

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Noach 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Noach

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

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Shalosh Seudos¹ of Parshas Noach 5768

”אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדוֹרֹתָיו אֶת-הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ-
נֹחַ.
”וַיֹּלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֶת-שֵׁם אֶת-חָם וְאֶת-יָפֶת.”²

“These are the chronicles of Noach: Noah was a righteous man, faultless in his generation. Noah walked with Hashem. Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yafes.”²

Rashi explains [that the verse begins by mentioning Noach’s offspring and concludes with his praise³] because the verse’s mention of Noach is a recounting of his his praise. As we find in the verse, “זָכַר צַדִּיק, לְבִרְכָה” —“The mention [or memory] of a *tzaddik* is a blessing.”⁴ Or this is to teach that the main progeny of the righteous is their good deeds.

The Three Sons of Noach

The *Zohar* teaches that the three children of Noach have divergent spiritual sources. The source of Shem is the right side, Cham is sourced in the left and Yafes is sourced in the middle path, which is a blend of both right and

¹ This lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Bereishis* 6:9-10

³ *Gur Aryeh*, ad loc.

⁴ *Mishlei* 10:7

left.⁵ The meaning of this *Zohar* is that the closer we get to the time of Moshiach, the more we merit to grasp that although every *avodah* includes ten *sefiros* alluded to in the *Shem HaVaYaH*, these ten can really be broken down into three supernal sources, which are an aspect of the Divine service of holy unifications and *dveikus*. [Each letter of the *Shem HaVaYaH* alludes to different segments of the ten *sefiros*. The tip of the *yud* represents *Kesser*, the *yud* itself alludes to *Chochmah*, the first *hei* refers to *Binah*, the *vav* symbolizes the six lower *sefiros* of *Chessed* through *Yesod*, and the final *hei* signifies *Malchus*.]

But what are these three sources? Rav Hai Gaon—and the Arizal after him—teach that above the ten *sefiros* there are three sources which are the “*oros hatzachtzachos*,” the pristine supernal lights, through which one merits every level of true *avodah*. Although what we do is the most important thing, our actions are still predicated on thought. As we say in the prayers for Friday night: “סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה”—“The end of action is first in thought.” This teaches that one must grasp the supernal sources with all of his strength in order to merit to act in consonance with what he knows is fitting for a true servant of Hashem. This explains how Noach got to be “צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו”—“a perfect *tzaddik* in his generations”—he grasped all three supernal sources, each of which is the source of one his sons.

The Three Supernal Sources

The *Pardes Rimonim* cites Rav Hai Gaon, that the three supernal sources are *Shem*, *Etzem*, and *Shoresh Hashorashim*—Name, Essence, and the

⁵ *Zohar* III:73a

Ultimate Source.⁶ In the Arizal's system these are *Mocha Sesima'ah*, *Galgaltah*, and *Reishah D'Lo Isyadea'ah* (or the terms, *Galgaltah*, *Avirah*, and *Mocha Sesima'ah*.)

[But what is the practical lesson for us in terms of our *avodah* from these three elements? It is no exaggeration to say that] all of one's *avodah* depends on these three foundations. The first represents holy *menuchah*, tranquility, the second is holy *yegi'ah*, toil, and the third path harmoniously blends both tranquility and toil.

We find that *menuchas ahavah*, a loving expansive calm connection to Hashem, is an outgrowth of Hashem's supernal illumination. As the verse states, “וַיֵּרָא מִנְחָה כִּי טוֹב,”—“And he saw rest, that it was good.”⁷ Similarly, the apparently opposite path of holy toil is also attained through connection to the light of Hashem. We see this from the very same verse: “וַיִּט שְׂכָמוֹ לְקַבֵּל” —“And he inclined his shoulder to bear the burden.”⁸

Noach's son Shem is an aspect of the right side, which represents *shoresh hashorashim*, *Reishah D'lo Isyadea'ah*, where [true connection to] the *Shechinah* is hidden.⁹ This is the source of the blissful tranquility a Jew feels when he truly recognizes that everything is *Elokus*. Noach's son Cham represents the left side, an aspect of *Mochah Sesima'ah* in which the *Gevurah* of *Atik* is encloded.¹⁰ [*Atik* is the higher aspects of *Kesser* and represents a deep

⁶ *Pardes Rimonim*, *Shaar* 11, Chapter 1

⁷ *Bereishis* 49:15

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See *Kalach Pischei Chochmah*, *Pesach* #104

¹⁰ *Eitz Chaim* 13:7

pleasure. The *Gevuros* of *Atik* symbolize the toil one has to put in to perforate to the hidden depths of *Mochah Sesima'ah* and experience a profound connection to Hashem through the toil.] This alludes to *dveikus* to Hashem accessed through contemplating the Divine Names, since this can level only be attained through tireless effort.] *Yefes* is the middle aspect, which the level of the *Galgaltah*, literally the “skull,” which represents *dveikus* in the *Etzem*, in the Essence of Hashem Himself.

