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Parshat Noach

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in memory of Joyce's father, ממתיהו בן אברהם הכהן ז"ל

The True End of the World

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

And G-d said to Noach, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the land is filled with corruption because of them; and behold I am destroying the land." (Bereishit 6:13)

With this single sentence, G-d handed down His judgment for humanity, the animal kingdom, vegetation, and the earth itself.

I will destroy

From most commentaries, it emerges that this message to Noach captured a moment of Divine decision-making. For example, in Radak's first interpretation of this verse, he writes that G-d informs Noach that at that point the corruption of humanity was so egregious that He needed to issue a verdict of utter destruction.

However, there is a slight syntactical issue with this interpretation. "The end of all flesh has come before Me" sounds as if G-d is commenting on a reality, rather than generating one. If the verse were meant to be read as Radak suggests, it should have said, "I have decided to destroy the land, and for this reason the end of the world is imminent." As it stands, however, G-d seems to be saying, "Behold, the world has **already** reached its end. Therefore, I will destroy it." What could this mean?

It is destroyed

Radak offers a second interpretation that is in accordance with this grammatical presentation. Though humanity had been sinning for many years, G-d had been gracious,

choosing not to annihilate them when their moral deterioration began. Instead, G-d gave them one hundred and twenty years to repent. However, He had, as it were, issued His verdict at the beginning of that period, but held its implementation in abeyance. He began the world's self-destruct countdown at that first moment, but programmed in an override code. Namely, if humanity would change its ways, G-d would prevent its impending doom. If, however, it did not, He needed only to let nature take its course. Thus, when G-d said, "The end of all flesh has come before me", He was not making a decision. He was stating a fact – the time was up, and there was no reason to alter the course of history. Thus, He allowed the self-destruction to commence.

Your angels will destroy it

Panim Yafot pushes this interpretation further with a mystical approach. He notes that a mishnah (Avot 4:11) asserts that for every sin committed, a heavenly prosecuting angel is created. The Zohar propounds that when the Torah states that the world was filled with *chamas*, it refers not to the sins themselves, but rather to these resulting accusers. After hundreds of years of sin, the world was overwhelmed by these angels. At that point, as it were, G-d had no choice but to react. Humanity had sealed its own fate – G-d just needed to comply with the demands of the prosecutors that mankind had created for itself.

Your actions have destroyed it

A similar interpretation can be offered

without invoking esoteric concepts. Many commentaries note that while the generation of the flood was guilty of many sins, it was *chamas*, theft and other monetary crimes, that sealed the decree against the world. Malbim suggests that most ritual sins affect the spiritual wellbeing of the sinner. However, economic crimes are unique insofar as they cause a breakdown of society itself. Only when society had devolved into Rousseau's "state of nature," did G-d assert there was no hope for World 1.0, and decide to reboot and try again with World 2.0.

Following this line of argument, perhaps G-d never "decided" to destroy the world at all; humanity did. Once cruelty and callous corruption became the norm, the world was no longer a place worth living in, nor a planet worthy of survival. G-d bemoaned what He saw. "Humanity has destroyed itself, dissolving the bonds that allow human communities to exist. What choice do I have, but to finish the job?"

Whether the world is a place worth living in is not up to G-d – it is up to us.

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**הורשתם את הארץ וישבתם בה (במדבר לג)
Marking the State of Israel's 70th Year!**

Israeli Landmarks: The Jerusalem Biblical Zoo

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

In the southwest of Jerusalem, on the northern slope of Nachal Refa'im, stands Noah's Ark. Inside you will find an auditorium, an art gallery, a gift shop, a snack bar, and computers providing information about animals mentioned in the Bible. "Noah's Ark" is the Visitors Centre of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, one of the most popular tourist attractions in Israel.

The story of this unique zoo begins in 1940, when it was formally opened by Aharon Shulov, a professor of zoology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on Mount Scopus. His goal was to collect as many animals mentioned in the Bible as possible. The zoo planners expanded the scope, and while the focus is still on biblical animals, the zoo also includes other animals, mostly belonging to endangered species.

At first, the zoo was located in the middle of the city, on Harav Kook Street. Complaints by neighbors forced the zoo to relocate, and after various temporary homes, it was placed in

Romema from 1950-1991. During the Six Day War, the zoo was bombarded, and 110 animals were killed by shrapnel and stray bullets. The zoo moved to its current location in 1993.

