

# א ביסל תורה!

# The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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נח

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# The Influence Our Actions Can Have

By Ethan Ravid

“What you do in life echoes in eternity”. After reading this quote many times I realized how significant it really is. We see this a lot In this week's פרשה. For the first half we talk about the flood that killed everyone in the world except נח, his family, and all the animals he saved. In the second half you have a lot of smaller stories that lead us to אברהם. After the flood we have this short story with נח exiting the תיבה, and gives a sacrifice to ה', and creates a ברית with ה' to never flood the world again. There is a פסוק in this week's פרשה that describes this more. כ. פרק ח פסוק כ. says, “וַיִּקַּח מִכָּל הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה וּמִכָּל הָעוֹף הַטְּהוֹר וַיַּעֲלֶה, Noach built an altar for Hashem, and he took from all the pure animals and all the pure birds and offered burnt offerings on the altar.” Why would נח give a קרבן of animals after he had worked so hard to protect and save these animals?

ה' said: "אמר: לא ציוה לי הקב"ה להכניס מאילו שבעה שבעה אלא כדי להקריב קרבן מהם" says, רש"י "he did not command me to bring in seven of each, for any reason other than making a sacrifice of them. רש"י is saying that ה' thought the only reason he would have 7 of each pure animal is to give a קרבן to ה'. This answer, however, is not perfect as it implies that he did what he wanted and not that there was a reason behind his actions. If you worked hard to do something, to keep something safe, would you destroy it after you achieved your goal?

ובנא נח מדבחא קדם ה' הוא מדבחא דבנא אדם בעידן," offers a different opinion. He says, "דאיטרד מן גינתא דעדן ואקריב עילוי קרבנא ועילוי אקריבו קין והבל ית קרבנהון וכד נחתו מוי דטובענא איתצד ובנייה נח דה' built the altar before ה'; that altar which אדם had built in the time when he was sent away from the עדן, and had offered קרבנות upon it; and upon it had קין and הבל offered their קרבנות. But when the waters of the מבול came, it was destroyed, and נח rebuilt it, and he took all clean cattle, and of all clean birds, and sacrificed four upon that altar."

This answer shows that when we make mistakes or do something we later regret, it leaves marks on this world. So now let us return to the saying “what you do in life echoes in eternity.” This saying is what the **יונתן** is referring to. When **אדם** got kicked out of **גן עדן**, he gave a **קרבן**, and it left a mark on the world and so too, the future. Then when his children gave **קרבנות** to **ה'** to receive help with growing the land, one got killed, **הבל**, and that left a mark on this world. But during the flood that killed so many people, it also destroyed the **מזבח** which erased the mark left by **אדם** and his children. This **מזבח** was used by many people to do **תשובה**, and now it was destroyed. However, when **נח** rebuilt this **מזבח**, it reinstated the mark which was left by past generations. This **מזבח** was now serving a new purpose: Making peace between **ה'** and the present generation. I hope that from this week’s **פרשה** we can have clarity and make smart choices, knowing that what we do has an impact and matters in every way.

# The Month Debate

By Nessa Jaffe

This week's פרשה נח, פרשת נח contains the story of the מבול, flood. The story contains lots of numbers and dates. One of these dates comes from when the מבול started. It says, "בשנת שש מאות שנה לחיי נח בחדש", "השני בשבעה עשר יום לחדש ביום הזה נבקעו כל מעינות תהום רבה וארבת השמים נפתחו:", In the six hundredth year of נח's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day All the fountains of the great deep burst apart, and the floodgates of the sky broke open.

Okay great, so which is the second month? You might say, I've been in kindergarten before, I know that the second month of the year is מרחשון (which would make the day the מבול started two weeks away). You might also say no, it's אייר because in the תורה, the first month is ניסן, so the second month is אייר. But the whole reason that the first month is ניסן is that it's when the Jews left Egypt, יציאת מצרים hadn't happened yet, so which one is it? רבי אלעזר and רבי יהושע have this same debate in מסכת ראש השנה. רבי אלעזר says that the month was מרחשון and רבי יהושע says that it was אייר. Rabbi יהושע says that the first month is ניסן because it says so in the תורה. רבי אלעזר says if they had to specify that they should start counting from ניסן then it means that they used to count from something else, like תשרי. Both of them think that the first month (תשרי for one and ניסן for the other) is the first month from when the world was created, and also the first month from when the מבול ended and the world was created anew.

They also both agree that since the people changed their actions for the worse, ה' changed the nature of the world for the worst. For רבי יהושע, the way the world was changed is that it doesn't usually rain in אייר, but in order to punish these people the rain came even in אייר. For רבי אלעזר it couldn't be that the rain came in an unusual time of year because it does rain in מרחשון. So for him what changed? He says that just like the sins of the people were "scalding hot", so too the rain was unnaturally hot. From here we learn the principle of מדה כנגד מדה, punishments fitting the sin. Despite the fact that the entire generation was killed, ה' still acted justly in His punishment. May we all refrain from sin in the future, as just as we sin, so too will we be punished.

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