



*Parasha Noach
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NEWS

NEXT JEWISH CELEBRATION

We have just finished the celebration of the fall's feasts that the Jews are thinking to the next celebration. This celebration is always on the same month of Christmas, on December. It is the celebration of Chanukah.

Chanukah this year will be from December 21 to 28. What your congregation is preparing for Chanukah? In Israel we always have our week of prayer during the feast of Chanukah. I hope that many Jews will be in contact with your community during this celebration.

YOUTH CAMP IN ISRAEL

The month of Tichri (September-October) is always a special month in Israel, because it is period of vacation. We have three feasts on this month: Rosh-Hashana (2 days off) Kippur (1 day off) and the week of Succoth which has 2 days off + half day off for most of the administrations during the week of Succoth. If we add the Fridays and the Sabbaths, it is almost a period of 21 days of vacation. That is why it is good period for spiritual gathering, for youth camp and other congregation's activities.



We of course organized our spiritual gathering during the days of Rosh hashana and the Youth departement organized his youth camp during the week of Succoth. The guest speaker was Paul Tompkins, the youth Director of the Trans-European Division.



I have heard many good things about this youth camp. Of course there are always space for better organization or activities, but the children and young people were happy that is the essential point in a youth camp.

Maybe some of you would like to improve the Hebrew speaking ability of your children, why not to send them to a youth camp to Israel. our leaders speak English, but the activities with the young people are in Hebrew.

OVERVIEW

LECH-LECHA

Genesis 12:1-17:27

Ten generations have passed since Noach. Man has descended spiritually. In the year 1948 from Creation, Avram is born. By observing the world, Avram comes to recognize G-d's existence, and thus merits that G-d appear to him. At the beginning of this week's Torah portion G-d tells Avram to leave his land, his relatives and his father's house and travel to an unknown land where G-d will make him into a great nation.

Avram leaves, taking with him his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their servants, and those whom they converted to faith in G-d.

When they reach the land of Canaan, G-d appears to Avram and tells him that this is the land that He will give to his descendants.

A famine ensues and Avram is forced to relocate to Egypt to find food. Realizing that his wife's beauty would cause his death at the hand of the Egyptians, Avram asks her to say that she is his sister. Sarai is taken to Pharaoh, but G-d afflicts Pharaoh and his court with severe plagues and she is released unmolested.

Avram returns to Eretz Yisrael (Canaan) with much wealth given to him by the Egyptians.

During a quarrel over grazing rights between their shepherds, Avram decides to part ways with his nephew Lot.

Lot chooses to live in the rich but corrupt city of Sodom in the fertile plain of the Jordan. A war breaks out between the kings of the region and Sodom is defeated. Lot is taken captive.

Together with a handful of his converts, Avram rescues Lot, miraculously overpowering vastly superior forces, but Avram demurs from accepting any of the spoils of the battle.

In a prophetic covenant, G-d reveals to Avram that his offspring will be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed for 400 years, after which they will emerge with great wealth and return to Eretz Yisrael, their irrevocable inheritance.

Sarai is barren and gives Hagar, her Egyptian hand-maiden, to Avram in the hope that she will provide them with a child.

Hagar becomes arrogant when she discovers that she is pregnant. Sarai deals harshly with her, and Hagar flees.

On the instruction of an angel Hagar returns to Avram, and gives birth to Yishmael.

The weekly portion concludes with G-d commanding Avram to circumcise himself and his offspring throughout the generations as a Divine covenant.

G-d changes Avram's name to Avraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. Hashem promises Avraham a son, despite Avraham being ninety-nine years old and Sarah ninety.

On that day, Avraham circumcises himself, Yishmael and all his household.

GO TO YOU

The Torah states: **"The L-rd said to Abraham go [to you] from your country, from your birthplace and from your father's house unto the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great and you will be a blessing."** (Gen 12:1-2) Everyone knows that the title of each parasha is taken from the first verse of the parasha. **"Lech lecha"** is the command G-d gave to Abraham to leave his country. **"Lech lecha"** means "Go to you". How can we understand these words

1. "It is better to you" to leave this country full of idolatry and immorality. According to our sages **"lech lecha"** means "to your benefit"

2. "Go to you" is also a divine invitation to go to your mind, your heart to understand why the almighty ask you to leave your country and to leave even if you don't know where to go, G-d did not describe the land — he didn't even tell Abraham where he was supposed to go. He merely said "go out" — leave, further instructions to follow.

