh. But many kosher animals consume non-kosher animals (i.e. kosher fish that eat non-kosher fish and sea creatures). If "we are what we eat," don't we indirectly absorb those negative elements when we eat those animals?

My second question: Many Jews insist that kashrut is mostly based on objections to cruelty (i.e., flesh torn from a living animal is not kosher, the rigorous requirements of the *shechita* procedure ensure that an animal is killed painlessly, etc.). Yet I understand that veal is kosher. And any animal rights activist will tell you that veal is the most cruel meat that is available: tortured calves who stand in a small pen for life being fed only milk. How can veal be kosher if Kashrut is about compassion towards animals?

Answer:

Before I deal with your specific questions, it is important to understand that we didn't make up the kashrut laws. Just like we didn't create the fish. We never claimed to have conceived them, nor to fully understand them. When Nachmanides and others provide reasons for these laws, they also make it clear that they are not getting to the bottom of it. It would be absurd to think that G-d gave us the Torah as a sort of bandage for His mistakes. "Oops! I didn't mean to put those nasty animals there! People might eat them! What do I do now?"

Rather, the Torah came first, and the world was designed to follow. Something like this: The Creator desired a world where we creatures would have a choice to connect with Him or go on our own messy way. He conceived of us as creatures who consume food, and that would be one of the areas where we would have this choice. If so, there are going to have to be animals that He doesn't want us to eat and animals that we may eat.

Whenever we eat something with mindfulness of our Creator and Divine purpose, our act of eating acts as a connection to Above. The energy we receive from that food itself becomes elevated into that higher purpose.

On the other hand, if we just eat that food because we are hungry, with no inner intent, we and the food remain just another chunk of this fragmented world.

That's how it works with kosher food. If it is of the sort of food that the Creator doesn't want us to eat, then the nature of that food is such that it can never be elevated by eating. No matter what we do, it remains stuck within this world, and shleps us down with it.

Some of these animals reflect this spiritual negativity in their actual nature and behavior. So Nachmanides speaks of the negative character traits imbibed with the flesh of non-kosher species. In many cases, what is not healthy for the soul is also clearly not healthy for the body, as well. So we have nutritionists confirming that a kosher diet is more healthy. Nice dividends, but not the underlying factor.

As for cruelty to animals, the Torah expressly forbids this. We are permitted to take the life of an animal only when it is necessary for direct human benefit — and even then it must be done as compassionately as possible. The prohibition of cruelty towards animals exists independently of the prohibition to consume non-kosher foods — an animal that was killed in a humane way can still be not kosher, and the fact that a certain procedure does not render an animal unfit for consumption does not imply that the procedure is not forbidden for reasons of cruelty to animals. This latter kind of cruelty is an area that needs correction today, as many have already realized.

By Tzvi Freeman; TFreeman@chabadonline.com, author of Be Within, Stay Above and Bringing Heaven Down to Earth

PARENTING

The Left Parent

While I was a school principal, from time to time a teacher would walk into my office very upset about the behavior of a student in their class. The teacher would go on to explain how rude this child was and how many warnings the child had received with no noticeable change. "I can't handle him any more. Please remove him from my class."

I would empathize with the teacher's frustration at not being able to get on with his or her job. I would then offer to spend some time talking to the child, allowing the teacher time to calm down, hoping that by then a more rational consequence would be found.

No matter how experienced and learned a teacher may be, s/he cannot play the role of witness, prosecutor and judge all at the same time. A judge who is involved in any way — whether the judge received a benefit from the accused or was personally hurt by the accused — is obviously not the right person to judge in the case.

The same principle applies at home. If one parent has become upset and angry at a child for misbehaving, it would be more appropriate to allow the other, uninvolved parent to deal with the situation and, if necessary, mete out the appropriate punishment. A punishment should be the consequence of the negative behavior, with the aim of preventing reoccurrence of the behavior. When a parent is angry, the punishment may come out as an expression of anger and frustration. The typical child will still feel loved and cared for with a punishment given by the non-angry parent in an assertive yet calm manner. When the punishment is handed down by an angry parent with a lot of emotion attached, the child will feel rejected and hated.

In the words of our sages, "The right hand should bring close while the left pushes away."

Our ultimate goal is to reach a point where the child behaves in an appropriate manner without the need of reward and punishment. But as long as this ideal has not yet been attained and we need to resort to employing the "left hand" to reject the negative behavior and hand down consequences, we must simultaneously employ our other hand and increase our positive reinforcement, with the "right hand" — i.e., the stronger motion and greater emphasis and — going to the positive, bringing closer activity.

Of course, this idea will sound very nice when we read it while away on vacation without our children, but may sound less realistic and practical while our child is causing chaos on a hot day in an un-air-conditioned car after a hard day's work. We can only work toward reaching this ideal. We should not however feel bad on those occasions when our natural instinct takes over. We should rather feel good and pat ourselves on the back on those few occasions when we successfully implement the principle of not dealing with the punishment when we are emotionally involved.

