

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בִּשְׁבִּיחָה



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
NOACH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO

Noach and his family were chosen to be the few survivors of the catastrophic flood. Though saved from destruction, their job was far from over. Night and day, Noach and his sons fed the many animals under their care, according to each creature's particular diet and feeding time.¹ As the days turned into months, the stench became unbearable, to the point where Noach was coughing and spitting up blood!²

Derech Eretz isn't just a nice thing, it's who you are.

Finally, after a full year, Noach determined that the water had receded and it was safe to open the doors and escape the cramped floating zoo. Yet, instead of knocking down the door and rushing out to dry land, Noach surprisingly waited for a command from Hashem before leaving.³ Noach was well aware that Hashem only needed him in the *Teivah* as a means to save Noach from the Flood. At this point, why did Noach wait, the Flood was over - go out!

The *Yalkut Shimoni*⁴ explains that Noach felt that it would not be proper to rush out of the *Teivah* - after all, Hashem commanded him to go in, how could he leave without being told? Though Noach desperately wanted some fresh air and room to move around, he held himself back, because it would not be *Derech Eretz*, proper conduct, to leave without specific permission.

We sometimes relate to *Derech Eretz* as 'a nice thing.' Because it is only a nice thing, we may tend to slip when it comes to our inconveniences. The truth is, *Derech Eretz* isn't just a nice thing, it's *who you are*. Acting properly in all situations - speaking softly in tense confrontations, helping others in their time of need, and being courteous to others are not simply things we do, they are the actions that make us. When we choose to focus on our wants and desires in place of civility and dignity, we change ourselves into different, coarse people. By reminding ourselves how far Noach went in the name of *Derech Eretz*, we can inspire ourselves to be better people.

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Derech Eretz manifests in many ways. Not interrupting others, knocking on a door before entering, and greeting others are just a few examples. Because *Derech Eretz* encompasses such a wide range of activity, is there a way to effectively change our mindset to one that is 'Derech Eretz oriented?'

One tactic may actually have little to do with focusing on *Derech Eretz*, and more to do with focusing on ourselves. Very often, we know the right thing to do, but we find that we 'don't have the time,' we're 'too tired,' or we're, 'not in the mood.'

These expressions are really manifestations of a certain apathy - or to be blunt, laziness. We might know the right thing to do, but we fail to act for no other reason than our own lethargy.¹

One way to motivate ourselves to act may be to focus on the idea that the sum of our actions makes us who we are. If we fill our days with excuses, we simply won't develop as people. However, if we push ourselves out of our comfort zone, we will be pleasantly surprised to find how much we can grow.

1 *Mesillas Yescharim* 6

1 *Medrash Tanchuma, Noach* 9

2 *Rashi s.v. נח אך* on *Bereishis* 7:23

3 *Bereishis* 8:14-16

4 *Noach, Remez* 59

Sponsored Anonymously

לרפואה שלמה חיים דוד בן רבקה

To sponsor, or to receive Beshivticha by email, please contact us

at info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW (4769)



"One who does not have good Middos does not have Torah or Mitzvos, because the whole of Torah is dependant on good Middos."

- R' Alexander Moshe Lapidus, *Divrei*

Emes, Chap. 14

THE POWER OF "GOOD NIGHT"

In Argentina there was a ritual slaughter complex, comprised of several buildings. The entire area was surrounded by a fence and everyone entered through a wrought iron gate in the front, near the parking lot.

The owner, Izzy Nachmal,* was always the first one in every morning and the last one out every evening. The guard at the gate, Domingo, knew that when Izzy left in the evening, he could lock up and go home.

One evening as Izzy was leaving, he called out to the guard, "Good night, Domingo, you can lock up and go." "No," Domingo called back, "not everyone has left yet." "What are you talking about," Izzy said, "everyone left two hours ago!" "Not so," Domingo said, "Rabbi Berkowitz hasn't left yet." "Maybe you just didn't see him," Izzy said. "Believe me, I am positive he didn't leave yet," the guard insisted. "We better go look for him."

Izzy knew that Domingo was reliable and decided not to argue, but instead got out of his car and rushed back to the office building with Domingo. They searched the dressing room, truck dock, packing house, and so on, with no luck. Finally they came to the huge walk-in refrigeration room where the large slabs of meat were kept frozen.

They opened the door and to their shock and horror they saw Rabbi Berkowitz desperately trying to keep himself warm. They ran over to him and helped him out of the refrigerated room, past the thick heavy wooden door that had locked behind him. They wrapped blankets around him and made sure he was warm and comfortable.

Izzy Nachmal was incredulous. "Domingo," he asked, "how did you know Rabbi Berkowitz hadn't left? There are over two hundred workers here every day. Don't tell me you know the comings and goings of every one of them?"

The guard's answer is worth remembering. "Every morning when that rabbi comes in, he greets me and says hello. He makes me feel like a person. And every single night when he leaves he tells me, 'Have a pleasant evening.' He never misses a night – and to tell you the truth, I wait for his kind words. Dozens and dozens of workers pass me every day – morning and night, and they don't say a word to me. To them I am a nothing. To him, I am a somebody. I knew he came in this morning and I was sure he hadn't left yet, because I was waiting for his friendly good-bye for the evening!"

**Names have been changed. Adapted from 'Reflections of the Maggid,' by Rabbi Paysach Krohn*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Torah learning cannot retain itself in someone until they have attained good *Middos*.¹
- Moshe *Rabbeinu* preferred to be humiliated than to violate *Derech Eretz*.²
- The first *Beis HaMikdash* was rebuilt after 70 years because the people of that generation acted with *Derech Eretz* to each other.³

1 *Rabbeinu Yonah* s.v. אין אים, on *Avos* 3:17

2 *Rivah* s.v. ויגרש אותם, on *Shemos* 10:11

3 *Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabbah* 14:2