

חדש חשון ותיקון צורתנו הרב חיים קסמן

In *Parshas Haazinu* we have the *tzivuy* of “*Zechor Yemos Olam, Binu Shenos Dor v’Dor.*” Rashi explains this to be a *tzivuy* to contemplate the deeds of the *Dor haMabul* and *Dor haFlagah* and what happened to them as a result of those deeds. From here we see that in these *doros* and their *chatoim* there are *yesodos* that we need to think about and apply to our lives. Moshe Rabbeinu urged *Klal Yisroel*, in their quest to be *shomer Torah* to the greatest extent, to be *misbonen* and draw lessons from the events in *Parshas Noach*.

In the beginning of the *parsha*, Noach is referred to as “*Ish Tzaddik, Tomim hayah b’dorosav.*” (בראשית ו, ט) Further on, when HaKadosh Boruch Hu speaks to him, Hashem says “*ki os’cha ra’isi tzaddik lefonai bador hazeh.*” (בראשית ז, א) *Meforshim* are bothered why the description of “*tomim*” is left out and only “*tzaddik*” is stated. Rashi, of course, says the famous rule of “*miktzas sh’vacho bifonov,*” one only gives partial praise in front of the subject.

The Maharil Diskin offers a different explanation. He says that in the *lashon* of Chazal, *tzaddik* refers to the *midda* of being *kovesh* one’s *yetzer* against the force of *ta’avo*. We find this by Yosef who is referred to as Yosef haTzaddik because he resisted the temptation of *eishes Potifar*. The *Dor haMabul* were *mush’chosim* in this *midda*. They allowed *ta’avo* to be *sholet* on them in an extreme manner. This *hash’choso* caused a breakdown of all societal boundaries, the most demonstrable being the increase of theft and *chomos*.

On the other hand, the description of *tomim* refers to excellence in the *midda* of *emunah*. We find this in the *posuk* of “*tomim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha,*” (דברים יח, יג) which refers to a *shlaymus* in *emunah* of Hashem Yisborach.

Therefore, says the Maharil Diskin, in the beginning of the *parsha* where we are discussing Noach *b’dorosav*, which means in comparison to both the *Dor haMabul* and the *Dor haFlagah*, the *posuk* uses both *bituyim* of *tzaddik* and *tomim*. “*Tzaddik*” was necessary for him to maintain his *madreiga* in the *Dor haMabul* and “*tomim*” was necessary for him to maintain his status in the *Dor haFlagah*. (The *Dor haFlagah*’s shortcoming was an err in *dei’os* and *emunah*.) However, when Hashem is speaking to him specifically about the *Mabul*, Noach is only described as *tzaddik* because that was the *midda* necessary for Noach to be *zoche* to the *yeshua* which he was granted.

(According to this Maharil Diskin, there is a very interesting *ho’ora*. We find that Chazal have a *tayno* on Noach in the *Dor haMabul* and a different *tayno* on him when introducing the *Dor haFlagah*. Noach hesitated to enter the *teivah* by the *Mabul* and Rashi brings that he had a *chisaron* in *emunah*. After he exited the *teivah*, we have the episode with the *gefen* which is *lich’ora* a *chisaron* in *tayvo*. Noach had the necessary *midda* required to excel in each given *dor*. He was a *tzaddik* before the *Mabul* but was still lacking in *emunah* and afterwards he was a *tomim* but lacked in the area of *tayvo*.)

Let us now examine this difference between *Dor haMabul* and *Dor haFlagah* at a deeper level. Chazal mention a *chiluk* between these two *doros* in the aspect of *achdus*. *Dor haMabul* had no *achdus*, it was very much “every man for himself.” Since their *chet* was *mitzad tayvo*, each person saw himself as the center of the universe and trampled anyone in his way. This was a breakdown in every boundary between people and it spread even to animals. They were punished *midda k’neged midda* with *mayim*. *Mayim* has the characteristic of erasing all lines and boundaries. For example, *rachmono litzlan* a person who has drowned, if he stays in the water long enough he will lose all distinct points of recognition in his features. Because the *Dor haMabul* lost all sense of boundary, the *mayim* of the *Mabul* came and totally erased any kind of boundary.