ABRAHAM IS TESTED

According to the Jewish tradition Abraham endured 10 tests. The order to leave his homeland was the first one. He did not know where to go, he had just to obey. Some of these tests found in this parasha are:

- To leave his country at the age of 75
- The famine (they have to leave again to Egypt)
- In Egypt Sarah is taken against her will to Pharaoh
- Lot is captured and Abraham has to wage war against four kings to save him.
- Abraham must believe in G-d's promise even though Sarah is childless he received the promise that a great nation would come from him.
- At the age of 99, Abraham is commanded to be circumcised.

According to Rabbi Yaakov Menken, the word "test" "Nisayon" comes from the word "Nes" which means "miracle" or "uplifting"

When one experiences a miracle one realizes it as an obvious sign that G-d cares and looks out for the person and it is indeed an "uplifting" experience.

Our sages say that the same also applies with the tests which we experience throughout our lives. For through these tests a person is uplifted, attaining a higher spiritual level and achieves greater strength.

The fact that G-d chooses to test an individual shows that the person has special qualities and the ability to pass the test.

It is exactly what Rabbi Shaul said **"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."** 1Cor. 10:13.

BLESSINGS

The Torah states: **"I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who will bless you... and in you shall all the families of the earth bless themselves."** (Gen 12:2-3) "Blessing" in Hebrew is "Bracha." Blessings are an important part of the Jewish tradition. Each morning, we express our gratitude to G-d for His kindness through various Brachot (blessings). Each morning we bless G-d for giving us our sight; **"Blessed are You L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who opens the eyes of the blind."** We bless G-d for giving us back our strength; **"Blessed are You... Who gives strength to the weary"** and **bless G-d "Who provides me with my every need"** etc. etc.

According to the Jewish law, one is even required to bless G-d for something bad that happens, as for the good. The Talmud tells us that during the time of King

David a plague broke out in Israel. Every day, 100 people died. King David then established that 100 blessings be recited each day and the plague stopped. Our sages have continued the tradition. We too, recite a minimum of 100 blessings each day.

What is the purpose of blessing G-d? Does G-d need our blessings? The Hebrew word for blessing, "Bracha", is related to the word "Berech" (a knee) or "vayevarech" (he made them kneel). Just like a father will kneel down to attend to a child, so too, our blessings cause G-d to make Himself available to us and to grant our requests. Thus, blessing G-d causes Him to bless us.

In Israel when we meet someone we ask: "Mashlomcha?" "How are you?" People answer: "Baruch HaShem (Blessed is G-d)".

In this way, everyone in Israel praise and bless G-d several time every day.

EVERLASTING COVENANT

All covenants with the Almighty are eternal, never to be abrogated or replaced by new covenants. The covenant with Abraham was not the first one, in the last parasha G-d made a covenant with Noah and his descendants (all the humanity) **"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ... I establish my covenant with you: . . . I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth"** (Gen. 9:9-17) We are all sure that this covenant is still valid, G-d will never destroy the earth by a flood. In the same way, the covenant G-d has establish with Abraham and his descendents is still valid.

Sources: These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com). By Rabbi Naftali Reich, Rabbi Berel Wein and Rabbi Yochanan Zweig, Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Torah.org (Project Genensis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

THIS IS FOR THE GOOD

Story given by Rabbi Packouz: A king in Africa was out hunting. His companion and gun bearer was a person whose attitude towards life is "It couldn't be better. This is for the good." The gun bearer erred in loading the king's rifle causing a misfire which blew off the king's thumb. When the gun bearer exclaimed, "This is for the good," the king replied, "No, it's not!" and had the gun bearer put in jail.

Close to a year later the king was once again hunting; this time he was captured by cannibals. They were ready to prepare the king for dinner when they noticed the missing thumb; being superstitious, the cannibals would not eat someone who was less than whole, so they let the king go!

Immediately, the king went to the jail to free his gun bearer. "You were right," said the king, "this was for the good! I am so terribly sorry that I sent you to jail." "No," replied the gun bearer, "being in jail was for the good, too."

"What do you mean? Look how you have suffered," said the king. "Yes," responded the gun bearer, "but if I wasn't in jail ... I would have been with you!"

It is so very important to train oneself to look positively upon life's situations. From a Torah point of view, all that happens in life is ultimately for the good. The Almighty loves us and wants only the best for us. He gives us opportunities for spiritual and character growth every day.

So many times what appears as "bad" or "negative" ends up being a blessing. In the meanwhile, we have invested so much time and energy into worrying or regretting -- all for nothing and all to our detriment. It is wise to remember that worry is defined as interest paid in advance on a debt which often times never comes due.

