

## Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

This week's Haftorah is from Yishayahu (Isaiah). It is the last perek of the sefer.

**The story line of the Haftorah:** The story of this week's Haftorah starts by discussing how Hashem dislikes sacrifices from the wicked. Hashem informs us (via Yishayahu) that he won't accept impure sacrifices in his pure and holy Beis Hamikdash – his choice of abode on this World. However, loyal Jews need not worry. The bringers of pure sacrifices need not fear retribution at the hand of Hashem, for Hashem will bring peaceful times to Jerusalem. Yishayahu makes a prophecy that Jerusalem will flourish and all the exiles will return. Yishayahu then continues to explain that Hashem did not lead them this far just to abandon them, he also mentions that he will bring retribution to the wicked and unleash his wrath upon the evil people. Yishayahu informs us that our helpers will be all the other nations in the world; they will bring us back to Jerusalem. His conclusion is that all the Tzaddikim will find comfort in the rebuilt Jerusalem.

**Famous phrases:** Isaiah: 58: 13, "Im tashihv me'Shabbat raglechah asot chah-fatzechah beyom kadshi, V-karat la'Shabbat oneg likdosh Hashem

*mechubad. Vchiybadito ma-asot derachecha mimitzoh cheftzecha v-daber davar. Az titanag al Adoshem vehirkavtechah al bamotai aretz v'ha'alticha nachalt Ya'akov aviycha ki pi Adoshem Yidaber.*" It speaks of Shabbos and its reward. "If you restrain your foot, because it is the Sabbath; refrain from accomplishing your own needs on my holy day. If you proclaim the Sabbath 'a delight' and the holy day of Hashem honored and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden – hence you will delight in Hashem, and I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Jacob, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken." Said during the daytime Kiddush for the Sephardim on Shabbos.

**The connection between the Haftorah and Shabbat Rosh Chodesh:** We read this Haftorah because of the passuk it contains (1:23) "It will come to pass that every Rosh Chodesh and every Shabbos, all of mankind will come and bow before Me, Hashem."

*Adapted from Haftorahman.com by Jonathan Fishel*



## נח, Righteous as he seems?

אלה תולדות נח איש צדיק במים היה בדרתיו

**These are the offspring of Noach; Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations.** (Bereishis 6:9)

In this opening Possuk, Hashem bestows praise upon נח. However, the qualification 'in his generations' seems to detract from this compliment somewhat. Indeed, Rashi quotes the famous Gemoro in סנהדרין קח. where יוחנן explains this as a detrimental description of נח – that he would not have been classified as a צדיק in another generation. However, ריש לקיש takes the contrasting, more positive view that if he would have been living in another generation, he would have become an even greater צדיק as he would have been influenced by other great צדיקים. Due to this מחלוקת, our understanding of נח remains clouded.

In order to attain a realistic insight into נח's greatness, one must first analyse his generation. The terms the Torah uses to describe נח's generation are 'corruption' and 'thievery'. Additionally, we are told that the more powerful men took any women they fancied. It is apparent that in this generation, all moral boundaries were crossed. Consequently, נח's behaviour was extremely commendable considering he managed to remain unaffected by the terrible evil surrounding him.

Furthermore, the Ramban is bothered by the inclusion of the word 'תמים' – 'Completely' (as Onkelos translates it). What extra information does it teach us? The Brisker Rov, based on a Rambam in הלכות תשובה explains that if the sins of the entire

world were to become more numerous than its merits, then the world would be destroyed immediately. Even צדיקים would be killed. However, נח, as our Possuk informs us, was greater than a regular צדיק. He had no sins at all – he was a 'complete' צדיק, and therefore he merited to be saved. This proves how great נח really was.

The מדרש אור החיים הקדוש (רבה יאג) - מדרש brings a more derogative way. In the מדרש, משה argues that he achieved greater spiritual heights than נח. He declares that נח only managed to save himself and his immediate family, but not the entirety of his generation. Whereas, after the sin with the הזהב עגלי משה himself defended the Jewish people and managed to save the vast majority of them. This is the reason for the repetition of the word נח. The Possuk is emphasising that only נח but not the rest of his generation was saved. It was נח's apathy and lack of responsibility towards his fellow human beings which let him down. נח failed to inspire his generation to do תשובה, whereas other צדיקים such as אברהם dedicated their whole lives to bringing people closer to G-d; for example, when he welcomed the three מלאכים at the beginning of Parshas Vayeira.