This applies to all areas of parenting and relationships. Our aim and goal is to increase the number and the frequency of times when we can apply logical reactions rather than emotional ones until, one day (hopefully while our children are still at home) it will become second nature.

Try it — it works!

By Rabbi Yaakov Lieder; leadlife@bigpond.net.au

SEASONS OF THE SOUL

The Last Jew

On the seventh day of Cheshvan, fifteen days after the conclusion of the festival [of Sukkot], one begins to pray for rain. This is to allow the very last Jew to reach the Euphrates River

Talmud, Taanit 10a

In many Chassidic communities, it was the custom that at the conclusion of the Tishrei festival season, the *gabbai* of the synagogue would ascend to the podium, pound on the table and, citing Genesis 32:2, announce: "And Jacob went on his way!"

When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, the festival of Sukkot (Tishrei 15-21) was a time of pilgrimage for all Jews, when all came to see and be seen at the Temple, the seat of G-d's manifest presence in the physical world. In the days following the festival, the caravans would stream from the holy city and make the long (physically for some, spiritually for all) trek back to plow and pruning hook, back to field, vineyard and orchard. The end of the first week of the month of Cheshvan found the people of Israel once more each under his grapevine, each under his fig tree.

Today, too, Cheshvan marks the end of a period of spiritual focus and a return to the demands of material life. During the month of Elul and the Days of Awe that open the month of Tishrei, we occupied ourselves with repentance, prayer, and charity, striving to improve our relationships with our Creator and with our fellows. Immediately following came Sukkot, the festival of unity and joy, and Simchat Torah, when we celebrated our unique bond with the Almighty by rejoicing with the Torah. Cheshvan is the month in which we return to our pedestrian involvements after many weeks in which the spiritual was at the forefront of our lives. Indeed, the only distinguishing feature of this month is the fact that it is the only month on the Jewish calendar that does not have a single festival or special day.

In truth, however, the month of Cheshvan, by virtue of its ordinariness, represents the very purpose of life on earth. For the Jew does not live only for the spiritual experiences of the festivals, merely tolerating the stretches of ordinary days and weeks in between; on the contrary-the holy days which dot our year exist for the sake of the so-called mundane days of our lives.

High and Low

G-d desired a dwelling place in the lower realms. With these words our sages describe the divine purpose in creation.

What are the lower realms? It is common to refer to the spiritual as higher than the material, and to the physical universe as the lowest of G-d's creations. But are these designations truly justified? After all, G-d not only created all spiritual and physical entities but also the very concepts of spirituality and physicality. He transcends both realms equally and, at the same time, is equally present in both, for His all-embracing truth knows no limit or categorization. So why should the spiritual be deemed loftier than the physical?

To understand why the physical is indeed lower than the spiritual, we must first examine the meaning of the term *olam*, the Hebrew word for world. *Olam* means concealment. A world is a framework or context within which things exist; and in order for anything to exist, a concealment must first take place.

The reason for this is that the basic (and only) law of existence is that there is none else besides Him-that G-d is the only true existence and that nothing exists outside of His all-pervading reality. In order for anything else to possess even the slightest semblance of somethingness or selfhood, this truth must be veiled and obscured. Hence G-d's creation of worlds-concealments within which things may exist distinct and apart (at least in their own conception) from the all-nullifying reality of G-d.

G-d created both higher spiritual creations and lower physical ones. The difference between them lies not in their essential closeness to or separateness from G-d, but in the degree of the concealment their worlds provide. A lesser concealment may allow for things to exist, but these existences will be conscious of their Creator and utterly subservient to Him, acknowledging their total dependence upon Him. In this there are many gradations and degrees-the greater the concealment in any given world, the more of a self the creations of that world will possess.

In this sense, the physical world is the lowest world of all. So great is the physical worlds concealment of

SEASONS OF THE SOUL

The Last Jew

G-dliness, that the selfhood of its inhabitants is absolute: by nature, the physical object or creature strives only for its own preservation and advancement, regarding its own existence as the axis around which all else revolves. The world of the physical not only dims its divine source but obscures it entirely, even allowing for creations that deny their own origin and essence.

The Dwelling

It is this lowest of worlds that is the focus of G-d's creation. G-d wished to create an environment in which His reality is almost entirely concealed, an environment so distant from its source in Him that it can even contain evil-elements which resist and deny His all-pervading truth, despite the fact that they are utterly dependent upon Him for their vitality and existence. And in this lowly realm He desired that we construct for Him a dwelling: a place in which He is at home, an environment in which He is openly and uninhibitedly Himself.

So He designed us as material creatures whose very survival demands a great deal of interaction with the physical reality. And He gave us the ability to direct our material lives to serve a G-dly ideal. Every time we use the yield of our field or business to help the needy, every time we utilize our workday involvements as the means by which to carry out the Creator's will, we are vanquishing the self-centeredness which so dominates the nature of the material world. We are vanquishing the I am of the physical, thereby transforming its very essence: instead of being the world that most obscures the reality of G-d, it now becomes a home for Him-an environment that expresses and reveals how truly all-pervading His reality is.

