



Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



TIFERET UPDATES

This Week in Tiferet

Tikun Leil Hoshana Raba – On Hoshana Raba night, Tiferet students, parents and alumnae were inspired by shiurim and a kumsitz in honor of this special evening. We are especially pleased that so many of our alumnae came – including **Tzipporah (Zimmer) Kaffash (5766)**, **Racheli Simon (5769)**, **Jamie Rohr (5770)** and **Gavriella Goldrich (5771)**! It was great to see you all again!

A Watery Start – We started the zman on Sunday with a tiyul to Ein Gedi and Yam Hamelach, led by the legendary Tzvi Sperber. As always, this was an inspirational and fun tivil together!

תורת תפארת

Changing Men

Mrs. Sarah Leah Haber (slhaber1@yahoo.com)

Parashat Noach

In this week's *Parsha*, Noach is introduced to us as "*Ish Tzaddik*" (*Noach* 6:9), a righteous man. He exits the *Parsha* as an "*Ish Ha'Adama*" (9:20), a man of the earth, or an earthy man, the title by which he is called before he falls into a drunken stupor after planting a vineyard and producing wine. *B'raishit Rabba* (36:3) contrasts Noach with Moshe who, in the beginning of his life, is referred to as "*Ish Mitzri*" (*Sh'mos* 2:19) and exits before granting his final blessing to *K'lal Yisrael* as an "*Ish Elokim*" (*V'Zos HaBracha* 33:1), a man of G-d.

Meshech Chochma provides an insightful explanation of this *Midrash*. There are two ways to serve Hashem, he says. One is to separate oneself from all others and focus only on oneself. One who follows this method would spend time learning, meditating, analyzing his flaws and developing his personality as a Torah Jew. The other approach is to reach out to others and constantly look for opportunities to help the community. Logically it would seem that the person following the first lifestyle, would probably maximize his potential and become a greater person than the second individual who would sacrifice his personal development in his attempts to fulfill communal needs. Yet we see from Noach and Moshe that the opposite is true.

Noach, who did not reach out to others, and was isolated first in a *tevah* and then practically alone in the world for a while, did not sustain his righteousness throughout his life. He died, "an earthy man." Moshe, on the other hand, devoted his entire life to helping others and yet continued to grow spiritually. He sought out the plight of his brothers in Egypt, he risked his life to save a fellow Jew, he saved the daughters of Yisro from the shepherds, he constantly prayed for the salvation of B'nei Yisrael and he was willing to give up his own life rather than witness the destruction of his beloved nation.

Yet his religious growth was not hampered. He died a "man of G-d". Clearly, sustained religious growth is not solely due to one's effort at self-perfection. It is granted as a gift from Hashem largely in response to and in proportion with one's involvement with the needs of others. One can actually reach greater heights by taking away time from self-contemplation, study and efforts at perfection for the purpose of helping others.

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In the Face of Failure: Noach and Avraham Aveinu Michali Glasenberg (Tiferet 5772)

In Parshat Noach, we learn a lesson in responding to failure. Noach is a disputed character in Tanach. Some commentators praise Noach, saying that he was a tzadik despite the fact that he lived in a generation of evildoers, constantly surrounded by the wicked and, had he lived in another generation, he would have been even more righteous. Others take the approach that, compared to his generation, Noach was a tzadik, but had he lived in the time of Avraham Aveinu, he would not have been considered to be righteous.

Humans became corrupted and evil, and immorality filled the earth. Hashem told Noach that He was going to wipe out all the human beings, and Noach and his family alone would survive in an ark of gopher wood. Noach spent 120 years building the tevah and anticipating the destruction of the world. Not once, however, did he make any attempt to save his generation. The Zohar tells us that Noach, the greatest man on the face of the earth at the time, did not daven for the salvation of the world.

When the rain began to fall and Noach closed the tevah with his family and the animals inside, the Midrash (Sefer Haazinu 47) tells us that the entire world was suddenly in chaos, everyone crying out, trying to be saved. Only when their voices were finally drowned out by the water did Noach daven for mercy. But it was too late. The flood had already made its impact. The tzadik of the generation failed to save humanity.

When the flood ended and the ark opened, "Noach, man of the earth, debased himself and planted a vineyard" (Bereishit 9:20). According to Rashi, Noach abandoned his mission and purpose, and engaged in the "chulin," the mundane.

How did the Ish Tzadik end up losing his ambition and drive to do good? According to Abarbanel, Noach suffered from guilt. He was so upset at life because he did not succeed in saving his generation. He was so angry at the flood that he pledged never to drink water again, he would only drink wine. Noach wanted to numb himself to the tormenting pain of failure and, consequently, preoccupied himself with the mundane.

Noach's outlook after his lack of his success was negative. He lost his drive, ambition, and will to act righteously.

Avraham Aveinu also did not succeed. Hashem told him that He planned on wiping out the cities of Sdom and Ammorah. Unlike Noach, Avraham began to daven for mercy, for he cared so much about fellow human beings that he could not stand by and watch the destruction of whole populations. However, Avraham did not succeed. Hashem destroyed the cities. Rashi comments that in response, Avraham moved to the Negev. Since the cities were destroyed, there would be no reason for wayfarers to travel near the Dead Sea area and, therefore, Avraham picked up his belongings and looked for new opportunities for hospitality. Avraham's outlook after his failure was inspiringly positive. He sought new ways to continue to act righteously. Life is filled with opportunities to succeed and to fail, to win and to lose. When we do not succeed, how do we react? We could act like Noach, run ourselves into a corner and wallow in guilt. Then, without a doubt, we will have lost. Or we can respond like Avraham Aveinu and use that failure to grow and continue to strive to accomplish whatever mission we have here on earth. By learning from our mistakes and using our failure as a step to greater success, we have not really failed at all.



תורת תפארת (המשך)

The fact that Moshe is referred to as "*Ish Elokim*" precisely at the end of his life before he blessed the *B'nei Yisrael* is significant. Moshe was denied entry into the Holy Land he desired to enter his whole life ultimately because of the complaints of the Jewish People at *Mei M'riva*. This led to his sin for which his punishment was to die in the desert. Yet, Moshe, rather than holding a grudge against his nation, and rebuking them severely at the end of his life, blaming them for his misery, blesses them! This supreme act of *chessed*, focusing on *K'lal Yisrael's* future happiness and not his own sorrow earns him the title of *Ish Elokim*. Once again, we see that focusing on the needs of others at the expense of one's own needs, results in Divine recognition and appreciation.

Of course, some balance between one's personal spiritual needs and those of the community must be maintained. To achieve the right proportion, one needs Divine Guidance. May we all be zocheh to merit G-dly direction in that area so that we can truly follow the inspirational example of our leaders.