This can be better understood in light of the Baal Shem Tov's teaching regarding the verse in our *parshah*, “בֹּא-אִתָּהּ וְכָל-בֵּיתְךָ אֶל-הַתֵּבָה” —“Come you and all your household into the ark.”¹¹ This can also be read as, “Come into the *teivah*, the word.” This teaches that connecting to Hashem in an aspect of truth where one connects to the essence of the Divine Names is much higher than all outer forms of service, since the purpose of *avodah* is to attain inner *dveikus*. The level above this is the aspect of *dveikus* in the Creator Himself. The highest level of *Shoresh Hashorashim* is where one connects so powerfully with the *Reishah d'lo Isyada'ah* that he attains a level which can hardly be experienced at all. It is regarding this level that the holy *Zohar* teaches, “אִהוּ תַפִּיס בְּכֹלָה” —“He grasps everything, yet none grasp Him.”¹² The connection to the *Shechinah* hidden in *Reishah d'lo Isyada'ah* is exceedingly hidden.

We can illustrate these levels with the rather commonplace example of one who learns Kabbalistic works. The learning itself reveals something of an

¹¹ *Bereishis* 7:1

¹² *Zohar* III:225a

understanding of the ten *sefiros*. After one has attained this level he can progress to *dveikus* with Hashem by “entering into the *teivah*” and connecting with the essence of the words beyond their meaning. On this level he accesses the essence of the *sefer* which is entirely composed of Divine Names. [Although intellectually this is beyond our understanding, this level is still accessed regardless.] It follows that through learning such deep works one can attach himself to Hashem in a very powerful manner. But there is an even greater level where through the first two stages of learning one reveals that everything is *Elokus*. This is the root of all *emunah*, where one truly sees that despite free will, no sin reaches such immense levels of holiness which are even above every Jew’s intrinsic connection to Hashem.

Come into the Ark—into the Word

The same step-by-step process can be followed in any *avodah*. One ascends the ladder from one palace [of spiritual delights] to the next, but this is not easy at all. Every person is caught in a spiritual net, while the *mayim hazeidonim*, the “treacherous waters” of insolence flow over him and try to wash him away from *avodah* by confusing him. But even so, “מִיַּם רַבִּים, לֹא יִכְלֹוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת-הָאֱהָבָה”—“Many waters cannot quench the love” that every Jew feels for Hashem and pushes him to truly yearn for *dveykus*.

One must hide himself in the *teivah*, in the ark which also means the word, by accessing the essence of the word above its meaning, since in this manner one is united with his deep inner attachment to Hashem which no blemish can ever extinguish. From there one ascends to the level of *dveikus* in

Hashem Himself which is achieved only through self-sacrifice, which is above all letters. At this height one experiences intense pleasure knowing that Hashem will surely bring him to his purpose in the most wondrous manner. Through this one attains the *dveikus* in the Source of all, which is above one's ability to grasp or describe. One connects to Hashem Himself on the level where He is completely above all. We attain these three levels of *dveikus* through prayer which is also called, "שיח"—"conversation." This word is an acronym for שׁוֹמֵר תּוֹרַת יִצְחָק, since one attains these levels by raising his hands in prayer, as we find in the holy *Zohar*.¹³ We must seize the *dveikus* mightily until we attain a true foundation for doing all holy *avodos* with deep connection to Hashem.

The verse states, "אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת"—"that Hashem created, to do it." This last "to do it," is meant to teach that Hashem wishes the Jewish nation to use His light by drawing it from below to above and from above to below. This light is the source of all true Torah and *emunah*, since it is the foundation for true toil in Torah as we find in the verse, "אִם-בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכּוּ"—"If you will walk in My statutes."¹⁴ Rashi¹⁵ explains that this is an adjuration to toil in Torah. [The Maharal explains that one's body naturally shuns effort and so it avoids walking places. This is why, when the Torah tells us to "walk" with the Torah, this means to toil in Torah.¹⁶] We all must draw down the light of Hashem from above to below to attain the fortitude to learn the entire Torah. Only in this manner we can attain the threefold level

¹³ *Zohar* I 65a, II, 268b

¹⁴ *Vayikra* 26:3

¹⁵ *Rashi* Ad loc.

