

my mission in life. As modest and as humble as a person must be, nevertheless he must have self-confidence.

True, a person cannot have the attitude "It is my strength and the power of my hand that is responsible for my great wealth." But a person needs to have faith in who he is and what he can do. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

### Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: Ahabat Hashem - Loving Hashem.**

The *misvah* to love Hashem is one of the few *misvot* that a person can fulfill at every moment, since it is dependent on a person's thoughts. It is also a very great *misvah* because when a person thinks about loving Hashem, it will lead him to perform many other *misvot*.

A person can arouse himself to love Hashem even through physical pleasures. If he likes tasty food or drink, or he enjoys going on trips or even accumulating wealth, he should think to himself: If I enjoy these items that are fleeting and temporary, all the more so should I feel love for my Creator, Who is the source of life and every imaginable pleasure. The person should then redirect his love for the physical pleasure and feel love for Hashem - the source of all pleasures. When he reaches this level, he can then involve himself in mundane actions like eating and sleeping, with the intention that they will help him to serve Hashem better. In this way, all of his actions will truly be *leshem shamayim* – for the sake of Heaven.

### Oath for Life

Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna, the famed Vilna Gaon, was once accused of kidnapping a Jewish child who had been held in a monastery. The Jewish community fasted, prayed and pleaded with Hashem to have mercy. They begged for the release of the Gaon from jail, fearing what his punishment might be.

The false witnesses appeared in court and had their say; no evidence was produced to the contrary. The verdict was handed down finding the Rabbi guilty. "We give the Rabbi a choice of punishment," said the judge. "He shall either submit to having a cross tattooed on his forehead, or he must be hanged!"

The Vilna Gaon shuddered at the first choice, which was not even an option for him. He would never consent to such a thing. The second choice was not displeasing to him; he rejoiced at the opportunity to give his life *al kidush Hashem*, in sanctification of G-d's Name.

His thoughts were interrupted by the judge's next words. "However if the Rabbi is prepared to take an oath denying the witness' testimony, the court will accept his word and drop the charges."

The Vilna Gaon had always been careful never to swear, out of fear of taking Hashem's name in vain., but he realized that he must now do so in order to save his life. He swore that he was telling the truth and was indeed innocent, and was released.

His prime disciple, Rav Chaim of Volozhin, related the episode along with his interpretation of why such a thing had come to pass. It was ordained by heaven that he should undergo such an ordeal, because the Vilna Gaon had fulfilled every possible *misvah* in the Torah in his lifetime, except for that of *שבועת השם*, swearing in Hashem's Name. Due to his lofty level, it was deemed proper for him to fulfill this command with no concern that any element of untruth would be involved, and thus would be put into such a situation. (A Mazeldig Voch)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לֵאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT NOAH ☆ נֶחֱמָה

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 54:1-10

**OCTOBER 28-29, 2022 4 HESHVAN 5783**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: Shaharit: 6:20, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am  
5:20 pm (main & upstairs) Morning Shema by: 9:23 am  
Candlelighting: 5:40 pm Shabbat Class: 4:15 pm  
Evening Shema after: 6:38 pm Shabbat Minhah: 1:30 & 5:15 pm  
These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Ends: 6:36, R"T 7:08 pm  
Weekday Shaharit: 6:45, 7:10 am, Sundays: 6:45, 8:00 am, Weekday Minhah: 5:35 pm

**This bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of our grandfather,**

**Haskell E. Doueck לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת יִחְזָקָאֵל בֶּן וְקִטּוֹרִיָּה**

**By Hal, Gary, Sammy and Annette Doueck**

**This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Victor Rishty**

**by his wife and children לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים בֶּן רַחֵל**

**Mabrook to Rabbi Ariel & Rivka Zafrani on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Shlomo & Shavie Abecasis.**

### A Message from our Rabbi

(Beresheet 8:22) "וְקָרָא חֹם וְקִיץ וְחָרֵף וְיוֹם וְלַיְלָה לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ"

"Cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall never cease"

After the flood, Hashem told Noah that the seasons of the year and day and night would never again be disrupted. This implies that these natural phenomena were interrupted during the flood. We are now moving from the fall season towards winter. For many of us, the sukkah has been taken down. I read a great thought from Rabbi Moshe Don Kastenbaum about this subject.

"I assume that for almost everyone, taking down the sukkah was a lot easier and quicker than putting it up. Building the sukkah takes time to figure out where each piece needs to go. There is a specific order that needs to be followed. Taking it down, on the other hand, requires little thought and attention. Construction is a far more complex and difficult process than destruction.

It is the same thing in the spiritual world. Spiritual growth takes a lot of time and effort, while spiritual decline can happen quickly and easily. One does not need to work hard to fall. On the contrary, just letting one's guard down is enough to facilitate

problems. Understanding this would prevent us from equating our spiritual ascents with our descents as if they were equally accomplished, which causes us a lot of unnecessary despair. Our steps forward say a lot more about us than our slips and falls, for they take far more time, effort and thought.

Because spiritual growth involves greater investment, it is not simply lost when we take a step down from where we were holding earlier. After fifty-one days from Elul through Succot, with hopefully many moments of *Aliyah*, a person can feel discouraged when he is not able to keep it up. But he must know that all that growth is inside him. It does not disappear. It positively impacts the rest of his year.

No one taking down his sukkah feels that his efforts were wasted now that he is no longer sitting in his sukkah. He understands that he takes along with him not only the *zechut* of the *misvah*, but also its holiness and impact. So it is with the last fifty-one precious days. Every thought of *teshubah*, every inspired word of *tefillah*, every moment of yearning to be bigger and better, leaves a mark and propels us to future growth.

