



## MACHSHAVOT

### Parashat Noach

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### Surviving the Modern Day Flood

**Rabbi Andrew Shaw**  
Chief Executive, Mizrachi UK

Tomorrow I will do something I have done every year since 1984.

I will learn Parshat Noach.

Yes, I still remember the first time, Kingsbury shul, October 27<sup>th</sup>. I was nervous, I was excited and I was, for the one and only time – a barmitzvah boy.

The world has changed quite a bit in the ensuing 36 years and I don't think as a 13 yr old I would have believed what the future has created in terms of technology.

I still remember about the time of my Barmitzvah, my Dad brought home something called a video recorder – I couldn't believe it – you could actually record TV and watch it later! At the same time, a father of a friend of mine had a phone in his car! I couldn't believe the technology.

Little did I know, how that technology would upgrade year after year, until the human race were addicted to these gadgets in our hands which we use for every conceivable thing. In 2020 the **average** user spends four hours a day on their smart phone, not to mention time spent watching Netflix, Prime, Sky, etc etc.

What do we do? How do we survive the flood of information, many times we can feel like we are drowning!

Enter Parshat Noach and a Rashi we all know so well.

*'Noach was a righteous man he was perfect in his generations'* (Bereishit 6:9).

**In his generations:** Some of our Sages interpret it [the word נִיִּתְּרָדָב] favourably: How much more so if he had lived in a generation of righteous people, he would have been even more righteous. Others interpret it derogatorily: In comparison with his generation he was righteous, but if he had been in Abraham's generation, he would not have been considered of any importance. — [Sanhedrin 108a, Bereishit Rabbah 30:9, Tanchuma Noach 5]

Notice the lack of symmetry. In the first part he speaks of a 'generation of righteous people' and then later he talks about 'generation of Abraham'. Could Abraham's generation not serve as the model for both?

Before we answer Rashi, we need to understand the timeline.

Noach was 600 when the flood hit, but he lived for another 350 years after – in the new world. Yet apart from the story with the vineyard, we hear nothing from him. Seder Olam tells us that Noach was still alive during the Tower of Babel incident. He was still alive, but he was silent.

There was another person who was alive during the tower of Babel as Seder Olam also tells us – Avraham was 48 at the time.

Rashi therefore is just stating a fact in the second part of his teaching, *'but if he had been in Abraham's generation, he would not have been considered of any importance'*. Noach DID live in the generation of Avraham and despite his greatness as an individual he was worthless to his generation.

He may have saved the world, but the rabbis found him lacking. Noach was able to withstand the evil of his generation yet made no effort to challenge the immoral and hedonistic lifestyle they were leading. That was both the greatness and the tragedy of Noach.

Avraham on the other hand, saw the challenges of his time and devoted his life to transforming and teaching about morality and monotheism. He is the one rewarded by becoming the father of our nation.

To be a Jew demands engagement with the world around us, yet to challenge the society in which we live in, to have our boundaries, our limitations to preserve our traditions and practices while still benefiting from the positives that the world has to offer.

And when it comes to the flood of information – we understand that it is maximum 24/6.

As I mentioned last week, Shabbat is so much a part of the solution of so much that is wrong in our society. Remarkably when I think of that boy in 1984 and my children – I can see how different their world is from my world back then. However, when it comes to Shabbat – it is almost identical.

The Shabbat my children love is away from phones and computers, immersed in books, meaningful conversations, quality family time and the community connection and that is also exactly the Shabbat I loved back in Kingsbury in the 1980's.

In two weeks' time we will be celebrating the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the Shabbat Project by holding our 3<sup>rd</sup> Shabbaton at Home, launching on **Thursday November 5<sup>th</sup> at 8pm** with the Chief Rabbi and Chief Rabbi Goldstein of South Africa. It is our attempt to bring the beauty of Shabbat and hopefully its observance to over 70 communities and 12 cities across the UK.