¹⁶ *Gur Aryeh*, ad loc.

of Noach, just like we find that Noach himself toiled in Torah.¹⁷ We must all fight against Amalek who darkens our perception of Torah thereby blocking our ability to grasp the depth of the holy Torah of Hashem. His weapons are anxieties about one's livelihood and similar foolishness that most often erodes one's *emunah*. Instead of focusing on Torah and *avodah* in a manner which reveals Hashem in the world, one's entire being is taken up with topics which dissolve his relationship with Hashem, just like the physical waters of the flood destroyed all.

But in this manner one can determine how much he really loves Hashem: how much does he focus on achieving an encompassing knowledge of all aspects of the Torah, not merely a little here and a little there. We must remember that the ultimate personal and general redemption comes about only through the entire Torah, each person according to his soul. This comes about through the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu who is enrobed in every scholar who expounds in an honest manner for the purpose of knowing Hashem.

It is fairly well known that when the Vilna Gaon's sister came for a visit after many years of being apart from her brilliant brother, the Gaon spent only a very short time with her. He explained that his beard was already turning white and that he had no time to speak in this world. "We will speak in the world to come," he said.

The Baal HaSulam explains that this story should not be taken at face value, since it insults the Vilna Gaon. How could one think for a moment that

¹⁷ See *Rashi Bereishis 7:2*

the Gaon could not speak with another while at the same time focusing on the deepest aspects of the holy Torah?

The true meaning of the story is that a person's main work should be to always cleave to the *Shechinah*. He must understand that the *Shechinah* is jealous of her honor [as it were], much like a person can't stand if someone who professes to be his friend sometimes acts friendly while at other times acts like a complete stranger. Surely this is not called a true love and regard. Because every physical truth is mirrored in spiritual terms, this truism applies to our *avodas Hashem* as well. True love of Hashem is only when one's entire self is yearning for connection at all times. It is only when one is completely closed into the ark and cares nothing for the physical that he merits true holiness. At this level, the *Shechinah* is always with him and Hashem's Torah fills his entire being, since the *Shechinah* doesn't reveal her secrets to anyone but one who is truly unified with Her at all times.

Although one must certainly be involved with his physical needs such as eating, drinking and the like, and most are obligated to work in the physical world to earn a living, the test is what his innermost self truly yearns for. Is his only interest is *emunah* and Torah? One must certainly have children and work to fulfill Hashem's will, as the verse states, “וְחַי בָּהֶם” —“and you shall live in them.” But this is only on condition that he desires only holiness. Our task is to seal our hearts with a *shlos meim*, which is shaped like *teivas* Noach. Like Noach, our deliverance depends on this seal in an aspect of the *shluss meim* in

the verse, “לְסַרְבָּה (לְמַרְבָּה) הַמְשָׁרָה” — “To magnify dominion.”¹⁸ We must bind our hearts until our deepest desire is solely to give Hashem pleasure by making Him a *dira b'tachtonim*, a dwelling place in the lower world.

Make Light for the *Teivah*

A person comes to spiritual completion only when he completely closes himself into the *teivah* and sails on the waters of insolence which sweeps through the world, high above all the things the *yetzer hara* makes into mountains. It is only when he reaches this level that the words shine to him in an aspect of, “צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לְתִיבָה” — “Make a light for the *teivah*.”¹⁹

One needs to have a true balance of both aspects of Shem, deep blissful spiritual tranquility, and Cham the aspect of toiling in service of Hashem. This balance is the spiritual source of aspect of *Yefes*, and sadly Noach did not balance these two aspects properly as indicated in his very name, Noach— which means rest. Because he lacked toil in accordance with his level, he fell. As the verse states, “וַיִּטַע, כְּרָם; וַיִּחַל נֹחַ, אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה; וַיִּטַע, כְּרָם;” — “And Noach, the man of the earth, began [or became *chol*], and he planted a vineyard.”²⁰ This verse teaches us why Noach fell—he drank wine. [Yet surely he had a higher goal than physically partaking in the wine? He drank the wine with the intention of connecting to holy *Binah*, the source of which is *Mocha Sesima'ah*, in which the aspect of *Gevurah D'Atik* is enrobed. This is the source of holy *gevuros*, where one transforms holy toil into the light of Hashem. [Since Noach didn't

¹⁸ *Yeshayahu* 9:6

¹⁹ See *Adir Bamarom*, Part I, *Tanya amar Rabbi Shimon*

²⁰ *Bereishis* 9:20

toil enough he fell, as the *Reishis Chochmah* writes, why did he drink wine so quickly? Why not wait and ensure that he was truly ready. In context of the above we can understand that while Noach meant well, he was not yet on the level to achieve a rectification through wine.]

