

# פרשת נח

This adaptation is dedicated  
in honor of my wife, Devorah.

"אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו"  
"These are the offspring of Noach –  
Noach was a righteous man, perfect in  
his generations" (ו, ט)

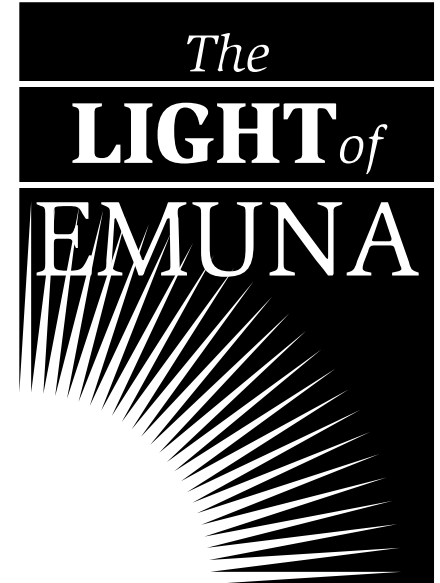
Here Noach is referred to as a perfect *tzaddik* – but later it states, "Then Hashem said to Noach ... for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation"<sup>1</sup> – but does not refer to him as "perfect." Says R' Yirmiyah ben Elazar: we learn from here that one only recounts partial praise of another in their company – their full tribute only outside their presence.<sup>2</sup>

" ונח מצא חן בעיני ד' " (ו, ה)  
"But Noach found grace in the eyes of  
Hashem"

For 120 years Noach built the Ark and the scoffers of the generation taunted him. With humility and meekness he proceeded in his task, silent in the face of all of the mocking and derision – doing the work of his Creator. To what end? So that the generation should take notice and possibly inquire into his actions, whereupon he would warn them that Hashem was planning to bring a flood upon the world – and just maybe – they would do *teshuva*.<sup>3</sup>

We are responsible for each other. Every Jew is responsible for other Jews. We are a portion of a complete nation that is charged with a holy task. We must feel concern for all, that we are integrated within them – it should pain us when

<sup>1</sup> ויאמר ד' לנח ... כי אתך ראיתי צדיק לפני בדור הזה (ז, א)  
<sup>2</sup> ערובין יח:  
<sup>3</sup> רש"י



Based on Harav Menachem Azolai's "Ohr Ha'Emuna"

someone does something negative. But how? It is difficult enough to manage ourselves, to maintain our own status – constantly failing, seeking forgiveness, doing *teshuva* and attempting to begin anew – and now we are being told that we are also responsible for the actions of others? We will be punished for the sins of others? This surety relationship amongst us is inside the spirit – in our thoughts, hearts and souls. It requires an altered outlook on life. It requires the understanding that we cannot maintain a connection with Hashem if we are not connected to the Jewish people.

We cannot seal ourselves away in shells and take comfort in the fact that our lives are going well. We must speak in plural, on behalf of everyone, to request for all of the Jewish people – to replace our selfish outlook for a broader perspective – to understand that Hashem will not bring Moshiach until we become one unified nation, until we all return in *teshuva*. The principle of the Jewish people is accountability for each other – it is the secret of redemption. Thus, what happens to others is not just their problem; it is our trouble as well. A Jew must feel the suffering of the Shechina for all of our individual deficiencies. We must cry for it, pray for it, and do whatever we can to draw another Jew close.

We must love the Jewish people! We must pray for the Jewish nation! To worry about the

Children of Israel! To desire the success of all Jews! We must all self-sacrifice for the Jewish people. The more a person merits attachment to the Jewish people, the more one connects to HKB”H. It is impossible to separate Hashem from the Jewish people! Impossible! The Jewish people and Hashem are **ONE!** Therefore, if we wish to connect to Hashem, we must love the entire Jewish people – connect to the nation.<sup>4</sup>

We cannot cling to Hashem while simultaneously avoiding other people – expressing an unwelcoming countenance, G-d forbid.

“These are the offspring of Noach – Noach was a righteous man” – why the repetition of the name Noach? Noach (נֹחַ) means pleasing – pleasing to others and pleasing to Hashem. Whoever is agreeable to others is delightful to Hashem. We do not live in a vacuum – we have obligations to Heaven and responsibilities to our fellow human beings. If we long to be gratifying and beloved to Hashem – we must be pleasant and cherished on Earth.

What is meant by being pleasing to our fellow human beings? Being foregoing, patient, even-tempered, not burdensome, dealing affably, being considerate. We must be thoughtful even in minor matters, such as knocking before entering even our own homes.