Everyone will once again receive from their shul a booklet of inspiration to read over Shabbat and then we will all come together on Motzei Shabbat at 6:30pm for the first ever 'Great UK Community Shabbaton at Home Quiz' with our friends at Etgar – it should be a remarkable event.

Yes, we can sometimes feel like we are drowning in this crazy world we live in, so once a week we climb into our Ark and for 25 hrs we can float, gaining inspiration and strength to once again on Motzei Shabbat engage with the world.

It is not enough just to be Noach – we need to be Avraham as well.

Shabbat Shalom

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## **Thursday 5th November - 8:00pm**

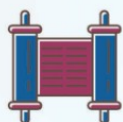
Launch event with Chief Rabbi Mirvis, Chief Rabbi Goldstein,  
Her Excellency Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely & more... **LIVE**

## **Shabbat 6th/7th November**

Contributions from Chief Rabbi Goldstein, Yehuda Avner Z"L,  
Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Dayan Simons and more...

## **Motzei Shabbat 7th November - 6:30pm**

The Great UK Shabbaton @ Home Quiz with Etgar **LIVE**







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# BRINGING MY CHILD'S KILLER TO JUSTICE

WITH ARNOLD ROTH

**MALKI ROTH**  
1985 - 2001

MURDERED IN THE HAMAS ATTACK ON A JERUSALEM PIZZERIA  
(SBARRO RESTAURANT), MASTERMINDED BY JORDANIAN  
AHLAM TAMIMI, A FUGITIVE FROM US JUSTICE.

**MONDAY 26 OCTOBER 2020**

**20:00 (UK)**

**ZOOM MEETING ID: 813 9376 6622 PASSWORD: 26102020**



SINCE 2012, ARNOLD AND HIS WIFE FRIMET HAVE BEEN PURSUING THE HAMAS TERRORIST  
WHO SPEARHEADED THE BOMBING OF THE SBARRO PIZZERIA IN DOWNTOWN JERUSALEM.  
THEIR 15 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, MALKI WAS ONE OF THE EIGHT CHILDREN MURDERED THAT  
DAY. IN ADDITION TO THE CHILDREN, A FURTHER EIGHT LIVES WERE TAKEN IN THE ATTACK.  
SOME 130 ADDITIONAL INNOCENTS WERE INJURED, MANY OF THEM VERY SERIOUSLY.

ARNOLD ROTH WILL BE SHARING HIS FAMILY'S EXPERIENCES, DESCRIBING THE CHALLENGES  
AHEAD AND WILL OFFER SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THEIR CAMPAIGN.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WILL FOLLOW



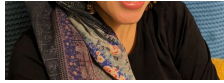
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT [UK@MIZRACHI.ORG](mailto:UK@MIZRACHI.ORG)



## Can't YOU Just Do It?

**Sheerelle Marks**

*Participant of the Mizrachi UK Fellowship Programme*



Gone are the days where our tables were laid with our finest crockery, cutlery and glasses. Where tablecloths, made from soft fabric, adorned our dining rooms and our sinks (or dishwashers) overflowed with dishes from all the hosting. From the onset of Corona and especially during lockdowns, our goal has been nothing more than 'keeping our head above water' - between all the meals, laundry, school work, tantrums, zoom calls, work, more meals, tidying up...

The to-do list is endless and so we try to find as many ways as possible to make our day-to-day lives a bit easier and more bearable. As a result, some might naturally turn to 'the disposables'. Homes will start to look like Pesach on a daily basis - with plastic cutlery, disposable dishes and tablecloths and definitely no space for a recycling bin. Phew! Now we have a few minutes in the evening to breathe and relax, rather than spend those final hours washing the dishes.

That brings me to this week's parasha.

At the time of creation, humans, animals and plants lived in harmony.