HaKadosh Boruch Hu reigned in the *koach* of *mayim* at the beginning of the *beri'ah* through *havdolo* between *mayim tachas loRoki'a* and the *mayim mema'al loRoki'a*. He also created the boundary of the *Yabosho*. When *Dor haMabul* were *chotei* with a *his'gabrus* of *tayvo*, breaking down all *gevulim*, it resulted in HaKadosh Boruch Hu removing all the *gevulim* of the *mayim* and they were drowned and erased in it.

Dor haFlagah, on the other hand, were *mis'acheid*, as Rashi says. They united around a *tzuro* and each individual was *mevatel* themselves for the sake of a purpose. However, the purpose was a mistake in *dei'os* and *emunah*. HaKadosh Boruch Hu scattered them and changed their languages in order to separate them and prevent them from uniting around this purpose. Essentially, they are still *ba'alei tzuro* who made in mistake in which *tzuro* they should have adapted.

The Arizal says the *inyan* of *Chodesh Cheshvan* is to be *kovei'a* in ourselves those *reshomim*, impressions, and moments of inspiration that we had in *Chodesh Tishrei*, to find some way to inculcate them into our permanent *tzuro*. I once heard from Rav Moshe Shapiro z"l, that *Cheshvan* was called *Chodesh Mabul* before *binyan Bayis-Rishon*. Chazal say that it used to rain for forty days until Shlomo haMelech was *mispallel* for this to stop. Then they removed the *mem* from its name and we find in *Tanach* that *Chodesh Cheshvan* is called *Chodesh Bul*. *Bul* is a mass which can be molded. Essentially, the message of *Chodesh Cheshvan* is that we need to remake ourselves and redo our *tzuro* to erase some of our boundaries in a good way. *Mayim* is *nimshal* to *teshuva* because *teshuva* requires a change of *tzuro*.

Seforim haKedoshim bring that the thirteen *brachos* in the middle of *shemoneh esray* are *knegged* the *chodshei hashono*. The *bracha* of "*Al haTzaddikim*" represents *Chodesh Cheshvan*. In this *bracha* we say "*v'sim chelkeinu imohem*," we ask that we should be with the *tsaddikim*. We are asking for the *siyata dishmaya* to remake our *tzuro* into that of a *tzaddik*.

Maharal says the reason why *geirim* are part of this *bracha* ("*v'al geirei hatzeddek*") is because every *tzaddik* is *b'emes* a *geir b'olam hazeh*. A *geir* is someone who remade his *tzuro* because he grew up with one which he rejected in order to obtain a superior *tzuro*. Every *tzaddik* maintains a *tzuro* elevated above a world of *chomer* and *dei'os kozavos* that surrounds him. We too, are like *geirim*, trying to remake ourselves into *tzaddikim* during *Chodesh Cheshvan*.

A *mehalech* in pursuing this is to have a mentor. Each of us in our pursuit of life can find *bnei Torah* who are trying to do the same things as us but are accomplishing it in a more elevated way. They are successful at what they are doing. We should try to adapt a mentor, to have someone who inspires us and to aim to be like that person.

Rabbi Lansky once said a different *teitch* of why *geirim* appear in the *bracho* of "*Al haTzaddikim*." Every *geir* has to attach himself to a *tzaddik*. His *moshol* of choice was Yisro and Moshe Rabbeinu. This fits very well with how we explained above. In order for the *geir* to perfect his new *tzuro*, he must attach himself to a *tzaddik* for inspiration and guidance.

We should be *zoche* in this *Chodesh Cheshvan* to take our inspiration from *Tishrei* and to learn from *Dor haMabul* and *Dor haFlagah* to adapt our *tzuro* above *chomer* and to work on *dei'os ne'emanos*.

We know that we can be *zoche* to things in *Chodesh Tishrei* that have to be brought out by our behaviors the rest of the year. Sometimes there will be a *din* which is *nikva*, we have the potential for a wonderful thing in our year, but it depends on us. It depends on how we carry forward throughout the year and how we maintain our *tzuro*. We should all be *zoche* to do this is a wonderful and correct way.