Whatever setbacks we face going forward, let us realize that the foundation has been laid. While it is easy to take away the physical sukkah, it is impossible to take away the sukkah that lies inside of us. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## *Window to the World*

Did you ever stop to imagine what life was like inside of Noah's ark? There were three floors; the middle floor was filled with a collection of the world's animals wild, domestic, and otherwise. Birds and critters of all shapes and sizes, vermin and an endless potpourri of creepy crawlers whose pesky descendants bear witness to their survival during that tempestuous period.

Then there was a floor of refuse. There was no recycling center, and no sewage system that I am aware of.

The humans had the top floor. Cramped in an inescapable living space was Noah, his three sons, their wives and one mother-in-law. I think the rest of the scenario can play clearly in our minds. Surely, it was far from easy. What intrigues are the detailed architectural commands that Hashem gave Noah. Hashem details measurements and design for an ark that took 120 years to build! Why? Are there lessons to be learned from the design of the ark? After all, Hashem promised that there will be no more floods. If there are no more floods, then there need not be any more arks. So what difference does it make how it was built. Obviously, there are inherent lessons we can learn from the design of the ark. Let's look at one.

Noah is told to build a window. It seems practical enough; after all sitting for an entire year can get awfully stuffy. So Noah is commanded to build a window for breathing room. It is a little troubling. Does Noah need a command to add something so simple as a window? Did that command have to be incorporated into the heavenly plans for an ark that would endure the ravaging flood?

A renowned *Rosh Yeshiva*, tragically lost his son to a debilitating disease at the prime of his life. Not long married, the son left a widow and a young child. The *Rosh Yeshiva* and his Rebbitzin were devastated at the loss and the *shiva* period was a most difficult time.

One of the hundreds of visitors was the Bluzhever Rebbe, Rabbi Yisrael Spira, whose entire family was wiped out during the Holocaust. He sat quietly, taking in the pain of the bereaved family. Finally, when it was time to say something, Rabbi Spira turned to the *Rosh Yeshiva* and spoke. "Your loss is terrible, but at least your son will have a living remnant, his child. He will also have a resting place and stone where the family can visit. I do not even know where any of my children who were killed by the

Nazis are buried." Then he added, "Yet somehow Hashem has given me the strength to rebuild my family and life." Those words truly helped console the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

Sometimes when we are locked in our little boxes, we, too, need a window. When we think our world is crumbling and that we are doomed to a fate that is too difficult to bear, Hashem tells us to make a window. Sometimes, in our frustrations we have to look across the globe, or even across the river to know that despite our difficulties, others must endure a more difficult fate. And when we realize that they can endure, whether it is an Og holding on the back of the ark, or struggling with those lost amongst the ruins, we can remember that life inside the ark is not so bad after all. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

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## *Small Believer*

The *pasuk* states: "And Noah and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons came into the *Tebah*, because of the flood waters (*mipnei mei haMabul*)."*Rashi* infers from these words that "Noah, too, was one of those with little faith "*m'katnei Amanah*" – he believed but he did not fully believe." Despite what he was told by Hashem, he did not enter the *Tebah* until he had no choice but to do so because of the onslaught of the torrential rains. Up until the last minute, he hesitated to enter the *Tebah*.

How do we reconcile this status of being a "small believer" with the *pasuk's* earlier description of Noah as "*Ish Sadik*" - a righteous man?

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, in his *sefer Kedushat Levi*, writes that Noah was a great *Sadik*. He interprets the expression "*m'katnei Amanah*" (a small believer) to mean that Noah did not believe in himself. He did not see himself as a *Sadik*. Reb Levi Yitzchak explains that there are two types of *Sadikim*. There is a *Sadik* who feels confidence in his righteousness and he knows that "*Sadik gozer v'HaKadosh Baruch Hu Mekayem*" (The Almighty follows the orders, so to speak, of a *Sadik*). He knows that a *Sadik* has incredible powers and can in fact – as it were – overrule the Master of the Universe!

As to the "complaint" against Noah – why did he *not* pray for his generation (as, for example, Abraham prayed for the salvation of Sedom) and ask that the decree of the Flood be annulled – Reb Levi Yitzchak explains, that is what is meant by "Noah was a small believer." He did not see himself as any better than the people of his generation. Simply, he did not realize that he had the credentials to petition the Almighty to annul this decree! "On the contrary, he considered himself to be just another member of the "*Dor haMabul*. Consequently, he reasoned – "if I am going to be saved from this Flood, the others in the generation will be saved as well, because I am no better than they are!"

"*M'katnei amanah*" does not mean that he had insufficient faith in the Word of G-d, but rather that he did not have the confidence and *Emunah* in himself. That is why he waited when the water was up to his ankles and then up to his knees and up to his thighs before entering into the *Tebah* at the last minute.

This attitude on his part explains many of Noah's actions, that might imply criticism: Why did he not pray for his generation? It is because his attitude was "Me? The Master of the Universe should listen to me? Why would my prayers be worth anything? Who am I?" This approach reconciles how Noah could at the same time be an "*Ish Sadik* and on the other hand also "*M'katnei Amanah*."

We begin our day with the prayer: *Modeh Ani Lefanecha, Melech Chai v'Kayam she'he'chezarta bi nishmati b'chemlah, Rabbah Emunatecha!* What is the meaning of the expression "*Rabbah Emunatecha*"? Rabbi Silber suggested that perhaps it can be interpreted as "You have so much faith in me!" I woke up again this morning. Why? It must be because You think I can do the job. Your *Emunah* in me is so great that You return my soul every single morning, manifesting Your confidence in my ability to fulfill