

A PARASHA THOUGHT

The Road to Success

We know there is not one extra word or even letter in the Torah. Every single letter is there to teach us how to live our lives and fulfill our purpose in this world. In the middle of this week's *parasha* the *passuk* (10:9) says about Nimrod that he was a "mighty hunter before Hashem." Rashi explains this to mean that Nimrod knew Hashem was true. Nonetheless, he would use his shrewdness to persuade people to go against Hashem. One who knows Hashem is the truth and purposely rebels against Him is like Nimrod. Additionally, two *pesukim* later, the Torah writes that Ashur left the land of Nimrod and built several cities, including Ninveh, a large city. Rashi relates that Ashur left his children when he saw them following the path of Nimrod, joining in building the tower in the rebellion against Hashem. What message is the Torah teaching us in all these *pesukim*?

The Chafetz Chaim explains that throughout history we find that there were groups of people who rebelled against Hashem. In earlier generations, like the time of the flood, the rebellion stemmed from their strength. At other times, such as with Nimrod, the rebellion stemmed from his shrewdness. However, even when there was a strong desire to join the rebellion, there were individuals who withstood it, like Ashur. Although it may look like they lost out at that moment since they were ostracized and rejected by the surrounding society, the truth is that those who remain firm with Hashem will ultimately succeed in life. Those who rebel will ultimately be punished and will suffer. The Torah stresses that Ashur withstood society and did not lose out; he was blessed to be the builder of cities, including the large city of Ninveh. In

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RABBI
YAKOV
APTER



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Q. In the fifth chapter of *Pirkei Avos*, the *mishna* lists items that Hashem created during the twilight of the sixth day of creation just before Shabbos. One opinion includes the ram that Avrohom offered in the place of Yitzchok. Why did this ram live so long?

A. Rashi brings a source that when Chava gave Adam the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, she also gave all of the animals to eat. This is why animals also die, just like man. However, the sin of eating the forbidden fruit occurred on Friday afternoon before twilight when the ram was created. So that specific ram never ate from the Tree of Knowledge and naturally would never die until it was offered by Avrohom Avinu.

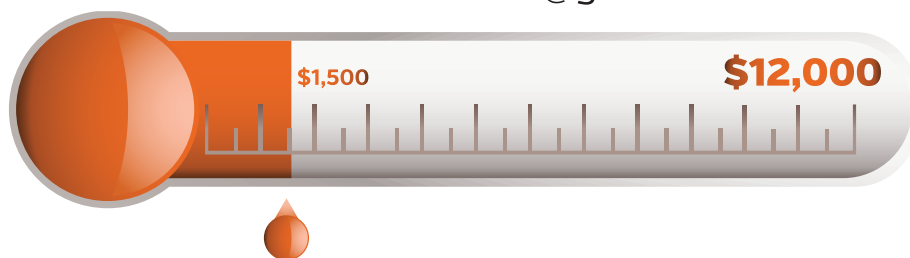
Q. In 11:31 we're told that Terach, Avrom, Lot, and Sarai all left Ur Kasdim with the intention of going to Eretz Canaan, but only got as far as Charan and settled there. Why were they going to Canaan and why did they change their plan?

A. Ramban in 11:28 explains that Terach originally was from Charan and moved to Ur, leaving his son Nachor in Charan. In Ur, Terach had a third son, Haran. This is why

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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the Torah, when referring to the death Haran, describes Ur as the birthplace specifically of Haran. After Avrom's miraculous salvation from the furnace in Ur, Terach wanted to put as much distance as possible between Avrom and Ur. This is why he planned to go as far away as Canaan. However, Terach, upon returning to his own native land of Charan, felt that it was sufficient to remain there. Ultimately, through the command of Hashem, Avrom, Sarai, and Lot continued the journey and settled in Canaan. 🕒

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing 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.

A PARASHA THOUGHT

CONTINUED

contrast, Nimrod, who was a leader with great power and glory, ended up failing to build his tower, his followers were scattered, and he was killed by Esav.

This teaches us that throughout history, there will be many movements that contradict the Torah's views. There will also be situations in which one is tested, and it will appear that one will lose out by following the Torah's path. For example, at times, it looks like acting 100% honestly in business causes one to lose out, especially when looking at others who have succeeded by acting dishonestly, and it may be a great challenge for us. However, the Torah teaches us a fundamental message. Although it seems that acting improperly causes people to succeed and gain power and wealth, in the end, their wealth will not remain, and they will be punished. However, if one acts honestly and follows the Torah's path, he will succeed. Perhaps not immediately, but in the long run, he will succeed. 🕒



Rabbi Minster shares weekly advanced-level remarks on the parasha with the Kollel's Choshen Mishpat Chabura. If you would like to receive a recording, please send an email to cincynkollelbusiness@gmail.com

HAFTORAH HAPPENINGS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

This week's Haftarah begins in Chapter 54 of the book of Yeshaya. It is a combination of two different Haftarahs we read between Tisha B'av and Rosh Hashana as part of the seven Haftarahs of consolation. We repeat it this Shabbos due to the fact that in chapter 54 verse 9 the Navi speaks of "the waters of Noach," where Hashem promises that just as He swore to never again bring a flood, in the times of *Mashiach* He will no longer be wrathful with us. However, the *Zohar* writes that the flood is called the "waters of Noach" because Noach was in some way responsible for the flood, in that he did not pray for the wicked people of his generation or try to lead them in the proper path. This needs an explanation. The Torah calls Noach a *tzaddik* (righteous). Why didn't he pray for his generation? The *Balei Mussar* explain that Noach was scared that trying to inspire the people of his generation in the service of Hashem would negatively affect his own spiritual level. Therefore, he did not want to get involved in helping his own generation. For that reason, he is held somewhat responsible for the flood.

This struggle is not at all unique to Noach. Helping others while preserving our own spiritual levels is a very delicate balance, and one that needs to be treated with the seriousness it deserves. However, just to ignore the importance of trying to help those who need spiritual direction is too serious of a need to ignore. 🕒



TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YEHUDAH LEVI

In many shuls this time of year, *aravos* (willow branches) can be seen laying atop the *Aron Kodesh*. This is a result of the practice some have of leaving the remnants of these "*Hoshanos*," customarily beaten in the Hoshana Raba service, on top of the *Aron*. An advantage of placing the used *Hoshanos* in a designated area is that doing so insures they are not disposed of in a disrespectful manner. However, the source for leaving them in such a prominent location is somewhat obscure, as there does not appear to be obvious mention of such a practice by any author earlier than the 19th century (at least not that I could find). Contemporary sources cite the *Malbushei Yom Tov* (Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Baslavsky) and the responsa of Rabbi Shalom Mordechai Schwadron (*Maharsham*), both of whom lived in the mid-1800s, as recording this behavior. The reasoning behind this custom also a bit of an enigma, with Rabbi Baslavsky forwarding a *kabbalistic* approach.

R' Moshe Sternbach offers a novel explanation of this custom by highlighting that the *Hoshana* ritual in which these branches were utilized is in commemoration of an activity that took place in the *Beis Hamikdash*. As part of the service in the *mikdash*, willow branches were arranged along the *mizbayach* in such a way that their tips would lay on top of it. As such, by laying the *Hoshanos* upon the *Aron Kodesh* we allude to that practice. 🕒

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