In truth, it is not our responsibility to pass judgement on people, but to emulate their good deeds and learn from their mistakes. נח's ability to ignore evil influences and steer clear of sin is a quality we can all learn from. Nevertheless, our aim should perhaps be to achieve the higher level of משה and אברהם who tried to improve and help those around them as well.

*Written by Shimon Levy*

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## Words from the Wise

This week was the *yahrzeit* of **R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov** – one of the great early figures of Chassidus. He considered each person in his community as one of his own children. This story demonstrates how he cared for individual members of his community.

Once, he was called to the house of a man on his deathbed. He rushed to the sick man's house, where the man's family were crowded tearfully around the bed. The man was tossing fitfully and was clearly extremely worried about something other than his impending death. R' Levi spoke gently to the man, asking him what was disturbing him.

"Rebbe" he answered weakly. "I know that soon I will die and stand before the Heavenly Court. On my deathbed I have repented for my many sins, but I do not know what merits I have that will stand for me. I do not know how I will

receive any portion in the World to Come." Tears streamed down his pale face. "Rebbe, please help me."

R' Levi looked at him thoughtfully. Suddenly he sprang into action. He grasped the sick man's hands in his and said "Don't despair. I will give you my entire portion in the World to Come."

The man smiled and leaned back on his bed, no longer worried.

R' Levi's followers were confounded. After the man had died, they asked the Rebbe: "How could you be so quick to give away such a precious object?"

His answer was astounding. "I would rather give away my entire portion of the World to Come than see a fellow Jew in pain and worry."

*Adapted from A Story a Day by Adam Gaventa*

### Riddle of the Week

How many fish survived the *boiling* hot water of the Mabul?

Previous week:  
N/A

### M'lachah of the Week

**Choreish** Is the preparation of the soil or landscape for the purpose of making it more suitable for seeding or planting, therefore any improvement of land or soil is the M'lachah of Choreish.

**Practical application:**

One should not play football on plain soil as there is no doubt that you will make the soil suitable for seeding or planting, there is, however, a machlokes concerning whether one is allowed to play this on grass.

## A Deluge of Inspiration

Ideas to warm you during the cold dark winter months

An interesting thing seems to occur with regard to the Jewish calendar. We have just experienced a month which was packed full of *ימים טובים* and suddenly... nothing. Not even a fast day! And we call it "מרחשון" – meaning 'the bitter month of ח'שון'.

The truth is that even the month of אב – tragic in its history - is not referred to as bitter (actually it is known as *מנחם אב* – which seems rather more comforting than one might expect – but that is a topic for another time). This is because, it is at the lowest points, that one realises that if one can move so far in a negative direction, there is the potential to move in the other direction. The scientific example is that of an elastic band – the further back you pull it, the further it will travel. ח'שון *seems* to have none of this. But let's look more closely...

We know that something did happen during ח'שון – the *מבול*. Indeed the real name for ח'שון is בול – from the same root. The world was given a rinse on a rather cosmic level. Yet, out of this came hope, a fresh start, from which, only 300 years later אברהם אבינו was born and as a result, conscience.

It is no coincidence that the סדרה which ushers in ח'שון – the story of the *מבול*! From beginning to end, this סדרה is confusing, as the word *מבול* denotes – the *מפרשים* comment on its etymological connection with the word *בלבול* – confusion on a number of levels. Hence even the end of the סדרה deals with *בבל* – again from the same root (as רש"י points out, *בבל* is where the dead from the *מבול* were swept, because it was the lowest point. Why would you build a tower to *שמים* form the lowest point – start from a mountain!?). And in the middle, נח gets drunk, which is a clear link to *עד דלא ידע* (this is only one of many allusions to *פורים* in the early פרקים of *בראשית*).

It is during winter, a time when everything seems dead, that the real preparation for spring is being nurtured. From the rotting seeds, sprout life.

This is just a little something to think about whilst we warm ourselves on those dark winter nights and move towards a light of understanding – the month of *כסלו* – and *חנוכה*!

Written by **Rabbi A Landau**

### Gematria of the Week

*חמס* (Thievery) is the same gematria as *מי נח* (waters of Noach) which shows that the generation of the flood were punished *מדה כנגד מדה* – measure for measure. Furthermore, *חמס* shares a Gematria with *גיהנם* which teaches us that they were punished with hot waters.

(בעל הטורים וז"א)