



Parshas Noach 2022, validation of purpose

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel, and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe, the first Chabad Rebbe, gave a talk on Parshas Lech Lecha in 1890. He said that "מען בעדארף לעבן מיט דער צייט" - **one must live with the times.** His older brother, Reb Yehuda Leib, explained that this means we should not just learn the weekly Torah portion; but **live it and implement its eternal lessons in our daily life.**

Growing up, my parents, teachers, and rabbis taught me that the timing of weekly Parsha was no coincidence. Rather, it is a deliberate and intentional effort by G-d to relate and connect with His people no matter where they may be. Accordingly, our great sages instituted that we do not go more than three days without reading the Torah and connecting with its holiness.

This profound custom was the inspiration and impetus to begin the Parsha Perspective. To demonstrate and share that the Torah and its lessons are practical and necessary now more than ever.

The darkness of the world and the chaos we are experiencing are getting louder and stronger every day. Yet, one thing remains steady and unwavering, G-d's Oneness and Wisdom. Although His Oneness and Wisdom may seem like two

separate qualities, they are one and the same. G-d created us with His great wisdom, and our existence against all odds proclaims His Oneness to the world.

This week is the 200th episode of the Parsha Perspective! I want to thank each of you for listening to or reading the Parsha Perspective every week. I hope you have gained as much as I have from the past 200 episodes.

I want to sincerely thank all who have supported and contributed to the mission and purpose of the Parsha Perspective. Your support and encouragement to share the stories and lessons inspire me and indicate the strength of our unity and combined mission.

May G-d, in His great Kindness, continue to enable me to share His Wisdom, Mercy, and Love with His people. May we merit to experience the ultimate redemption with the coming of Moshiach!

Our Parsha introduces Noach, a man who remained faithful to G-d while the rest of society descended into chaos and anarchy. Noach was told by G-d that a Mabul (*flood*) would soon destroy all of civilization. Only he and his family would survive in a Teivah, an ark he was to build. He was given the ark's dimensions and commanded to bring 7 of every kosher animal and a pair of every non-kosher animal.

Noach slowly built the ark to give people a chance to repent and stop the flood, but he was unsuccessful. The rain began on the 11th of Cheshvan as Noach entered the ark with his entire family and every animal. The downpour lasted 40 days and nights, killing all humans and animals that were not in the ark. The waters continued to stir and boil for 150 days until G-d commanded it to subside.

Noach sent out a raven to determine the extent of the water's retreat; however, the raven did not fly far before returning to the Teivah. Noach waited and then sent out a dove three separate times. The first time the dove left, it returned empty-handed.

But, It returned with an olive leaf in its beak the second time, indicating that new growth had begun to sprout. The final time the dove did not return, signaling to Noach that the land had become dried. On the 27th of Cheshvan, Noach and his family exited the Teivah to reinhabit the world exactly one year after entering.

However, a question comes to mind: The Torah begins with stories that chronicle and describe the mistakes of mankind. From eating from the tree of knowledge and Cain killing Avel to the entire world revolting against G-d during Noah's times, Humanity was not vindicating their creation. So why would the Torah begin by shedding a negative and destructive light on humanity? What is the lesson and purpose of learning these stories?!

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, gives a deep and profound explanation. He writes that the Torah begins by seemingly portraying humanity as a failure to teach us an essential and crucial lesson.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the difference between a pessimist and an optimist. A pessimistic view is critical of hopes and dreams while cherishing gloom and doom. It robs people of their confidence and belief and exchanges it with fear, anxiety, and despair. Hence, a pessimistic and negative society can not survive or endure, for it devalues growth, advancement, and innovation.

While an optimist is precisely the opposite. An optimistic view cherishes aspirations and ambitions while devaluing negativity and cynicism. This outlook gives those without hope or faith the inspiration and energy to grow and transform their lives. Accordingly, a positive and optimistic society thrives despite misfortunes and tragedies. For there is always a dream to aspire to and a promise to fulfill.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that we must ask ourselves, **which camp are we in? What perspective do we see? Which side do we stand on?!** The Torah is abundantly and perfectly clear on which side it's on.

Just follow the story of the whole society descending into chaos and rebellion against G-d, we learn about **Avraham Avinu**, a man who was unwavering in his belief. A man who came to the realization that there is a higher purpose and a greater mission than the vanity of this world.

He passed down this understanding to his son, **Yitzchak Avinu**, who exemplified this realization. First, by the Akedah, the altar, he was supposed to be offered as a

sacrifice to G-d. Then in Be'er Sheva, where he famously dug seven wells even though the Philistines were filling them.

He gave this perspective to his son, **Ya'akov Avinu**, who embodied this awareness with a resolve that gives us strength today. From fighting Esav's angel to believing his son was still alive, Ya'akov maintained his faith and trusted G-d to keep him in the right direction.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe answers the original question with a question: **Which part do we focus on?** The mistakes, faults, and errors of humanity? **Or the faith, trust, and belief of our forefathers that was passed on to us?**

This immensely powerful lesson is ever more relevant as the chaos around us swells, and the challenges don't seemingly stop; whose side do we stand on? What perspective do we see? **Which idea is worth fighting for?!**

**"The Jewish task remains to be the voice of hope in an age of fear,
the countervoice in the conversation of humankind."**

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Have a meaningful Shabbos,

Rabbi Sholom Yemini