



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Parashat Noach

Dissention Versus Unity

Question:

Our *parasha* teaches us about two different generations – that of the Flood and that of the Dispersal. The Generation of the Flood transgressed sins between man and his fellow; they stole from one another and acted immorally. The Generation of the Dispersal, however, transgressed sins that were between man and Hashem. They worshipped idols and denied Hashem, *rachmana litzklan*, to the extent that they built a tower, intending to wage war against Hashem. They did other terrible things as well. Nevertheless, they were not punished, and simply dispersed, while the Generation of the Flood was decimated. Why is this?

The Reality of the Election Period

Elections are now upon us, and this usually fires people up and a spirit of competition begins to be felt. Who will win and achieve the goal he so desires, without giving thought to integrity and honesty, only to lust, honor, and control. They hide behind the banner of Torah, claiming that all they do is for the sake of the Torah and those who study it. They claim that their true desire is to glorify the Torah. Yet behind the scenes they employ unjust methods to gain more and more power, ignoring the damage that they wreak along the way. Nor do they take into consideration that they cause the people to transgress the sin of *lashon hara*, strife, and revenge. On the contrary, they actually utilize all of the negative character traits which run contrary to the Torah and the Will of Hashem. If they would join together and think about how to truly increase the honor of Hashem in the world, they would act differently than the non-religious cities. For in *chareidi* cities matters should be carried out with honesty and integrity. Decisions should be reached together and in unison, without stoking the flames of conflict and strife for the sake of honor and power. In the non-religious cities, the primary focus should be only how to increase awareness of the need to guard Jewish values. This should take precedence over all of the other petty issues that interest people. Now the finger cannot be pointed at any one person in particular, since all those involved speak only about acting for the sake of peace and unity. Only Hashem knows man's true intentions. But we cannot deny the fact that elections breed strife, hatred, and every form of *lashon hara* – all in the name of the Torah. For this is the way of the *Yetzer Hara*, to trick a person into thinking that he is acting nobly. He was even able to influence Chava - the handiwork of Hashem - to transgress the commandment of Hashem by making the Tree of Knowledge look ever so appealing. This is as the Torah teaches us in *Parashat Bereishit* (3:6), "And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and that it was desirable to the eyes and a means to wisdom. And she took from the fruit and she ate, and she also gave to her husband, and he ate." How could it be that she suddenly viewed the tree as being so appealing? Think about it- she had never tasted the fruit; how could she have reached a conclusion that the tree could grant her



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wisdom and even seem to be so good? Rather, the Torah is teaching us about the power of the *Yetzer Hara* to be able to make a sin seem so enticing and totally for the sake of Heaven. We must ask ourselves how we can recognize our mistake and overcome our evil inclination. We will learn this from our *parasha*, *be'ezrat Hashem*.

The Dor Hamabul and the Dor Haflaga

Our *parasha* teaches us about two different incidents that occurred, one in the *Dor Hamabul*, the Generation of the Flood, and one in the *Dor Haflaga*, the Generation that was Dispersed. The *Dor Hamabul* was characterized by personal indulgence; each person sinned immorally and stole to satisfy his own desires. They did whatever they wanted and thought nothing about others. This is the very destruction of humanity, to the extent that it is not worthwhile to keep such a world in existence. This is because the *pasuk* states that "The world was built with kindness," and self-interest and dissention is the exact anti-thesis of the world. Therefore Hashem punished them with a great punishment, until the world was totally destroyed. However, the *Dor Haflaga*, despite their wickedness, learned a lesson from the *Dor Hamabul*. They understood that their sin lay in selfishness and disharmony, and they therefore united, with all of mankind speaking one language. Even though they wished to build a tower to wage war with Hashem, Heaven forbid, and were guilty of other atrocities as well, nevertheless they were united and therefore could not be punished. This is as the *pasuk* states that Hashem said (11:6), "And Hashem said, 'They are one nation with one language for all ... Now they cannot be punished for all they plotted to do.'" For this is the power of unity - it prevents retribution for even serious transgressions.

