



TIFERET HASHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

Our students were excited to return to Tiferet this week, ready to jump back into learning after the Chagim. On Sunday though, we started with an amazing tiyul to the Yam Hamelach area. There we learned about the history of this region, both in Tanach and in modern times. We hiked and swam in the beautiful oasis of Ein Gedi, along the famous Nachal David trail. Our students were also privileged to daven Mincha at the remnants of a shul in Ein Gedi, over 1500 years old! Finally, we traveled to Yam Hamelach, where our students enjoyed its unique waters. This fun-filled and interesting tiyul got us ready to start the zman on the right foot. Our students are especially looking forward to our Shabbaton in Tzfat tomorrow – details and pictures next week!

תורת תפארת

Somewhere Over the Rainbow Skies Are Blue

**Rav Elie Mayer
Parashat Noach**

We live in a very negative and cynical society. Magazines publicize the worst dressed of each year and news outlets publish embarrassing moments in the lives of public figures. The fashion and entertainment industries champion unrealistic and unhealthy bodies resulting in only 4% of women having a positive body image. 19 out of every 20 comments that parents make to children are critical. It is no wonder that we are a society riddled with anxiety and a critical lack of self-esteem.

The Zohar teaches that Noach was a victim of the same cynical and negative society. The generation of the flood didn't believe that they were capable of righteousness and able to achieve levels of greatness. Rav Shlomo Carlebach teaches that it was their low expectations of themselves that led them to live a life of immorality. Their sins were a result of a disbelief that they could be anything but sinful. They believed that they were a lost cause and didn't see in themselves anything redeeming. It was in this environment that Noach was raised.

Rav Meir Simcha of Lublin teaches that the reason that Noach wasn't successful in effecting a change was that Noach didn't believe his generation was capable of change. He didn't see anything redemptive in his community.

Noach was influenced by a society of negativity and misanthropy. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Zohar teaches that Noach may have believed in G-d but he didn't believe in himself. Not unlike his generation, Noach didn't see the good in himself. Since he didn't believe in himself, he didn't believe that he had the power to convince his peers to desist from their evil ways. That was the secret to his lack of success in persuading his peers to repent.

Had Noach believed in himself and been surrounded by those who supported him, maybe the destruction could have been averted and humanity spared. The Baal Shem Tov teaches that the worst sins come from not believing in your ability to be righteous. A lack of self-esteem often results in despair, which leads to a spiritual breakdown. If you can't be great then why bother trying? The story of Noach teaches us how important it is to ignore the negativity and cynicism of our surrounding, see the good in ourselves and believe that we have the potential for greatness. Many of my students despair because they have been taught to believe that their growth was not sustainable or that they did not have the ability to succeed.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov teaches in Likutei Moharan that the commandment to judge favorably applies also to oneself. You must "find the good that exists in you. This will give you the strength to avoid a complete fall into despair and indeed, recover your vitality and bring joy... Whenever a person falls in his estimation of himself, it may well be true that he sinned. But the fall itself and the consequent depression and sadness that overwhelm him, are nothing but the work of the Evil One. By searching in oneself at all times for good, it is possible to revive oneself and become happy again and then one will be able to pray and sing and give thanks to Hashem and return to Hashem with true sincerity."

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Attention Alumnae!

Save the date - Our annual alumnae Shabbaton in Stern College will be taking place on Shabbat, November 8th with Rav Elie Mayer.

Hope to see you there!

תורת תפארת (המשך)

In this vein, Rav Soloveitchik explains why Hashem specifically chose the rainbow as a sign. The Rav explains that Noach was so negative and only saw the dark clouds, the people's sins but not the light that encounters a tiny raindrop to make a rainbow. Noach and those who do not see the good and believe in themselves needed to be reminded of the message of the rainbow: there is good and potential in every person - no matter how far they may have strayed.

As the rainy season begins and the rainbow appears, may Hashem imbue us with the recognition of our own goodness, Godliness and lofty potential as well as that of our fellow Jew.

Shabbat Shalom.

It's Not Just a Numbers Game Miriam Gutstein (5773, 5774)

At the end of Parshat Bereishit, we read the names of the ten generations from Adam to Noach. The Torah lists the person, the age at the time his son was born, how long he lived after the birth, the total number of years he lived, and his death. At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Parshat Noach, the Torah lists the names of the ten generations from Noach until Avraham. Here is listed the person, his age at the time his son was born, and how long he lived after his son's birth. The Torah does not relate to us the total number of years that each person lived, or that he died. This is an abrupt change in style. Why does the style change? Why not provide the same detail in Parshat Noach?

The Malbim explains that the people listed in the twenty generations from Adam until Avraham were the leaders of each generation, but there was a major difference between the first ten generations and the second ten.

The leaders of the first ten generations were righteous. Enoch, Metushelach, Enosh... They tried to positively influence and help those around them. Although the leaders were not always successful on uplifting society as a whole, their efforts did help strengthen individual character. The Torah spends a significant amount of time on each leader because all the years' of their lives made a difference in the world. The impact of their lives, as well as death, was felt by others. The Torah is not a history book: It focuses on the lives of the tzadikim so that we can learn from them.

The leaders of the next ten generations were not righteous. For the most part, they did not seek to help those around them and improve civilization. They were selfish and only sought to satisfy their own needs. Their lives as well as deaths made no impact on the world. Therefore, the Torah has little to say about them.

This week, there is a global effort called the Shabbos Project, which strives to have the world-wide Jewish community all keep one full Shabbat together. Communities around the world are inviting Jews of all walks of life into their homes and shuls. Color, shape, or size does not matter. Everyone is invited. Shabbat is central to the continued vitality of the Jewish people. By inviting fellow Jews into our homes to keep the shabbat, we can be like the first ten generations from Adam until Noach. We can have a profound influence on the world one person at a time, even if it cannot be seen immediately. Or we can choose to be like the second ten generations, from Noach until Avraham. We can decide to have a nice, quiet Shabbat in our homes and ignore our brothers and sisters who so desperately need the Shabbat.

Will we be like the first ten generations or the second? Will we seek to help our neighbors, our friends and our world? Will we strive to make a difference in the world? The choice is ours.