Thus, the physical aspects of our existence are the *primary* vehicle for the fulfillment of our life's purpose. The spiritual in ourselves and in creation was created only in order to assist us in the realization of this goal-to inspire and direct us in our interactions with the physical. So one who shuns involvement with the material world and pursues only spiritual and transcendent endeavors is abandoning his primary mission in life.

The same applies to the spiritual and material areas of time. The festivals of Tishrei-as all special dates and events of the Jewish calendar-are for the sake of the Cheshvan days of our lives. These spiritual days exist in order to supply us with fortitude and direction so that we may make proper and optimal use of the ordinary days of the year-the days in which we interact with the physical reality, each in his own occupation and field of endeavor.

The Trek to the Euphrates

There does seem, however, to be one breach in the ordinariness of Cheshvan: On the seventh day of Cheshvan, says the Talmud, fifteen days after the conclusion of the festival [of Sukkot], one begins to pray for rain. This is to allow the very last Jew to reach the Euphrates River. (To this day, Jews living in the Land of Israel add the prayer for rain to their daily prayers beginning on the 7th of Cheshvan.)

But upon closer examination, the specialty of this day only further underscores the preeminence of the ordinary in the Jew's life.

For the duration of the festival of Sukkot, the Jew left his field and field-related concerns behind and came to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where the miraculous was the norm and the divine presence was openly perceived. But then began his journey back home-home to his homestead, home to his mission and purpose. For some it was a journey of several hours, for others, of several days, and for the last Jew farming his land on the most distant frontier of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, it was a fifteen-day journey to the Euphrates. On the 7th of Cheshvan, when every last Jew was home on his own land, the entire community of Israel began to pray for rain, beseeching G-d to bless their efforts to work the earth and the earthiness of the world into an abode for His presence.

On a deeper level, the last Jew is the most distant Jew in the spiritual sense-the one whose occupation is the most material of all. Yet all Jews, including those whose missions in life have placed them but a stones throw from Jerusalem, cannot pray for rain until the lowliest of pilgrims has reached home. For without this last Jew, their work is incomplete; it is he, more than any other, who represents what life is all about.

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, www.therebbe.org; adapted by Yanki Tauber, editor@chabadonline.com

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Noach

Genesis 6:9-11:32
Torah Reading for Week of October 6-12, 2002

G-d instructs **Noah** — the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption — to build a large wooden *teivah* ("**ark**"), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the **water**, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species.

Rain falls for **40 days** and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat, and from its **window** Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of **doves**, "to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth." When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the *teivah* and repopulate the **earth**.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the **rainbow** as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah on the sacredness of life: **murder** is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the **meat** of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes **drunk** on its produce. Two of Noah's sons, **Shem** and **Japeth**, are blessed for covering up their father's nakedness, while his third son, **Ham**, is cursed for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendents of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great **tower** to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their **language** so that "one does not comprehend the tongue of the other," causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into **seventy nations**.

The Parshah of Noach concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later **Abraham**), and the latter's journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the **Land of Canaan**.

PARSHAH SUMMARY & COMMENTARY

Noach

Genesis 6:9-11:32
Torah Reading for Week of October 6-12, 2002

Noah—the only righteous man in a corrupted world—is told by G-d: "The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence." Therefore,

> *Make yourself an ark of gofer wood, and make rooms in the ark; and you shall pitch it within and without with pitch.*
>
> *And this is the fashion of which you shall make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shall you make for the ark, and to a cubit shall you taper it on top, and the door of the ark shall you set in its side; with lower, second, and third stories shall you make it.*
>
> *Behold, I will bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; every thing that is on the earth shall die. But with you will I establish My covenant; and you shall come into the ark, you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*

Noah is also commanded to bring into the ark two members of each animal species—a male and a female (seven members of all "pure" or kosher species), as well as food for himself, his family and the animals..

The Flood

> *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken open, and the windows of heaven were opened.*
>
> *And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty*

Commentary

NOAH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN, PERFECT IN HIS GENERATIONS (GENESIS 6:9)

Among our sages, there are those who interpret this as being in praise of Noah: If he was righteous in his generation then certainly he would have been even more righteous if he would have been in a generation of righteous people. And there are those who interpret this as a condemnation: in relation to his generation he was righteous, but had he been in Abraham's generation, he wouldn't have been regarded as anything

(Rashi)

AND G-D SAID TO NOAH: "THE END OF ALL FLESH IS COME BEFORE ME, FOR THE EARTH IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE THROUGH THEM" (6:13)

Why was the generation of the Flood utterly destroyed, but not the generation of the Tower? Because the generation of the Flood were consumed by robbery and violence, while amongst the generation of the Tower love prevailed.

(Midrash Rabbah)

AND G-D SAID TO NOAH… MAKE YOURSELF AN ARK (6:13-14)

G-d has many ways to save someone—why did he make Noah toil to build the ark? In order that the people of his generation should see him occupied with the task for 120 years, and they should ask him, "Why are you doing this?" and he would tell them that G-d is bringing a flood upon the world. Perhaps, this would cause them to repent..

