



Yeshivat Ma'alot

Parashat Noach

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ישיבת מעלות

פרשת נח

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A Model for Growth During Stormy Times

Man's evil deeds and ways brought about the flood on the world. Only Noach and his family were spared, along with the representatives of the many species of life forms. They all entered the Ark, which protected them from the flood. There is a very deep concept here, which relates to the way to rectify the entire world –Tikun Olam, and the Tikun of one's self.

The following lesson is derived from Rav Kook's "Musar Avicha"¹.

The healthy and normal form for the world and for man to function, is when Kochot - (energy and talent) are used to their greatest potential. When this takes place, spiritual elements direct material elements along the proper path. The neshama also expresses its potential and livelihood. This is true both for the entire world, and for the individual person. Nevertheless, when the Kochot – the powers of the material are directed towards bad deeds, the freedom that they are given may cause damage. Any spiritual flow that would be directed towards these powers would cause only worse damage, since their path is crooked and damaged.

What can be done in such a situation?

Noach's Ark is a model for dealing with such a situation.

Noach, who was a "Tzadik Tamim" and was occupied with trying to rectify the world, can no longer continue doing so freely. He is forced to withdraw into himself, into a prison.

Now all his work towards rectifying the world will be done from within the Ark, without direct contact with the world outside. Only after the flood is over, when the world outside has been washed and corrected, Noach is allowed to exit the Ark, to free all his energies, powers, and tikunim, and to return to influencing the world directly, through unmediated contact with the world.

Rav Kook explains that this is true for the individual as well. A person should strive to set his Kochot, his powers and energy, free. They should be used to their fullest extent without any drawbacks. Yet, when one notices that when doing so he ends up

¹ Musar Avicha 2,1

in bad places, he must do Tshuva. He must enclose himself into "Noach's Ark" which he must build for himself. He must capture his Kochot and imprison them. This is an uncomfortable and unpleasant state of focusing the Kochot inwards instead of outwards, yet is vital for the opportunity to correct the Kochot. Only after ensuring that it is safe to let the energies loose again without them causing damage, the individual can return to his normal state, freeing his powers from their prison, and living a happy and meaningful life.

It seems that we should learn from here, that when there is a storm outside, we should reflect inwards, to strengthen our powers and only then we will be able to exit the "Ark".

In our times, it would be fair to say that Yeshivot are a form of Noach's Ark; the world outside suffers from a storm of heresy and immodesty. If a man just continues to flow with the tide, he may end up hurting his own powers and damaging his soul. Therefore an individual, and even an entire community, need to choose to withdraw to "the Ark" – the Yeshiva. There they build and strengthen their powers-their Kochot so that when they meet the world and what it has to offer, the meeting will result not in damage, but in positive rectifications.

It is true that this is not the normal way of life, to capture your energies and powers, but this period of time is necessary in order to strengthen these Kochot. Through this personal empowerment, when one will set out to meet the world, he will be able to enrich it with positive light and help the rest of the world find this strength and freedom.