



דרכים בפרשה

נח



ויאמר אלקים לנח קץ כל בשר בא לפני כי מלאה הארץ חמס מפניהם והנני משחיתם את הארץ (ו:יג)

And HaShem said to Noach, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth has become full of robbery because of them, and behold I am destroying them from the earth (6:13)

The gemara in Mesichta Sanhedrin tells us in the name of Rav Yochanan, “come and see how far reaching are the consequences of *chamas*/robbery. The generation of the *mabul* transgressed everything that they were commanded; they were guilty of the most wicked behaviours. Yet, the decree of their punishment was not sealed upon them until they stretched forth their hands to engage in robbery”. Rashi writes the famous words here, *lo nechtam gezar dinam ela al hagezel*-their punishment (was not) sealed only because of robbery.

Of course, the *mabul* was a punishment for all of their sins, especially their immorality, however, the “final straw that broke the camel’s back” was robbery.

The obvious question that needs to be asked is that every last major and minor sin of the Torah had been violated at that point. The entire world was in a state of chaotic despair. Destruction of the world was indeed necessary for so many reasons; even the ground itself was no longer able

to pass the most basic of environmental tests. The world had been corrupted at its very core! Why did it take the sin of robbery to go ahead and finally cause HaShem to “hit the reset button”?

I heard an answer in the name of Rav Avrohom Pam z”l in explanation of this *chazal* as follows: HaShem created the world for the purpose of giving *chessed* to others. HaShem has in Him a desire to shower His goodness upon the world, and in turn, HaShem expects us to do the same, emulating Him and following His footsteps. *Olam chessed yibaneh*- The world was built on the principals of *chessed*. It was created specifically to teach us how to be kind to one another and to be giving of ourselves.

When HaShem sees us acting kind with one another, even if there are major problems in other areas, HaShem still says that the purpose of the world has been fulfilled and it is worthwhile to keep around. However, once the world became full of *chamas*, it was clear to HaShem that the world’s

purpose of *chessed* no longer was in place. Of course there was no excuse for the other sins of mankind, but at the very least, there was still a purpose. Now that robbery had occurred, there was absolutely no reason to keep the world around. The whole concept of giving to each other was gone. Instead of being givers, the world was full of takers. Yes the other sins were on the highest level, but they did not erase the purpose of creation.

This explanation sheds light on another aspect of Noach's existence during the *mobul*. The gemara in Sanhedrin (108b) relates that many years after the *mobul*, Eliezer the servant of Avrohom met Shem the son of Noach. Eliezer asked Shem to describe what life was like during the year in the *teiva*. Shem spoke of the most unbelievable burden of the hectic feeding schedule of all the animals. There was no time to even grab a coffee break. Some animals needed to be fed in the morning and some at night; some this type of food and some another type. We all recall Rashi's comment that Noach was once a moment late in bringing food to the lion and he received a bite.

At the same time, the entire existence of Noach and his family in the *taiva* for the year was clearly super natural. According to the Malbim, the best boat in the world would not have been able to withstand the boiling hot and turbulent waters of the

mobul, save for nothing less than a miracle. If so many miracles occurred, why couldn't HaShem have performed another miracle in sustaining the animals in a miraculous way as opposed to feeding the animals with their bare hands on such a difficult schedule?

According to what we mentioned above from Rav Pam z"l, the answer is very simple. *Olam chessed yibaneh*- The world was built on the principals of *chessed*. It was created specifically to teach us how to be kind to one another and to be giving of ourselves. The first world was destroyed because it was devoid of *chessed*, and it therefore lost its right to exist. Surely HaShem could have performed another miracle here in the *taiva* by taking care of the animals on His own. But HaShem wanted Noach and his family to work tirelessly at the *middah* of *chessed*, in this manner, once again setting down the foundation for the new world.

When a person performs an act of *chessed*, (*keveyachol*) HaShem looks at the deed and proclaims that it was for this very action that the world was created! Let's not underrate *chessed*!

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפל



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