Only a few generations later, and all of creation 'corrupted' (*hishchit*) its way on the earth." (Genesis 6:12). The Hebrew word used to describe the 'corruption' - '**hishchit**' is also the same word used for the mitzvah of 'avoiding waste and unnecessary destruction' - Ba'al **Tashchit**. While environmental issues are rarely addressed directly in the Torah, there is an explicit prohibition of Ba'al Tashchit (do not destroy).

Noach, described as an "Ish Ha'adma" - a man of the soil, was commanded to build an Ark that could house two of every type of animal: small and large, from creeping creatures to the largest behemoths - at least a pair of every kind.

The Ramban (on Genesis 16:3) asks the question that is on all of our lips: How on earth could they all fit? According to the Talmud (Chullin 63b) in 'the East', there are over one hundred categories of non-kosher birds, not including birds of prey as well as all of the kosher ones - if we calculate the space needed for them alone, as well as food they would need for a whole year, this Ark could not possibly be sufficient for holding anywhere near the amount of wildlife being suggested by the verses. The Ramban answers that Hashem must have performed a miracle to create space for them all inside of the ark.

However, this leads the Ramban to a further question, if Hashem was going to miraculously expand the Ark, why did He command Noach to build such a big one? Could Hashem not perform a miracle to save Noach all that hard work?

Ramban offers two answers. Firstly, by commanding Noach to build this large Ark, the people of that generation would see it, wonder about it, talk about it and hopefully do Teshuva. Even still, we could ask why didn't Hashem just cause the ark to miraculously appear - one that was large enough, or even bigger than the one Noach was commanded to build? I'm sure the people would still talk and wonder!

Perhaps Ramban's second answer addresses this problem. He explains that, of course, Hashem could perform such miracles but where's the fun in that? Hashem wants us to put in our own effort, to work for something that we believe in and attempt to work towards solving these challenges, even when the end goal seems impossible. Like many other places in Tanach, we see that our leaders didn't just rely on miracles, but instead they took action like Nachshon stepping into the Red Sea or Esther approaching Achashverosh.

However, we could have posed a different challenge to Noach's task. Fine, make him build the boat, by why did Noach have to bother with the animals? Hashem made them, he could do it again, or save them himself, or allow them to save themselves. Why did he give this task to Noach?

Maybe it was to teach him, and us, that we have responsibility for our world and wildlife. If we take a look at Noach through the eyes of our Sages, we discover a man who spent his time innovating a lifestyle of environmental harmony and Divine awareness. According to the midrashim, during the flood, Noach and his family faced incredible hardship as they fought the tide of destruction. Nonetheless, they ensured that the animals were well fed and looked after - they didn't sit idle and rely on God for

salvation. Additionally, Noach knew that his large yet relatively little ark was not going to house all species. Nonetheless, he worked tirelessly and patiently day and night to build it, using his own resources and putting in all his effort knowing that Hashem would help him with the rest.

Caring about the environment requires patience and forethought. We each know that our individual contributions aren't going to save the planet or even make much of a difference. However, we have responsibility for our world and wildlife. Even using one less disposable tin or taking a few extra steps to put a plastic bottle into recycling, shows Hashem that we care about his world, that we are sensitive to our environment, that we are making an effort and most importantly that we believe in trying to make a difference. Maybe in that merit, like He did for Noach, he will help us ensure our earth is protected.

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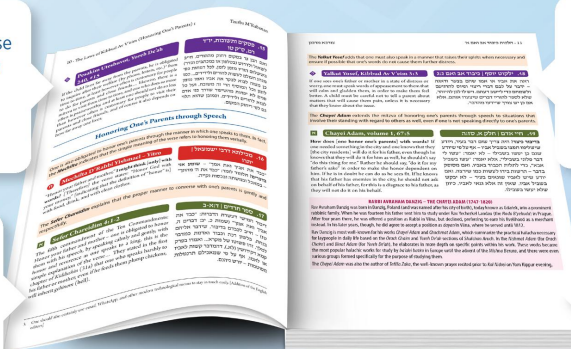
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