By nature, we are self-absorbed. We are self-centered. We must inspire ourselves to think positively about others – enjoying their successes and suffering their agonies – honestly, not superficially.

In an interview with Israel’s oldest man last year, Chochom Zechariah Barashi, he was asked for his secret. He responded with the *pasuk*, “Do not hate your brother in your heart”<sup>5</sup> – we must never hate another Jew, even if he antagonizes us – that is the secret to longevity. We must obtain the attitude that if something is good for another Jew - it is good for us - and vice-versa. We must

greet everyone with a smile, increase *ahavas Yisroel* and never hate, G-d forbid. When we are scrupulous in maintaining this mindset – our hearts remain calm and relaxed and avoids challenges.”

Exhibiting joyous countenances and illuminating our expressions is the greatest kindness that we can perform. We can present someone all of the gifts in the world, but if we do so with a sour face – the Torah considers it as if we have given him nothing. But, if we receive others cordially, even without offering him anything - it is as if we have given all the bounty in the world.<sup>6</sup>

**Moreinu Harav:** Every Jew has an aspect of Awe of Heaven that no one else possesses – one *davens* better, one excels in holiness, one performs more kindness, and one learns more deeply – if we believe in all of them, cling to all of them and admire all of them – we execute the *mitzvah* of clinging to Hashem.

If we speak negatively about another Jew – we are finished! We’ve lost everything! We’ve lost our sanctity! How can we speak against someone that Hashem loves so much? Hashem loves every Jew! Do we really believe that the Jewish nation consists of only those few people that we care about? Hashem loves us all! How can we speak against Hashem’s beloved children? Every Jew is a diamond in Hashem’s crown and when we undermine one, we demean HKB”H’s honor. When we seek positive attributes of others, we embed additional jewels in Hashem’s crown.

We must associate with all Jews – love them all. We must not maintain any grudges, even against those who agitate us, humiliate us – we must not resent – and thereby our sins are forgiven.

Great Jewish leaders have always taken great care in loving all Jews. Once, the great Jerusalemite *tzaddik* R’ Zelig Braverman zt”l encountered a young boy crying in the courtyard of the Etz Chaim school in the old city of

<sup>4</sup> המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום  
<sup>5</sup> לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך

<sup>6</sup> אבות דרבי נתן יג-יד

Yerushalayim. R' Zelig inquired of the boy as to what was causing his tears. The boy explained that he had left his lunch at home and he lived quite a distance from the old city and would go hungry all day. R' Zelig, who was a serious *masmid*, to whom every moment of Torah was more precious than gold, hurried to the boy's home, retrieved the lunch from the boy's mother and rushed back to the waiting youngster – never telling anyone of his mission or kindness.<sup>7</sup>

Just as every father loves his children intensely, innately and involuntarily – so Hashem loves us, His children. Just as a father will take issue with anyone who hates his child – Hashem too resents anyone who hates any of His children. When we love someone unconditionally, we necessarily and consequently love their families.

“Master of the World, assist us in preserving unconditional love amongst us. May we merit observing the positive commandment of ‘loving others as ourselves’ – that peace and friendship reign - primarily in our homes.”

A young man once sought advice from the famous Steipler Gaon zt”l regarding his manner of learning. The Steipler's response surprised the questioner: “Know that you must help out around the house. I see that you are a great *masmid*, but you must help your wife.” The young man responded that his wife was ardently devout and unreservedly preferred that he spend his time learning with self-sacrifice and sanctify himself to Torah. The Steipler replied, “That is her *mitzvah* – your *mitzvah* is to lend her a hand. Whenever you come home, you must immediately inquire as what needs to be handled, what you can do.”

When we do favors for others, we never lose – even when it looks like a waste of time. The Chazon Ish zt”l once counseled a young kollel man who was worried that doing *chesed* would waste time from Torah study: “To fully understand Torah, we must be refined and refinement is attained only via performing acts

of kindness. There is no spiritual forfeiture when we aid others – to the contrary, it itself is the very goal – it is an attainment of perfection! There is a popular adage: “Another's materialism is our spirituality...”

If Hashem refuses to give up on a single Jew – how can we? If Hashem can tolerate everyone – how can we not? The Abarbanel says that we are never punished for contemplating the commission of a transgression – with one exception – hating another Jew in our hearts. Love, peace and unity = *yiddishkeit*. We are not entitled to not love others. We must invest all of our efforts to learn from Avraham Avinu. From where did Avraham draw the strength to become the pillar of *chesed* – loving everybody and drawing everyone near?