The holy Zohar reveals that the supernal light is composed of three elements: light, water and the *raki'ah* or firmament.²¹ Light represents the aspect of *Shem*, “וַיִּרְא מְנוּחָה כִּי טוֹב” — “and he saw rest, that it was good.”²² Ultimately we were all created to enjoy Hashem. But in order to make the clarifications that we are charged with we must toil in Torah in an aspect of, “וַיִּט שְׂכָמוֹ לְקַבֵּל” — “and he inclined his shoulder to bear the burden.”²³ And the source of every *avodah* and *menuchah* is the level of the *Shechinah* in *Reisha d'lo Isyada'ah*.

When one closes himself in the *teivah* he must accept the yoke of Torah. This is especially relevant during the month of *Cheshvan* during which every Jew should be *merachshen sifvasei*—his lips ought to be murmuring the holy words of Torah during this month after all of the uplifting *avodah* of Tishrei, as Rav Bunim of Peshischa explained.²⁴ Our only aspiration should be to connect to Hashem and His Torah. We must have the light of *menuchah*, yet we must also have the aspect of water which alludes in this context to the springs of *Binah*, which inspire one to learn Torah with passion and toil. The source of this level is in *Mocha Sesima'ah*, the source of Cham. Yefes is sourced in the

²¹ *Zohar* II:167a

²² *Bereishis* 49:15

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Kol Mevaser*, III, *Chodesh Cheshvan*

firmament, which joins the aspect of *Chochmah* and *Binah* (an aspect of the *Da'as* of *Atik*, which is enrobed in the *avirah*.)

The Raven

We find that when the *teivah* rested Noach sent a raven to determine if the land was inhabitable. The *Zohar Chadash* teaches that this raven represents Dovid HaMelech, who is an aspect of Leah [his ancestress.] Subsequently, Noach sent a dove, which alludes to Yosef [an aspect of Rochel].²⁵ When the dove returned it had an olive branch in its beak. The *Bris Kehunah* states that this represents the days of Chanukah when we light the menorah with olive oil.²⁶ This teaches that the light of Yosef HaTzaddik shines even lower than ten *tefachim*.

In our context this means that one who enters the *teivah* should strive to grasp the light of Dovid, an aspect of a raven [which has both good and bad aspects]. This light in holiness brings to the tranquility of Shabbos, yet when misused it represents Shabbtai or the planet Saturn, which is the strength of the fire which destroyed the *beis hamikdash*. In order to use this in holiness one must cease all desires that are not in consonance with holiness. To achieve this we must obey the directive of Moshiach to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi when the latter asked when the final redemption will come: “He will arrive when we fulfill the verse, “אִם-בְּקִלוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּ” —“Today, if you hearken to His voice.”²⁷ This means that a person must forget about tomorrow and yesterday

²⁵ *Kehillas Yaakov, Erech Yonah*

²⁶ *Bris Kehunah, Olam Ma'amar Ner Mitzvah*, Chapter 12

²⁷ *Tehillim* 95:7

since they pull him down and distract him from Divine service today.²⁸ Even regarding Divine service one shouldn't fret about what he has or has not yet accomplished. Instead, he should focus on cleaving to Hashem today by doing whatever he can. This level cannot be attained in one try. As one works on it he attains in an aspect of *מטי ולא מטי*, "touching and not touching," slowly burning out the negative within [which tries to focus on anything which tends to distract from avodas Hashem.] In this aspect one can access the *avodah* of toil. This is represented by the olive leaf since one's mission in this world is to raise up his portion of the two hundred and eighty-eight Divine sparks that fell before man was created and then fell again when man sinned.²⁹ It is of great significance that the word the verse uses to describe the leaf in the bird's mouth is *טרף*, which has a numerical value of two hundred and eighty-nine, since it includes one for the word itself. Within this struggle is hidden the Torah of *Atikah Sesima'ah*, which is a Torah with no *levushim*, absolutely pure connection to Hashem.