(Rashi; Midrash Tanchuma)

When G-d said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before Me," Noah said: "what will You do with me?" But he did not pray for mercy for the world, as Abraham would pray for the city of Sodom.. This is why the Flood is called "the waters of Noah" (Isaiah 54:9)—he is culpable for them, because he did not appeal for mercy on the world's behalf..

(Zohar)

Noah tried to save his generation by calling on them to repent. But the fact that he did not pray for them implies that, ultimately, it did not matter to him what became of them. Had he truly cared, he would not have sufficed with "doing his best" but would have implored the Almighty to repeal His decree of destruction—just as a person who's own life is in danger would never say, "Well, I did my best to save myself," and leave it at that, but would beseech G-d to help him.

In other words, Noah's involvement with others was limited to his sense of what *he* ought to do for them, as opposed to a true concern for their well-being. He understood the necessity to act for the sake of another, recognizing that to fail to do so is a defect in one's own character; but he fell short of transcending the self to care for others beyond the consideration of his own righteousness.

This also explains a curious aspect of Noah's efforts to reach out to his generation. When the Flood came, Noah and his family entered the ark—alone. His 120-year campaign yielded not a single *baal teshuvah* (repentant)! Perhaps public relations was never Noah's strong point, but how are we to explain the fact that, in all this time, he failed to win over a single individual?

But in order to influence others, one's motives must be pure; in the words of our sages, "Words that come from the heart, enter the heart." Deep down, a person will always sense whether you truly have his interests at heart or you're filling a need of your own by seeking to change him. If your work to enlighten your fellow stems from a desire to "do the right thing" but without really caring about the result, your call will be met with scant response. The echo of personal motive, be it the most laudable of personal motives, will be sensed, if only subconsciously, by the object of your efforts, and will ultimately put him off.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

PARSHAH SUMMARY & COMMENTARY

Noach

Genesis 6:9-11:32
Torah Reading for Week of October 6-12, 2002

> *nights… and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was raised above the earth…And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains, that were under the whole heaven, were covered…*
>
> *And all flesh perished that moved upon the earth… there remained only Noah, and they that were with him in the ark.*

The Flood lasted a full solar year —365 days. The 40 days of rain were followed by 150 days in which the water swelled and churned, after which "G-d remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and G-d made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters were assuaged" and began to subside. Sixteen days later the ark to rest upon "the mountains of Ararat," but it took another 44 days for the mountain peaks to become visible..

Noah waited another 40 days, and then, opening the ark's window, he sent a raven from the ark, to test the conditions in flooded world outside. The raven proved uncooperative, so, a week later, Noah sent a dove. The dove retuned, finding no rest for her feet; so Noah waited another seven days. This time,

> *The dove came in to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; and Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.*

When Noah dispatches the dove a third time seven days later, it does not return to the ark at all. Still Noah remain in the ark. On "the first day of the fist month"—307 days after the rains began—the water has completely drained, and Noah removes the covering of the ark; but it takes another 57 days for the surface of the earth to dry completely. Finally, on the 27th day of second month, comes the Divine command:

> *And G-d spoke to Noah, saying: "Go out of the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. Every living thing that is with you, of all flesh, both of birds, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—bring out with you; that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.'"*

The Vow

Commentary

AND G-D SAID TO NOAH… COME INTO THE ARK (7:1)

The Hebrew word for ark, *teivah*, also means "word". "Come into the word", says G-d, enter within the words of prayer and Torah study. Here you will find a sanctuary of wisdom, meaning and holiness amidst the raging floodwaters of life.

(Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov)

IN THE SIX HUNDREDTH YEAR OF NOAH'S LIFE… ALL THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP BROKE OPEN, AND THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN WERE OPENED (7:11)

[This alludes that] in the sixth century of the sixth millennium [from creation—1740-1840 in the secular calendar], the gates of supernal wisdom will be opened, as will the springs of earthly wisdom, preparing the world to be elevated in the seventh millennium.

(Zohar)

The chronology of events, as indicated by the dates and time periods given in the Torah's account and calculated by Rashi, was as follows:

Cheshvan 17: Noah enters ark; rains begin.

Kislev 27: Forty days of rain end; begin 150 days of water's swelling and churning, in which it reaches a height of 15 cubits above the mountain peaks.

Sivan 1: Water calms and begins to subside at the rate of one cubit each four days.

Sivan 17: The bottom of ark, submerged 11 cubits beneath the surface, touches down on the top of Mount Ararat.

Av 1: The mountain peaks break the water's surface.

Elul 10: Noah open the ark's window and dispatches the Raven.

Elul 17: Noah sends the dove for the first time.

Elul 23: The dove is sent a second time, and returns with an olive branch in its beak.

Tishrei 1: Dove's third mission. Water completely drained.

Cheshvan 27: Ground fully dried. Noah exits ark.

