

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

A Cut Above



RABBI
DOVID TZVI
MEISSNER

From all the kosher animals take for yourself seven each-man and his wife (7:2).

Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky, זצ"ל, was once conversing with Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, may he be well, and quipped: "Who was the *mesader kiddushin* (marriage officiator) for these animals?", noting, as does the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 108b), the interesting husband-wife terminology used regarding animals. The Gemara's answer, quoting R' Shmuel bar Nachmeini in the name of R' Yonason, is that this term was reserved for the animals that weren't involved in sin (i.e., they didn't mate with other species, as the other animals did).

Rav Galinsky proceeded to ask Rav Kanievsky, ultimately, how does the concept of marriage, seemingly limited to humans, apply to those animals?

Rav Kanievsky pointed out to him the *Sefer ha'Aruch's* comment, quoted by *Mesores Hashas* on the gloss of the Talmud (*ibid*). *Aruch* explains since these animals didn't sin by mating with other species of animals, the Torah elevated them and applied this terminology, unique to humans, to them as well.

Rav Galinsky, in his classic *mussar* style, replied that this idea can be a valuable lesson for us. When most of the world is influenced by the surrounding environment and culture, focusing on achieving fleeting desires and pleasures of This World, one who strengthens himself and rises above his surroundings will certainly be elevated above human stature. For, if the animals were elevated from their animalistic stature to attain human stature by overcoming their pull to sin like the other animals, most certainly a human who overcomes his temptations, especially in an area where many others fail, will be elevated above the stature of humans.

Perhaps we can connect this concept to Noach. Vilna Gaon in his commentary to *Parshas Bereishis* (*Aderes Eliyahu* 2:17) notes that the Torah describes the one forbidden tree in Gan Eden as the *eitz hada'as tov varah*, Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Why was Adam forbidden to eat from this tree if its contents provided good knowledge? He explains that since there was *ra*, evil knowledge as well, it was not worth it—it's very bad.

The secret to success, says the Gaon, is being *tam*, simple and unexposed. This way, one won't be drawn to all the damaging surroundings *despite* the fact that there's a lot of good around as well, and he will thus be able to break the shackles of physicality and cleave to Hashem. The Gaon says that Noach, Yaakov, and Yov excelled in this trait of being a *Tam* (Noach is described as *tamim*, from the root *tam*).

This is what set Noach apart from all the others in his generation; while others acted as they desired, as is recounted at the end of *Parshas Bereishis*, he remained uninvolved and distant, and he was the only one saved.

Everything in the world around us vies for our attention, including many things which have good elements, but have potential detrimental effects as well. Although it may be difficult, one who rises up and remains disconnected from these things will truly be elevated—a cut above.



**Men's Thursday night
Derech Hashem shiur**
starting back up at a 8pm on
Thursday Nights; Discover the
secrets of the Universe Part 2
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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH RABBI SPETNER

Q: Why did Noach need to send the raven to see if the water had gone down. Why did he not just ask Og, who was hitching a ride on the *teiva* (ark)?

A: Og would only be able to see around the *teiva*. Perhaps there was water all around his field of vision. A bird can fly!

Q: Doesn't the Talmud state that the flood did not enter Eretz Yisrael? Why didn't Noach just go there?

A: Who says Noach knew?! The real question is why didn't Hashem just send him to E"Y? The *Maharsha* (*Zevachim* 113a) answers based on *Rashi* in Chumash. The *teiva* was a huge construction project; after all, it took 120 years to build! Hashem wanted a very visible, constant reminder that He was unsatisfied with how the people on earth were acting and that they should improve their ways. Therefore, he commanded Noach to build a huge boat that would take a long time to put together. There was plenty of time for the curiosity of his neighbors to get the better of them and ask, "What is that for?!" Noach would answer them by saying that G-d is going to be bringing a flood to destroy all life on earth unless people repent of their evil ways.

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

Q: Isn't a rainbow part of nature? Did light not refract before Noach's times?

A: Ramban says that the rainbow is part of nature and that is why the *passuk* writes regarding the sign of the rainbow "nosati," "the sign I have given" in past tense and not "ani nosein," "the sign I am giving" in present tense, meaning that the sign is something that already exists in the world and is just being given as the sign from now on. *Levush* and *Malbim*, on the other hand, actually suggest that the way it rained before the flood was in such a way that there was no natural opportunity for a rainbow to happen and give explanations for how that could be, such that the rainbow was never seen before Noach was told of its future significance.