But what are *levushin*? *Levushin* are the splendor Hashem takes in every Jew's *avodah*. One must be clever like Shem and Yefes who did not reveal their father's *ervah*. This is a very prevalent mistake in spiritual terms where people mistakenly believe that because that the path one should travel is only that of *Shem*, where one fails to toil. Cham fell into this error. Although it is only through the garments generated by every person's toil that one can achieve true connection, nevertheless this toil should never be a burden since feeling

²⁸ See *Imrei Pinchas, Shaar II, #97, Sichos HaRan*

²⁹ See *Shaar Hakavanos, Drushei Halaylah #7*

burdened by spirituality is a sure sign that the side of evil has grasped the one who is bowed down with such cares.

Although Hashem wants us to toil assiduously in Torah, sparing no pains, this toil must be an outgrowth of the supernal light of Hashem and not a burden one feels is beyond him. Hashem created the world to bestow good, not to make things difficult.

One must fulfill the verse, “לְאֹסְרִים צְאוּ” — “Say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth.’”³⁰ Those who toil in Torah as a direct result of their great love for Hashem are delivered from their personal exile and the Torah begins to shine to them with the light which was revealed during the six days of creation. This is represented by the olive leaf. Although olive leaves are bitter, just like the work of clarification through toil in Torah and Divine service, nevertheless one who keeps at it will merit the illumination of Chanukah and serve the Creator in an aspect of true *menucha*. He will merit to rest from his weariness as we say in the Shabbos zemer, וְשָׁם יָנוּחוּ יְגֵעֵי כַח — “There rested the weary.”

When a Jew enters the *teivah* out of love for Hashem, this in itself is exceedingly precious even if he does not know what will happen in a day or two. The moment he enters the *teivah* and does *teshuvah*, begging Hashem to protect him from the flood waters of material concerns and to serve Him at all times, he is delivered, no matter what happened in the past or will happen in the future. But he must not enter b'keri, in a manner that is clearly meant to be temporary, since the main sins of the generation of the flood came about because they did not serve Hashem with a sense of permanence.

³⁰ *Yeshayahu* 49:9

But one who sincerely pours out his heart to Hashem will be saved even if he falls away from the *teivah*. Since immediately after such a fall he will surely repent and reenter the *teivah* since his only desire from his transient material existence is to serve Hashem.

A person must be like a raven “who is cruel to his offspring.”³¹ He must place his entire focus on the *teiva*, word he is learning and not allow physical considerations to distract him at all. He must realize that his entire hope is to break through to the rapture of connection through Torah. A person’s main path must always begin with the aspect of Shem, who is only concerned with finding the One who gave the Torah he learns. Although he must also toil to comprehend the Torah in an aspect of Cham, yet like the Raven was sent out and returned to the *teivah*, he too, must return to a deep connection with Hashem. He must fight against the tendency to make *pilpul* an ends in itself [and forget Hashem entirely *chas v’shalom*.] In this manner he will eventually attain the higher level of Yafes, transcending everything physical, which is grasped through proper balance of the path of Shem and Cham.

Hashem should help us toil assiduously to attain our portion in Torah by internalizing that every day one does not enhance his Torah wisdom he is distanced from Hashem. We should merit the light of the thirty six lights of Chanukah, which represent the thirty six tractates of the Talmud. Imbued in these tractates is primordial light which was hidden away for the righteous to enjoy in the ultimate future. Hashem should fulfill in us the words of the

³¹ *Eiruv* 22a

holy Zohar which teaches that one who seals himself in the *teivah* will be saved from the flood of materialism and will be delivered in mercy. Amen!

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of the phrase: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*), and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”³²

When the Baal Shem Tov once passed by a *shul* he remarked that it was filled with Torah and prayer. He later explained that Torah learned without love and fear of Hashem does not ascend on high.³³ Sadly, the Torah learned there was with no interest in the *nosain HaTorah* that he noticed. We must clarify the Torah by toiling in an aspect of *nefesh*, but also remembering the higher level of *Chochmah* where we focus exclusively on the deeper significance of the Torah. Our very words and the toil are an aspect of *nefesh*, which we imbue with *Chochmah* by while connecting to Hashem through the Torah.

“And it will be a crown for your head”—through this one merits the level of *Kesser*, an aspect of the Torah of *Atikah Sesiemah* which is above any garment as it were. Yet merely to learn and daven is not enough. One must also keep mitzvos as in the continuation of the *zemer*, “guard your holy *mitzvos*.” This means that he will also imbue the physical *mitzvos* with the tranquility of Shabbos in an aspect of “guard My holy Shabbos.”

³² From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D’ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

³³ *Tikunei Zohar*, *Tikkun* 10

Hashem should help us do even physical actions for His own sake. In this merit he should grant us children, life and livelihood, and we should live to see the ultimate redemption speedily in our days. Amen!

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