Avraham did not draw strength from “love your neighbor as yourself” – he derived it from a higher source – from “and you shall walk in His ways.” By follow Hashem's practice – his *chesed* was so profound that we cannot even fathom it.

Similarly, Rachel Imeinu's forbearance towards her sister, Leah, did not develop from the *mitzvos* of interpersonal relationships alone – that would not have been sufficient to provide the power to withstand such a challenge. Only by drawing from imitating Hashem – with the power of *emuna* and G-dly will that it is preferable to be cast into a fiery furnace rather than embarrass another person. Only this was enough to help her overcome her most difficult trial and give up her *shidduch* to her sister.

We too cannot seclude ourselves – we must assist others, love all. This is so basic that we do not need to even offer Torah proofs. But, the more basic – the more difficult. The fundamental principal of Torah is to avoid doing to others as we would not have done to us. Yet, we tend to make our love conditional, limited. Our only hope is to connect to Hashem's example – to connect to G-d's will.<sup>8</sup>

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אי ש חסד היה

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באור פני מלך חיים

We must speak encouragingly at home – smile. If others are incapable of giving, we teach them by example, by warming the environment at home with compliments and admiration. What is the alternative? To constantly complain – they did not give me my due, they did not do what I wanted, did not treat me right?

Our mission is to acquire a generous attitude – not to be jealous – to be happy for the success of others. “Master of the World, I am tired of being jealous - save me. Help me not to become dejected when others surpass me. Help me remember that I will arrive to You via the route and the pace that You have set for me. Help me remember that we all have our own unique and distinct assignments.

Being pleasing to others depends on

forbearance. It is an amazing weapon that creates an atmosphere of geniality and satisfaction. Attachment to Hashem is dependent upon changing our self-centeredness into concern for others.

Rashi explains the *pasuk*, “Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations” as meaning that Noach was humble, modest and righteous in his actions – he was very careful about stealing. Humility is a prerequisite to righteousness – we can accept others as they are, focusing on their attributes that we do not possess. If we consider ourselves insignificant, it is easy to discover positive qualities in everyone.

Loving our colleagues is obligatory – not just loving, doing for them. Our compassion and assistance is everlasting.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** When I observe another Jew acting inappropriately, committing a sin – I do not tremble, I do not shake, I do not cry – even when they are so close to me. Help me, Father, that it, at a minimum, bother me, pain me - that I realize that it is pertinent to me. Help me feel Your pain, Father, the anguish of the holy Shechina, over what occurs down here. Help me be concerned for the Jewish people - that I merit being one of those who pray for the entire nation, among those who love all of Israel - that I merit being among those who are distressed when they witness a Jew who is distant from You, Father.

**Master of the World!** If it is so difficult for me to “love my neighbor as myself,” because, apparently, I love myself more than I should. Help me to, at least, achieve “what is distasteful to you, do not do to your fellow.” Just as I do not enjoy when I am yelled at, criticized – help me, Father, to not do so to others – because I do at times. Just as I am annoyed by those who are not on time, help me, Father, to not tarry and try to grab another small task and thereby arrive late to my appointments and cause others to wait for me. There are many things that I do not appreciate – yet I am not careful to refrain from doing them myself.

**Master of the World!** Help me to not speak negatively about any Jew. So often I find myself discussing events in the neighborhood without paying heed to the veering into prattling on about others and becoming *loshon hora*. So many incidents do not appear to contain *loshon hora* – but, upon a bit of scrutiny, we realize that they contain forbidden speech! Even if someone has hurt me, angered me – I must weigh each word before voicing them!

**Master of the World!** Help me guard a clean mouth – when I refrain and succeed – there is such great joy and such a feeling of closeness to You.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

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Notice: The foregoing is based on my limited understanding of the Parsha Sheet, *Ohr Ha'Emuna*, disseminated by Harav Menachem Azolai *Shlita* and is not a complete or exact adaptation of *Ohr Ha'Emuna* and is not necessarily even a reliable interpretation of the ideas presented therein. *Ohr Ha'Emuna* is published in Hebrew; in translation, accuracy is always compromised. Rav Azolai has not reviewed this material - any inaccuracies, omissions or confusion should be attributed exclusively to me. I still hope you enjoy and it provides some *chizuk*. Thank you Mordi Blass for your help with some of the Hebrew expressions.

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