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! If you would like to submit a question on the parasha, please email it to parasha@cincynkollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity. To be considered for the coming week, questions must be submitted by Monday at noon. 🕒

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Among those who came to America looking for a new start was the Berger family from Rava, Poland. The Berbers had once been wealthy but World War I had changed that. Left destitute, Rav Berger asked his Rebbe for a blessing for sustenance. To his surprise, instead of a blessing he was instructed to emigrate to America! While Rav Berger was disappointed, his wife was even more so, having heard the horror stories of what had become of other families and their commitment to religion upon reaching the shores of America, and only agreed to go after traveling herself to the Rebbe and hearing the directive from him herself. She firmly committed herself to not allow her observance to change even in the minutest detail in America. This was put to the test when, eventually, Rav Berger was offered the position of Rabbi at a synagogue in Cleveland which at that time was light years behind New York, where they had been living, as far as what was available in the kosher food department, among other things. And items like *Cholov*



Starting this Sunday Morning!

Minchas Chinuch Chaburah in the Kollel Annex from 9:30 – 11am.
For more details or to request a Chavrusa contact Rabbi Nossan Wiggins at nossanwiggins@gmail.com or 845-641-6306

A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

The *passuk* states (7:23), "vayishaer ach noach," that Noach alone was left behind. *Ba'al Haturim* points out that the words *vayishaer* and *ach* are both exclusionary words and the phrase would therefore be a double negative which would then mean, as the *Talmud* says, that the *passuk* means to include something. Says *Ba'al Haturim*, the *passuk* is including Og, whom the *Talmud* states survived the flood, meaning that in the words that tell us that Noach alone was left there is a hint that Og was left as well. Correspondingly, the *gematria* (numeric value) of "ach Noach" (79) is equal to the name Og.

Yaakov ben Asher, known as the *Ba'al Haturim*, was a scholar and biblical commentator who lived most of his life in Spain from approximately 1275 to approximately 1340. His classic commentary is printed in many editions of the *Chumash*. 🕒

Yisrael (milk from a cow that the milking was overseen by a Jew) were just not found. The Rebbetzin, though, had given her word to herself and was not about to give in. She soon found a farmer and intended to buy a cow for herself so that she would have *Cholov Yisrael*. But how to pay for a whole cow on a Rabbi's meager salary? Rebbetzin Berger looked down at the last vestige of her former wealth, her diamond ring. Slowly, she took it off, handed it to the farmer, and took her precious *Cholov Yisrael* cow home. 🕒

THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

YEISHU HANOTZREI – THE FALSE PROPHET OF G-D (PART II)

According to the Gemara in *Sotah*, Yeishu was born approximately 200 years before the destruction of the Second *Beis Hamikdash*. (As we saw last week.) It would seem differently, though, from the Gemara in *Gittin* (80a). The *Talmud* there relates, that an anxious fellow named Papus ben Yehudah was overly protective of his wife. Whenever he left her at home, he would lock her in the house. On the holy day of Yom Kippur, while the men were in *shul*, a local scoundrel named Joseph ben Pandira, passed by the house of Papus. He convinced Papus's wife to escape to freedom and provided her with a rope ladder. The two fled Jerusalem and settled in Beis Lechem where their son was born shortly after. The child was called ben "sadita" (son of the one who veered away). The Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (67a) reports that ben Sadita was hanged on Erev Pesach. This Gemara seems to be alluding to another Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (43a), which relates that Yeishu was hanged on Erev Pesach after being convicted of spreading idolatry and wizardry within the Jewish nation. Hence, ben Sadita is understood to be none other than Yeishu *Hanotzrei*. The final piece of the puzzle is the Gemara in *Berachos* (61b), which recounts that Rabbi Akiva and Papus ben Yehudah sat in a Roman prison together, decades after the destruction of the Second *Beis Hamikdash*. Consequently, Yeishu couldn't have been a student of Yehoshua ben Prachya who lived 200 years earlier. 🕒