Similar to the original Ark, one of the zoo's primary goals is to preserve and restore the animal populations of Israel. Some of the animals which are mentioned in Tanach as present in Israel have long been extinct from the Middle East, such as the Asian Lion, Syrian Brown Bear, Persian Leopard, and the Nile Crocodile. The zoo has had some success in rejuvenating the population of some of these animals. For example, the population of the Persian Fallow Deer in Israel, after having been destroyed at the beginning of the twentieth century, has increased to several hundred.

However, the zoo's aspirations are not limited to Israel alone. It is considered one of the leading organizations worldwide in captive animal reproduction. Twelve years ago, after a

complex procedure of artificial insemination, an elephant named Gabi was born in the zoo. Gabi's six-hour birth was viewed by over 350,000 people in 108 countries via live streaming on the zoo's website.

The zoo has some very interesting applications of modern halachic issues. For example, the animals of the Biblical Zoo legally belong to a Kohen so that they may be fed *terumah*, the sanctified food given to Kohanim and their households. Thus, the animals are fed at no cost to the zoo. [*Terumah* is separated from most Israeli produce, but humans may not eat it due to impurity.]

The zoo also invests in educating the next generation about animals and human responsibility for them. The zoo even has its own youth movement for young teens aged 13-15, who help at the zoo and learn about animals. The group is very properly named – "Noah's Movement".

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The Zionist Idea: The Perils of War

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Since the modern wave of *aliyah* began in the 1870's, Jews have run life-threatening risks for the sake of returning to our homeland. Whether attacks by lone-wolf terrorists, mobs, or foreign armies, we continue to brave threats in order to live in the Land of Israel. What is the justification for putting ourselves in harm's way?

For and Against

Some contend that the risks are indeed unjustified. These authorities cite a 12th century comment by Tosafot (Ketuvot 110b) that the talmudic power to compel one's spouse to make *aliyah* does not apply if *aliyah* would be dangerous. Even if we are bound by a *mitzvah* to settle Israel, Rabbi J. David Bleich has noted, "[N]o individual is required to place his life in jeopardy in order to fulfill this precept. The *mitzvah* concerning settlement in the Land of Israel which devolves upon the individual, as distinct from the communal obligation with regard to conquest of the Land, demands no more of the individual than does the fulfillment of any other commandment. A person is relieved of his obligation with regard to performance of *mizvot* if such performance necessitates placing his life in danger." (Contemporary Halakhic Problems, Vol. 2)

On the other hand, many halachic authorities contend that such mortal risks are justified by the Torah's law of *milchemet mitzvah*: war which fulfills a Divine command. As Rabbi Yosef Babad noted in his 19th century *Minchat Chinuch* (425:3), it is a given that war will endanger lives, but the Torah commands it nonetheless. This demonstrates that

certain causes, and particularly defense of our land, justify undergoing danger.

An Important Limitation

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein accepted the *Minchat Chinuch's* justification for undertaking the risks of battle. However, in a 1984 article (Techumin 4) he noted certain limits to this permission – for our own sake and for the sake of others. Rabbi Lichtenstein pointed out that Rambam (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 5:1) defines *milchemet mitzvah* as a war "to aid Israel before an enemy who attacks," and so we must ask whether each conflict truly "aids Israel".

Rabbi Lichtenstein went on to highlight three specific concerns, writing:

- [T]here is always a concern for the loss of Israeli fighters...
- Second, the price [of war] is also paid by the enemy, who is also graced with the Divine image, and one should grieve whenever G-d's creations drown in the sea...
- Third, war harms the nature of the individual and society which engage in battle. As Ramban wrote, regarding Devarim 23:10, "And you shall be on guard against every bad thing," "The most naturally righteous of people will be clothed with cruelty and rage when going to war against the enemy, and therefore the verse warned, etc."

May our family in Israel remain safe in the face of all perils, and may our leadership weigh carefully "the aid of Israel".

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Biography

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg

Rabbi Yair Manas

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg was born in 1915 in Jerusalem, and died there in 2006. Unlike the great majority of leading halachic authorities of the twentieth century, he did not serve as a Rosh Yeshiva or as a Maggid Shiur. Instead, he was a rabbinic judge in Jerusalem's Supreme Rabbinical Court, and served as Rabbi of the Shaare Zedek Medical Center. In this capacity, he dealt with many cutting-edge medical questions, and issued many rulings, some quite controversial. He permitted abortion in certain cases, opposed in vitro fertilization, prohibited cosmetic surgery, and ruled that smoking is forbidden.