Total time in ark: 365 days (one solar year; one year and 11 days on the lunar calendar)

AND G-D SPOKE TO NOAH, SAYING: "GO OUT OF THE ARK..." (8:16)

This, too, is a Divine command. G-d commands us to "enter into the ark," into the sanctums of spirituality we are to create in the material world. But then we must "Go out of the ark" to carry forth its sanctity to the ends of the earth.

(The Chassidic Masters)

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Noach

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Noah builds an altar and brings offerings "of every pure beast and of every pure bird" (of which he had been commanded to bring additional members into the ark).

> *And G-d smelled the sweet savor, and G-d said in his heart: I will not again curse the earth any more because of man, for the impulse of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.*

Never again, vows G-d, shall the patterns of nature be so disrupted:

> *For as long as the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

Man and Animal

G-d then blesses Noah and his son that they "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" and issues a number of instructions regarding the new world they are to build.

Man is given dominion over all life forms, and the fear of him is instilled in all animals. He is allowed to kill animals for food (Adam was only given license to eat plants), but is forbidden to eat meat or blood taken from an animal while it is still alive.

Human life is sacred, and murder is punishable by death—if a human court fails to punish the murderer, G-d himself will seek redress. "At the hand of every man's brother, will I demand the life of man. Who so sheds man's blood by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of G-d made He man."

Commentary

AND NOAH BUILT AN ALTAR TO G-D (8:20)

The location of the Altar [in the Holy Temple] is very exactly defined, and is never to be changed... It is a commonly-held tradition that the place where David and Solomon built the Altar on the threshing floor of Arona, is the very place where Abraham built an altar and bound Isaac upon it; this is where Noah built [an altar] when he came out from the ark; this is where Cain and Abel brought their offerings; this is where Adam the First Man offered a *korban* when he was created—and it is from [the earth of] this place that he was created. Thus the Sages have said: Man was formed from the place of his atonement.

(Maimonides)

I WILL DEMAND THE LIFE OF MAN... FOR IN THE IMAGE OF G-D MADE HE MAN (9:5-6)

How were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one tablet and five on a second tablet. This means that "Do not murder" corresponds to "I am G-d your G-d." The Torah is telling us that one who sheds blood it is as if he has reduced the image of the King.

What is this analogous to? To a king of flesh and blood who entered a country and put up portraits of himself, and made statues of himself, and minted coins with his image. After a while, the people of the country overturned his portraits, broke his statues and invalidated his coins, thereby reducing the image of the king. So, too, one who sheds blood reduces the image of the King, as it is written (Genesis 9:6): "One who spills a man's blood... for in the images of G-d He made man."

(Mechilta)

AND NOAH BEGAN TO BE A MAN OF THE EARTH, AND HE PLANTED A VINEYARD (9:20)

When Noah took to planting, Satan came and stood before him and said to him: "What are you planting?" Said he: "A vineyard." Said Satan to him: "What is its nature?" Said he: "Its fruits are sweet, whether moist or dry, and one makes from them wine which brings joy to the heart." Said Satan to Noah: "Do you desire that we should plant it together, you and I?" Said Noah: "Yes."

What did Satan do? He brought a lamb and slaughtered it over the vine; then he brought a lion, and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a monkey, and slaughtered it over it; then he brought a swine, and slaughtered it over it; and he watered the vine with their blood. Thus he alluded to Noah: When a person drinks one cup, he is like a lamb, modest and meek. When drinks two cups, he becomes mighty as a lion and begins to speak with pride, saying: Who compares with me! As soon as he drinks three or four cups he becomes a monkey, dancing and frolicking and profaning his mouth, and knowing not what he does. When he becomes drunk, he becomes a pig, dirtied by mud and wallowing in filth.

(Midrash Tanchuma)

HAM SAW THE NAKEDNESS OF THEIR FATHER, AND TOLD HIS TWO BROTHERS OUTSIDE. AND SHEM AND JAPHETH TOOK THE GARMENT... AND COVERED THE NAKEDNESS OF THEIR FATHER… AND THEY SAW NOT THEIR FATHER'S SHAME (9:22-23)

One of the cornerstones of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov's teaching is the doctrine of *Hashgachah Peratit*, "specific Divine providence." *Hashgachah Peratit* means that nothing is by chance—every event in a person's life is purposeful, an integral part of his Divinely ordained mission in life.

From this principle arises another of the Baal Shem Tov's famous teachings. "Your fellow is your mirror," the Besht would say to his disciples. "If your own face is clean, the image you perceive will also be flawless. But should you look upon your fellow man and see a blemish, it is your own imperfection that you are encountering—-you are being shown what it is that you must correct within yourself." Otherwise, to what purpose would G-d cause you to see your fellow's degradation?

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Noach

Genesis 6:9-11:32
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The Covenant

And G-d spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying:

"Behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you… from all that came out of the ark… That never shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth."

And G-d said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you… I have set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth…the rainbow shall be in the cloud. I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between G-d and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

The First Drunk

Noah began to be a man of the earth, and he planted a vineyard.