A FINE FELLOW

Two friends were sitting together at the funeral of a prominent community member. A long procession of distinguished personages and family members delivered warm eulogies,

bringing tears to many eyes. After the funeral, the two friends walked home in a contemplative mood. "You know something," one of them commented. "He was a very fine fellow. I'm going to miss him."

"I know" said his friend "you're not supposed to speak ill of the dead, but you couldn't stand the guy. You always had something nasty to say about him."

"Yeah. But let's be honest. Whenever he was honored, I always wished I was receiving those honors. But now that he's passed on, I can think about him more objectively. And you know what? He really was a fine fellow!"

PUT YOUR LIFE IN PERSPECTIVE

A drunk was sitting at the curbside, taking huge gulps from a bottle of wine. His clothes were filthy and disheveled, and chunks of grime lodged in his hair. "I don't understand you," a disgusted passerby berated the drunk. "You want to drown your life in a bottle? Fine. But why do you have to be such a slob? Why can't you at least shake the grime out of your hair?"

"If I had the sense to shake the grime from my hair," said the drunk with a twinkle in his eye, "I'd have the sense to go home and have a normal life."

In our own lives, we often get caught up in the mad rush of daily life. The only way to have a good life is to put our life in perspective. What is essential in your life. And every once in a while, we should take the time to step back and examine our lives with as much honesty as we can muster. At the very least, it will engender in us the habit of seeking the truth, a habit that can only bring us benefit and fulfillment.

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Isaiah 40:27 - 41:16

The book of Isaiah has a very beautiful text. This prophet was a real poet and the text for this week is a wonderful poem. **“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The L-RD is the everlasting G-d, the Creator of the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 40:28).**

The G-d of Israel is an everlasting G-d with an everlasting love for his children. He calls Israel his servant, the chosen, He calls Abraham his friend. Here we have the link between the Parasha and this Haftarah, both of them are about Abraham who left his home to respond to the calling of G-d. **But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, “You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off”; do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your G-d; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:8-9)** is our protection. There is nothing to fear when we are with the Almighty and the almighty is with us. Abraham left his home, and was protected during all his life even if he was travelling to an unknown country. **Fear not, for I am with you, Be not frightened, for I am your ; I strengthen you and I help you, I uphold you with My victorious right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)** What a wonderful G-d we have, he is always ready to help, to save, to love and to take care of us: **“For I am the L-rd, your , who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” (13)** What every could happen, G-d stay the Redeemer **“Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you,” declares the L-rd, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” (14)**

G-d has always been good with his people, even though his people has not been very faithful, G-d was faithful. This is the great lesson of the Bible. Adam was not faithful, but G-d was faithful, Abraham was not always faithful, but was faithful. He will be faithful with us in the same manner. In difficult time we have just to trust him and he will be with us.

BRIT HACHADASHA

Heb 6:20-7:28

In the parasha we have the strange story of the meeting between Abraham and Melchisedek. It is a strange story because of the presence of one the characters of the story, Melchisedek. Melchisedek is not like all the others people of Genesis. Reading the book we discover that it is a book of genealogy, we discover the genealogy of Noah, Abraham, who were the descendent of Adam, Cain etc. but Melchisedek, the priest of , had no genealogy, we don't know who is his father, his mother, if he is descendent of Cain or Seth, or one of the other children of Adam and Eve. Why this particularity? The letter to the Hebrews gives us the answer. The author, supposedly Shaul was a believer in Yeshua, and even though Melchisedek was a historical man, who really existed, was symbolically for Shaul a metaphor of Yeshua the Mashiach, He said “Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of G-d he remains a priest forever.” That means that Melchisedek, was an illustration of the Mashiach, the Mashiach was in heaven, he came from heaven through a great miracle, the incarnation, and he is presented in the prophecy in this way “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” in Hebrew: Mimei ‘Olam (from everlasting days, or day of eternity). The Mashiach is presented as eternal, like Melchisedek in the letter to Hebrews “without beginning of days or end of life” it is true that the birth and the death of Melchisedek were not recorded in the book of Genesis, as if he never was born or never died. Then if the Mashiach was never born and will never die, he is also at the image of G-d. That is why when the angel gave his name in the book of Isaiah he called him Immanuel which means “G-d [is] with us”. This similitude between them is also in the name; Melchisedek means “king of Justice” and in his title; king of Salem, or king of Peace. Only G-d is the “King of Justice” and the “King of Peace”.