Rabbi Waldenberg is known as "Tzitz Eliezer", the title of his twenty-four volumes of responsa. Approximately 25% of the responsa concern medical issues. Rabbi Chaim Jachter tells of visiting Rabbi Waldenberg in July 1993, "I vividly recall Rav Waldenberg beaming while showing Rav [Nota] Greenblatt the latest volume of Tzitz Eliezer to be published. Rav Waldenberg, who was 77 years of age at the time, was elated at its publication as if it were the first time his name appeared in print... It is fair to assert that his teshuvot [responsa] were his Yeshiva and his readers his Talmidim."

Rabbi Waldenberg published his first sefer at the age of 19, and received the Israel Prize in 1976 for his work. A posthumously published work regarding the State of Israel, titled "Hilchot Medinah," was opposed by the Beth Din Tzedek of Jerusalem, and by Rabbi Waldenberg's own family. Ironically, Rabbi Waldenberg himself allowed the posthumous publication of halachic texts even when the descendants of the author disagree. (Tzitz Eliezer 20:51)

Because Rabbi Waldenberg did not affiliate with any specific part of the Jewish community, he often passed under the radar. As was noted by one mourner at the time of his death, "For 50 years, he has been quoted by latter-day rabbis who didn't even know he was alive." (<http://bit.ly/1TmUxAL>) Rabbi Jachter notes that tens of thousands of people attended the funerals of other leading sages, while only thousands attended Rabbi Waldenberg's funeral, reflecting the fact that Rabbi Waldenberg was underappreciated. However, when we learn from his works we gain a glimpse into a great scholar, and we become his "talmidim".

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Torah and Translation

Prolonging Life: At What Cost?

Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg, Tzitz Eliezer 18:62

Translated by Adam Friedmann

לדעתי דעת תורה בזה היא, כי הצדק היה בזה עם אבי-הילד שהסכים להמלצת הרופאים להשתיל בגולגולת של הילד צינורית חילופית שתנקו את עודף הנוזלים מחללי המוח אל הקיבה, ולעשות כל מה שאפשר כדי להאריך את חייו העצמיים. ואם-הילד שהתנגדה לניתוח מתוך הכרה שגורל בנה נחרץ, ומתוך רצון לקצר את שבלו, לא צדקה בהחלט...

אוסף תבלין להאמור לרווחא דמילתא ממה דאיתא בספר מור וקציעה על או"ח להגאון ר' יעקב עמדין ז"ל בסימן שכ"ח, דכותב שם בהמשכיות דבריו, דכשהרופא עוסק ברפואה בדוקה וגמורה לעולם כופין לחולה מסרב במקום סכנה אפילו בנטילת אבר כדי להצילו מסכנה, ואין משגיחין בו אם הוא אינו רוצה ביסורין ובוחר מות מחיים, אלא חותכין לו אפילו אבר שלם אם הוצרך לכך למלטו ממות וכו' ואין הדבר תלוי בדעתו של חולה ואינו נתון ברשותו לאבד עצמו יעו"ש...

עוד זאת קאמינא, דמצינו בחז"ל שהורו לנו דגם חיי צער ויסורי מחלה קשים ל"ע אשר אין מפלט מהם, מכל מקום עדיפים אפ"ה יותר מהמות, ולא עוד אלא שגם המשכת חיים כאלה מהמות המידי תלויים בזכות שנמצא על זה, יעוין בסוטה כב:...

[Background: The question posed was whether or not to take measures to extend the life of a terminally ill patient, without alleviating suffering. The specific case was of a child with terminal cancer; the father wished to follow doctors' advice to perform a procedure to prolong life, and the mother wished to cease treatment on account of the child's suffering. Note that there are many views on this subject; for example, see Karyana d'Igrita 1:190, Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:73-74, Beit Yitzchak 1986 and Shiurei Torah l'Rofim 189. Please see your halachic authority for practical guidance.]

In my opinion, the view of the Torah on this matter is that the correct view is that of the child's father, who agreed with the advice of the doctors to implant into the cranium of the child a replacement tube to drain the excess fluids from his cranial cavity to his stomach, and to do everything possible to lengthen his essential life. The mother of the child who opposed this surgery out of recognition that her child's fate was sealed and a desire to shorten his suffering, was totally incorrect...