And he drank of the wine, and was drunk; and he was uncovered within his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

Commentary

One may ask: Perhaps I am being shown my fellow's deficiency not as a message concerning my own state, but so that I may assist him in its correction?

To answer this question, we must first take a closer look at the principle of "particular Divine providence." *Particular* Divine providence means that not only is every event purposeful, but also its every aspect and nuance.

For example, the same event can imply different things to different observers, depending on how much they know about the people involved and events that led up to it. Divine providence is "particular" in that it shows each observer precisely what is applicable to him. If you witness an event, everything about it, including the particular way in which it has affected you, serves a purpose crucial to your mission in life.

When you are confronted with a fellow's deficiency, there are two distinct elements in your awareness: a) the fact of that person's wrongdoing; b) his guilt, culpability and decadence. The former does not necessarily imply the latter: you may be aware of the fact that a fellow has done wrong, yet such knowledge can be accompanied with understanding, compassion and vindication.

In order to correct your fellow's wrongdoing, it is enough to know that the action is wrong. To also sense his guilt and lowliness is completely unnecessary; on the contrary, it only hinders your ability to reach out to him in a loving and tolerant manner. The only possible purpose that can serve is to impress upon you how despicable that thing—or something similar to it, if only in a most subtle way—is in yourself, and thereby compel you to correct it.

This is what the Torah is telling us when it says, "and they saw not their father's shame." Not only did Shem and Japheth not physically see their father's shameful state— this we already know from the (twice-repeated) fact that they turned "their faces were backward"—they also did not perceive his guilt or disgrace. Unlike Ham, whose own debasement was reflected in his vision of his father's, their entire reaction to their knowledge of what had transpired lay in what they must now do to correct it. The e *shame* of their father, however, they simply did not see.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

AND THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER: "...LET US BUILD FOR OURSELVES A CITY AND A TOWER WHOSE TOP SHALL REACH THE HEAVENS; AND WE SHALL MAKE FOR OURSELVES A NAME (11:4)

What was their sin? Their motives for building a city with a tower "whose top shall reach the heavens" seem quite understandable. Mankind was only just reconstructing itself after the Flood that had wiped out the entire human race save for Noah and his family. If fledgling humanity was to survive, unity and cooperation were of critical importance. So they set out to build a common city to knit them into a single community. At its heart, they planned a tower which would be visible for miles, a landmark to beckon to those who had strayed from the city and a monument to inspire commitment to their common goal—survival. All they wanted was to "make for ourselves a name"—to ensure the continuity of the human race..

And yet, their project to preserve humanity deteriorated into a rejection of all that humanity stands for and an open rebellion against their Creator and purpose. Their quest for unity resulted in the breakup of mankind into clans and factions and the onset of close to four thousand years of misunderstanding, xenophobia and bloodletting across the divisions of race, language and culture. Where did they go wrong?

But precisely that was their error: they saw survival as an end in itself. "Let us make a name for ourselves," they said; let us ensure that there will be future generations who will read of us in their history books. But *why* survive? For what purpose should humanity inhabit the earth? What is the *content* of the name and legacy they are laboring to preserve? Of this they said, thought, and did nothing. To them, life itself was an ideal, survival itself a virtue.

This was the beginning of the end. No physical system will long tolerate a vacuum, and this is true of spiritual realities as well: unless a soul or cause is filled with positive content, corruption will ultimately seep in. A hollow name and shrine soon becomes a tower of Babel.

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Noach

Genesis 6:9-11:32
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And Shem and Japheth took the garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's shame.

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. And he said: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be G-d, G-d of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. G-d shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

The Dispersion

The Torah now lists the seventy nations that formed when the descendents of Shem, Ham and Japheth (Noah's three sons) dispersed across the earth. It then tells the story of how this dispersion came about.

At first, the descendents of Noah formed a single community, sharing "one language and mutual words." Migrating westward, they settled in the valley of Shin'ar (Babylon).

And they said: "Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And G-d came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men were building.

And G-d said: "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be withheld from them, which they have schemed to do. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So G-d scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth: and they ceased to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because G-d did there confound (balal) the language of all the earth, and from thence did G-d scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Abram's First Years

Noah's son, Shem, had a son named Achparshad. Achparshad fathered Shelach; Shelach's son was Eber (one of the sources of the appellation "Hebrew); Eber fathered Peleg ("division"—it was in the year of Peleg's death that the division of humanity into nations occurred in wake of the sin of the Tower); Peleg's son was Reu; Reu's son was Serug; Serug begot Nachor; and Nachor was the father of Terah.

Terah had three sons: Haran, who died in his father's lifetime, Nachor, and Abram. Haran had a son, Lot, and two daughter: Milkah, who became the wife of her uncle Nachor, and Sarai (also called Yiskah), who also wed a younger brother of her father's, Abraham. Sarai was barren, having no children.

The Parshah of Noach concludes by telling how the entire family set out from their hometown, Ur Casdim, to journey to the Land of Canaan. They stopped, however, at Charan, where Terah dies at the age of 205.

