



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### Influencers

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Adjunct

**"Noach walked with G-d" (6:9)**

Rashi points out an interesting discrepancy between two verses. In this week's portion, the verse states that Noach walked *with* G-d, while by Avraham it says (Bereishis 17:1) that he walked *before* G-d. Rashi explains that Noach needed G-d's support but Avraham was able to stand on his own.

Noach needed G-d's help because of the exceedingly wicked generation in which he lived, where all barriers of immorality, larceny and idolatry were broken. Avraham lived a few centuries later and he was able to withstand the wicked atmosphere around him. He fearlessly destroyed his father's idols, defied the mighty Nimrod, and traveled far and wide proclaiming the word of G-d. Avraham was able to change the atmosphere around him, while Noach was not, and he therefore needed special Divine assistance to withstand the powerful wickedness around him.

While we are not to judge these great individuals, we can still derive a great lesson from this contrast. A person can either be an influencer or one who is influenced by others. One can either uplift those around them – friends, family, or community – or be influenced by one's surroundings. While we must strive to dwell in a place that will have a positive effect on us, we must also endeavor to become people who will have a positive influence on our surroundings. We also mustn't forget to pray to G-d to give us much needed support to protect us from the negative influences that prevail in our society and that we should remain the holy and pure nation that we truly are.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos!**

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## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

**Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations... (6, 9)**

Some expound this verse with a negative connotation as follows. According to his generation, Noach was righteous. Had he lived in the generation of Avraham, he would not have been considered righteous. (Rashi)

Rav Yehuda says, "In his generation, he was righteous. Had Noach lived during the generation of Moshe or Shmuel, he would not have been considered a righteous person. (Bereishis Rabba 30, 19)

Why did Rashi use the example of Avraham while the Midrash used the example of Moshe or Shmuel? In addition, why is there a necessity for examples? Isn't it sufficient to say, "Had he lived in a generation of righteous people...?"

### Parsha Riddle

**The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens (9:2). What halachic implication does this verse have?**

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

**Why is the sky blue?**

**Answer: It reflects Hashem's throne which is made of sapphire, which is blue. (Chulin 89a)**

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Noach (10:8-10) contains the *chumash's* single mention of Nimrod, at least by that name:

And Cush begat Nimrod. He was the first to be a mighty man on earth. He was a mighty hunter before Hashem; therefore it is said: "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Hashem. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. ...

The Biblical text is ambiguous regarding Nimrod's moral character. *Chazal* considered him an egregious villain, explaining that his very name signified rebellion (*mered*) against Hashem (*Eruvin* 53), and identifying him as the instigator of the building of the tower of Babel (described later in the *parashah*), which they understood to have been an act of incredible sinfulness (*Chullin* 89a; *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 24).

Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, understands Nimrod to have been pious (and the building of the tower to have been not at all sinful!)

The meaning of *before Hashem* is that Nimrod built altars and offered the animals he hunted as whole offerings to Hashem. (Ibn Ezra *ibid.* [and cf. *Ramban ibid.*] and 11:1-4)

A ramification of this dispute is the propriety of naming a child Nimrod. It is written in *Mishlei* (10:7) that "the name of the wicked will rot," which the Talmud (*Yoma* 38b) interprets to mean that "**decay will spread on their names**, meaning **that we do not call others by their names.**" Rashi explains that "one should not call his son by the name of a wicked man." In accordance with this principle, and following *Chazal's* view of Nimrod as a villain, some contemporary rabbis oppose naming a child Nimrod. R. Shlomo Aviner (*Sheimos me-ha-Tanach, she'eilot*) notes that in pre-state Israel, some parents named their children Nimrod as an allusion to their aspirations to rebel against the British, and "in this sense, it is permitted, but in [general] practice it should not be given."

Perhaps the practice of those who do name their children Nimrod can be justified by Ibn Ezra's interpretation of him as a righteous man, although as my friend Dr. Jason Rosenblatt notes, even the English (Christian) poet John Milton (*Paradise Lost*, Book 12) took for granted that Nimrod was a rebel against G-d and a tyrant.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I ?

1. I was a tzaddik.
2. I was a man of the earth.
3. I made work easier.
4. Gentiles are called my children.

#### #2 WHO AM I ?

1. I had a tower with my name.
2. I have a Talmud with my name.
3. I was the source for confusion.
4. I am the drain of the world.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 The letter Beis/Beit** (I am two, I am with or in, I begin the beginning, I sound like a house.)

**#2 Eisev/Grass** (I am not moldy, yet I'm green, I am from the third day, You cut me to control me.)

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**Mondays:**

**Parsha Journeys**

**8:15pm - On Zoom**

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**8:15pm - In person at SEJC (10900 Lockwood Dr.) and on Zoom**

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