I will add [explanatory] "flavour" to this, expanding on it from what is found in *Mor uKetziyah* by the great Rabbi Yaakov Emden to *Orach Chaim* 328. He writes there, in the course of his words, that when a doctor is using a totally confirmed treatment, we always force the recalcitrant patient in a case of danger, even to amputate a limb, in order to save him from danger. And we do not listen to him if he does not want to suffer and chooses to die instead of live. Rather, we amputate even a whole limb, if this is necessary to save him from death, etc. The matter does not depend on consent of the patient, and it is not within his rights to give himself up (to die).

I will say further, that we find that our Sages teach us that even a life of pain and the suffering of difficult diseases (may they not come upon us), from which there is no escape, is nevertheless preferable to death. And not only this, but the prolonging of such life as opposed to immediate death depends on a person's merits [and, therefore, it would seem that prolonging this type of life is desirable]; see Sotah 22b...

As we have discussed (Toronto Torah 6:37, Korach 5775), the Torah mandates that in the first, second, fourth and fifth years of every seven-year *shemita* cycle, we separate 10% of our produce and designate it as *maaser sheni*. Devarim 14:22-27 instructs us to bring it to Jerusalem and consume it there. However, those who live far from Jerusalem may redeem the produce for money, bring the money to Jerusalem, and use it to buy food to eat in Jerusalem.

The Torah also presents a mitzvah of *viduy maaser*, requiring that we declare every three years that we have disposed of our tithes properly. (Toronto Torah 9:4, Netzavim-Vayelech 5777) This declaration includes the specification that we have not eaten *maaser sheni* while in a state of *aninut*; Sefer haChinuch counts this prohibition as the Torah's 608th mitzvah.

Biblically, as explained in Sefer haChinuch, one becomes an *onein* at the moment of passing of an immediate relative for whom mourning is biblically required. The state of biblical *aninut* ends with burial or nightfall, whichever comes first. Rabbinically, *aninut* continues past the first nightfall until the burial, and eating *maaser sheni* during that extension would be rabbinically prohibited.

Sefer haChinuch identifies two reasons not to eat *maaser sheni* during *aninut*:

- *Maaser sheni* is viewed as the sacred property of G-d, and grief is inconsistent with a royal feast;
- Eating sacred items is an act of personal atonement for sin, and requires a state of concentration inconsistent with grief.

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Weekly Highlights: Oct. 21 – Oct. 27 / 1 Cheshvan – 7 Cheshvan

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Oct. 20-21	Rosh Chodesh, Day 2			
Before minchah	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi's Classroom
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gem. Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Oct. 22				
8:45 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	Hebrew
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah	BAYT	Not this week
Mon. Oct. 23				
7:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Great Jewish Thinkers	Terraces of Baycrest	Open to all
8:30 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	A Connected World 1: The Videoconferenced Get	Shomrai Shabbos	For men
Tue. Oct. 24				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Satan in Judaism	Adath Israel	Women; there is a fee info@adathisrael.com
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: Confrontation	Shaarei Shomayim	
Wed. Oct. 25				
2:30 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Exploring Bamidbar	32 Timberlane Ave.	For women
8:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
8:00 PM	Yaron Perez	הפרשה ואני	Shaarei Shomayim	In Easy Hebrew
Thu. Oct. 26				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Enter Delilah	49 Michael Ct.	For women
Fri. Oct. 27				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Ribbit: Trading Labour	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim

11 AM Sunday, Yaron Perez, Contemporary Halachic Issues: Birkat Kohanim outside Israel

8:30 AM Monday, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring, Nefesh haChaim

8:30 AM Friday, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, The Book of Yeshayah

For University Women, at Ulpanat Orot

9:30-11:30 AM Monday, Mrs. Elliezra Perez, From Rachel Imeinu to Racheli Frenkel

9:30-11:30 AM Tuesday, Mrs. Ora Ziring, Shabbat

9:30-11:30 AM Wednesday, Mrs. Ora Ziring, Contemporary Halachah

9:30-11:30 AM Thursday, Mrs. Elliezra Perez, Parshah in the Eyes of Chassidut

Coming Next Week: Wednesdays "Mental Health in Judaism", Fridays "Melachot of Shabbat"!