Commentary

Never has the lesson of the Tower of Babel been more pertinent to our people than it is today. We, too, are a generation struggling to recoup after a holocaust of destruction that threatened to erase us from the face of the earth. Reconstruction and survival are uppermost in our minds, and together, with G-d's help, we are succeeding.

At a time like this, it is extremely important that we not repeat the error of the builders of Babel. Rebuild we must, but the objective must be more than a more enduring name, a greater city, a taller tower. If we are to survive, we must give import to our survival, reiterate the "why" of our existence. We must fill our name with value, our city with significance, and crown the tower of our resurgence with the higher purpose for which we were created.

(Based on an address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1959)

AND G-D DESCENDED TO SEE THE CITY AND THE TOWER WHICH THE SONS OF MAN HAD BUILT (11:5)

Obviously, G-d did not need to "come down" in order to see their crime; but He wished to teach all future judges that one must not judge the accused until they see and appreciate.

(Rashi)

PARSHAH SUMMARY & COMMENTARY

FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, www.therebbe.org; adapted by Yanki Tauber, editor@chabadonline.com

THE MEMORY OF WATER

Your earliest self-knowledge is of a being immersed in water.

You were one with your environment: you were mother and mother was you, you were the universe and the universe was yourself. There was no I, she, it or that, for all being was one.

Then came the day when you were thrust out from the enveloping waters. Distinctiveness and identity were conferred upon you, and your oneness with your source became a vestige of a memory. You now revel in your apartness, your ego a shield, wresting sustenance and purpose from an environment that is distinct of yourself and which you share and compete over with like-armored others.

But the memory remains. And when the strangeness of your world becomes too much to bear, and the loneliness of your battle too heavy to carry, you seek solace in your watery past. The memory of the womb comforts you, reassuring you that you are not truly alone, that underneath it all you are one with the universe, with your creator.

On the face of it, the Torah's account of Noah's Flood tells the tragic tale of a corrupt generation eradicated from the face of the earth. But an axiom of Chassidic teaching — particularly as expressed in the writings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe — is that every word of Torah, at its core, is a gem of unadulterated goodness. Our world is a place where negativity and even outright evil may occur, and the Torah, which addresses and describes our world, reflects this. But as our Sages tell us, the Torah precedes the world, precedes creation; in its quintessential state, the Torah's every story and law has a positive meaning.

In essence, Noah's Flood is the earth's immersion in the *mikvah* of divine knowledge, in the womb of primordial oneness. And though the earth eventually emerged from the Flood's waters, the memory remains in its soil and stones, in its trees and clouds, and in every living being that crawls or walks upon it. Never is our world too distant, too apart, too alienated, to draw on this memory of total submersion within the all-embracing totality of its Creator.

THE RAINBOW

And G-d spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "... This shall be the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all generations.

My rainbow I have set in the cloud.... When the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud, I shall remember My covenant.... Never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh."

Genesis 9:8-15

The rainbow, of course, is a natural phenomenon. Rays of sunlight pass through water droplets suspended in the atmosphere; the clear, crystal-like droplets refract the light, unleashing the spectrum of colors it contains and displaying them in an arc across the misty skies.

Yet before the Flood, this natural occurrence did not occur. There was something about the interaction between the moisture in the earth's atmosphere and the light emanating from the sun that failed to produce a rainbow. It was only after the Flood that the dynamics that create a rainbow were set in place by the Creator as a sign of His newly-formed covenant with His creation.

The spiritual and the physical are two faces of the same reality. This change in the physical nature of the interaction between water and light reflects a deeper, spiritual difference between the pre- and post-Flood worlds, and the resultant difference in G-d's manner of dealing with a corrupted world.

Contrary Differences

An examination of the Torah's account of the first twenty generations of history reveals two primary differences between the world before the Flood and the post-Flood era.

The pre-Flood generations enjoyed long lives-we find people living into their 8th, 9th and 10th centuries (Noah's grandfather, Methuselah, lived 969 years; his father, Lemech, 777 years; Noah himself, 950 years). The Zohar explains that this was an era of divine benevolence, in which life, health and prosperity flowed freely and indiscriminately from Above.

Following the Flood, we see a steady decline in the

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FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

human lifespan. Within ten generations, Abraham is "old" at the age of 100.

The second difference is one that seems at odds with, and even contradictory to, the first: after the Flood, the world gained a stability and permanence it did not enjoy in the pre-Flood era. Before the Flood, the world's very existence was contingent upon its moral state. When humanity disintegrated into corruption and violence, G-d said to Noah:

The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I shall destroy them and the earth.

Following the Flood, G-d vowed:

I will not again curse the earth because of man.... neither will I again smite everything living, as I have done. For all days of the earth, [the seasons for] seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

No longer would the cycles of life and nature totter on the verge of extinction whenever man strays from his G-d. The post-Flood world is a world whose existence is assured, a world that is desired by its Creator regardless of its present state of conformity to His will.

And the guarantor of this assurance, the symbol of this new stability, is the rainbow.

