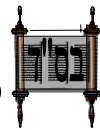




Kinder Torah



Dedicated in Loving Memory of Ralph and Anita Siegel ob"m.

Tower of Emunah

"Can you help me with my homework, Abba?"

"Certainly, Avi."

"We have to give three examples of Noach's *emunah* in Hashem."

"Just three?"

"Are there more?"

"One could write an entire book about Noach's *emunah* in Hashem. He was a Tower of *Emunah*."

"That sounds fascinating, Abba."

"Noach lived through the biggest disaster in history. His eyes saw the destruction of the entire world. Living through such a tragedy would break the spirit of most people. Noach, however, kept his *emunah* in Hashem."

"How?"

"Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch points out that the Torah goes into great detail about the size and construction materials of the ark. Why? There were many ways for Hashem to save Noach, his family, and the animals. He chose this way, and commanded Noach to build this ark. Noach had 120 years to build. He could have built a bigger ark. The Ramban explains that according to the laws of nature, even ten arks could not have held all of the animals! Yet, Noach followed the Word of Hashem and built the ark to His exact specifications. As the verse states, 'And Noach did everything that Hashem commanded him, so he did' (Bereshis 6:22). That is *emunah*."

"Fantastic, Abba."

"Noach and his sons did not rest for a minute during the year that they were in the ark. They were busy all the time caring for the needs of the animals. Every creature received the proper food at the right time. This superhuman effort to preserve Hashem's creations is a second example of Noach's *emunah*."

"Amazing."

"Finally the flood ended. Hashem told Noach and his family to leave the ark. The first thing that Noach did was build a *mizbeach* (altar). He slaughtered ten of each of the *tahor* (pure) animals and brought them up as a burnt offering on the *mizbeach*."

"Really? After working so hard for a whole year keeping those animals alive, the first thing that he did was kill them?"

"Brilliant, Avi. Rav Hirsch asks the same question. The Medrash explains that Noach followed Hashem's will. Hashem commanded him to bring extra of each *tahor* animal into the ark (seven instead

of two). Noach understood that these additional animals were destined to become *korbonos*, and so he followed the Divine Will, built a *mizbeach*, and sacrificed them. Rav Hirsch relates that this *mizbeach* and these *korbonos* were a monumental historical event. They sanctified the whole world to Hashem. He was pleased with Noach's *emunah*, as the verse states, 'And Hashem smelled the pleasing aroma' (Bereshis 8:21). This was not a physical smell, rather a spiritual satisfaction, coming from seeing His creations perform His Will."

"Noach's *emunah* really was remarkable."

"It certainly was, Avi. May he be an example for all of us."

Kinderlach . . .

We begin the Torah anew at the beginning of each year. We started the year on a good note, reached a level of inspiration during the Yomim Noraim and Succos. Now we enter the winter months, with their inevitable trials and tribulations, testing our emunah. Let us keep the image of Noach with us. Let his emunah inspire us to stay close to Hashem. May we all have a productive winter, serving Hashem with emunah shelayma.



A Strong Chain

The wine was strong, as Noach had suspected. Blessing had returned to the earth after the flood. Now Noach would work the land to bring forth its fruits. It was only fitting that the first fruit planted be the choicest of all, the grape. One can only imagine Noach's elation with the first cup of wine from his grapevine. He would be drunk with happiness alone, from tasting the first fruits of the land. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains that Noach was concerned that he might get drunk from the strong wine. Therefore, he went into his tent, a private place, to avoid embarrassing himself.

"And Cham, the father of Canaan saw his father's shame, and he related it to his two brothers outside" (Bereshis 9:22). Why does the Torah pick this point in the story to mention that Cham is the father of Canaan? Rav Hirsch answers this question with a compelling insight; one that touches the very roots of civilization. The Torah was written down by Moshe Rabbeinu, to be given to Klal Yisrael, before they entered the Land of Israel. They had seen the destruction of Mitzraim, and were about to destroy Canaan. Both nations were sons of Cham, and were decimated because of their corruption. The Torah mentions that Cham is the father of Canaan to teach the Jewish people that the root of Canaan's downfall was his father Cham, who showed no respect for his father Noach. Cham invaded Noach's privacy at his time of shame. He then went out and described the scene to his brothers, with all its details. A nation whose patriarch shows no respect for his parents will ultimately fail.

Contrast this with Klal Yisrael, the nation that honors its elders. Inheritance in Klal Yisrael is called "*nachalah*", like the word "*nachal*", a flowing stream of water. Our *mesorah* (tradition) is passed down from generation to generation, like a stream passes water from place to place. All of this is based upon respect for the older generation. Klal Yisrael was being warned that the nation of Canaan was about to perish due to their corruption. The root of this was Cham's lack of respect for his father Noach.

Kinderlach . . .

We know that the mitzvah of honoring and respecting our parents is important. It completes the first of the two luchot ha'brit. Now we see that it is the foundation of society. We respect our parents, therefore we learn from them. We become a link in the chain of tradition from Har Sinai. Without this, we are lost. Without respect, we are left on our own, and will ultimately fail due to our lack of wisdom. Respect your parents, kinderlach, and keep the chain strong.

Parasha Questions

- What is the meaning of "*chammas*"? (Rashi 6:11)
- How old was Noach when the flood began? (7:6)
- Which bird did Noach send out first? (8:7)
- Why was the place called Bavel? (11:9)