An Opaque World

Before the Flood, man's role in creation lay primarily in *reacting* to G-d's involvement in the world. The flow of divine vitality into the world was plentiful and uninhibited, enabling man to attain great material and spiritual heights; but these achievements were merely man's acceptance of what was being bestowed upon him from Above, rather than the fruits of his own initiative.

The pre-Flood world was like a brilliant pupil who grasps the most profound teachings of his master, but who lacks the ability to conceive of a single original thought of his own. So once corrupted-once it had distanced itself from its Master and disavowed its relationship with Him-it lost the basis for its existence. When man ceased to respond, the world held no further use for the Creator.

After the Flood, G-d imbued the world with a new potential-the potential to create. He granted it the ability to take what it receives from Above and develop it, extend it, and expand upon it. The world was now like a disciple who had been trained by his master to think on his own, to take the ideas which he learns and apply them to new areas. Man was now able not only to absorb the divine input into his life but also to unleash its potential in new, unprecedented ways.

Such a world is in many ways a "weaker" world than one that is wholly sustained by divine grace. It is more independent, and thus more subject to the limitations and mortality of the human state. Hence the shorter lifespan of the post-Flood generations. But in the final analysis, such a world is more enduring: even when it loses sight of its origin and purpose, it retains the ability to rehabilitate itself and restore its relationship with its Creator. Because it possesses an independent potential for self-renewal, it can always reawaken this potential, even after it has been suppressed and lain dormant for generations.

Rising Mist

The rainbow is the natural event that exemplifies the new post-Flood order. Moisture rises from the earth to form clouds and raindrops, which catch the light of the sun. A less refined substance would merely absorb the light; but the purity and translucency of these droplets allows them to focus and channel the rays they capture in such a way that reveals the many colors implicit within each ray of sunlight.

The pre-Flood world lacked the rainbow. There was nothing in or about it that could rise from below to interact with and develop what it received from Above. Such was its spiritual nature; as a result, the conditions for a physical rainbow also failed to develop-the mist it raised could only absorb, but not refract, the light of the sun.

Lacking a creative potential of its own, the pre-Flood world was left without reason and right for existence when it ceased to receive the divine effluence from Above. Then came the Flood. The rains that destroyed a corrupted world also cleansed it and purified it, leaving in their wake a new world with a new nature: a world that rises to meet and transform what is bestowed upon it; a world with the "translucency" and refinement to develop the gifts it receives into new, unprecedented vistas of color and light.

When this world goes astray, G-d sees its rainbow, and the sight causes Him to desist from destroying it. For the rainbow attests to the world's new maturity-its ability to ultimately rise above its present lapse and rebuild its relationship with its Creator.

Based on an address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sunday Tishrei 30 - October 6

Rosh Chodesh

Laws & Customs: **Rosh Chodesh observances**

Today is the first of the two Rosh Chodesh ("Head of the Month") days for the month of Cheshvan.

(When a month has 30 days, both the last day of the month and the first day of the following month serve as the following month's Rosh Chodesh).

Special portions are added to the daily prayers: Hallel (Psalms 113-118) is recited -- in its "partial" form -- following the Shacharit morning prayer, and the Yaaleh V'yavo prayer is added to the Amidah and to Grace After Meals; the additional Musaf prayer is said. Tachnun (confession of sins) and similar prayers are omitted.

Many have the custom to mark Rosh Chodesh with a festive meal and reduced work activity. The latter custom is prevalent amongst women, who have a special affinity with Rosh Chodesh -- the month being the feminine aspect of the Jewish Calendar.

Links: The 29th Day

http://chabad.org/article.asp?aid=2764

The Lunar Files
http://chabad.org/article.asp?aid=1209

Monday Cheshvan 1 - October 7

Rosh Chodesh

Laws & Customs: **Rosh Chodesh observances** [see text and links for Tishrei 30

1st day of the Jewish month of Cheshvan

The month of Cheshvan is also called Mar-Cheshvan. Mar means "bitter" -- an allusion to the fact that the month contains no festive days; it also means "water", alluding to the month's special connection with rains (the Seventh of Cheshvan is the day on which Jews we begin praying for rain (in the Holy Land), and the Great Flood, which we read about in this week's Torah reading, began on Cheshvan 17th).

Links: The Last Jew *http://chabad.org/article.asp?aid=60358*

Wednesday, Cheshvan 3- October 9

On This Date: **Passing of R. Israel of Ruzhyn (1850)**

The 3rd of Cheshvan is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of the famed Chassidic master Rabbi Israel of Ruzhyn (1797-1850), known as "The Holy Ruzhyner." Rabbi Israel was a great-grandson of Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch; a close friendship existed between the Ruzhyner and the 3rd Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch.

Links: Forty Days and Forty Nights
http://www.chabad.org/article.asp?aid=1295

Friday, Cheshvan 5- October 11

Light Shabbat & Festival Candles before sunset

Shabbat, Cheshvan 6 - October 12

Torah reading: *Noach (Genesis 6:9-11:32)*

Haftorah: *Rani Akara (Isaiah 54-56).*