Unity Can Save One's Life

There is a story about two Jews who were friends from their youth, and they were totally devoted to one another. Each was readily willing to give up his life for the other, and they were the living embodiment of the *pasuk*, "You should love your friend as you love yourself." Neighboring their city was an enemy country, and they were constantly at war with one another. One of the Jews used to bring merchandise from the neighboring, hostile country to sell in his country. One time he went to that country on business. The people there realized that he was from the enemy country, and they suspected him of being a spy. Since they were at war and it was a dangerous time, they immediately imprisoned him and brought him before the court. Since being a spy was a terrible offense, they did not even interrogate him very extensively. Rather, they quickly sentenced him to death by hanging. All of the Jew's attempts to prove his innocence by claiming that he was only there on business were useless. Rather, the government issued a decree that he would be hung the very next day. When the Jew saw that there was no hope to convince them, he pleaded bitterly with the gentile judge to at least give him seven days to leave his family and issue his final will. But this too was refused by the judge, saying that there was no guarantee that the Jew would return in a week's time. On the contrary, they suspected that this was an attempt to escape from the authorities. Hearing this, the Jew burst out in tears and said to the judge, "I am prepared to prove my trustworthiness. I have a dear friend, and we have a bond of friendship so strong that it cannot be described. He will certainly



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agree to sit here in my place as a guarantee that I will return in seven days." The judge could not believe his ears – could anyone have such a good friend, one that was willing to risk his life as a guarantor for another? Yet when the friend arrived, they were shocked that, indeed, he was ready to sit as "collateral" for his friend. The astonished judge agreed to the deal and had the friend sign that if his convicted friend did return, then he would be hung instead of him at the end of the week. A week passed, but the friend did not return. The gentiles sent a message to the friend who was sitting in his place that if his friend did not arrive by the evening then he would have to be hung in his place. Yet when evening fell, the friend still had not returned, and an announcement was therefore made that all of the city's inhabitants should gather in the square to watch the hanging. The friend was brought to the gallows much to the delight of the excited crowd. As they were about to hang him, everyone held his breath, and the air was filled with tension. The executioner covered his face and was about to tighten the noose, when suddenly they heard terrible screaming coming from afar. Everyone turned around to see where the screaming was coming from, and who did they see? The first friend who was originally sentenced; he was running with all his might and screaming frantically, "Stop! Stop!" He had been deterred along the way and had managed to arrive at the very last second. Then something unbelievable happened. The Jew that had been sentenced immediately jumped up to the platform; he was the guilty one, he exclaimed, and he was the one to be hung. But his friend, who had already been released, refused to descend from the gallows – he was sure that his friend was innocent; he could therefore not allow him to die, and was ready to be hung instead. But the first friend screamed, "Heaven forbid! I am the one who was sentenced, and you are free to go home!" The executioner almost collapsed from astonishment; such an argument he had never seen in his life! Such devoted friendship, one friend willing to die for the other, he had never seen before! The people who had gathered there also were incredulous. Since no one knew what to do, they brought the case before the king. The case heard the arguments of each friend and was no less astonished than the people were. He could not believe how each one was willing to die for the other and loved the other more than himself. The king was deeply moved by their incredible friendship and it only convinced him that such amazing people had to be innocent; the friend must have been slandered. He therefore took the case into his own hands, and after thoroughly examining and analyzing the matter, he discovered beyond a shadow of a doubt that it had all been a fiendish plot, and the friend had done nothing wrong. The king immediately annulled the decree and set them free. However, he asked them to wait a moment because he wished to make a sincere request of them. "In all my days, I have never seen a such a true friendship such as yours. In my entire life, I have never met people who have such golden hearts like the two of you. Please allow me to join with you as a third partner in your friendship."

This is what the *pasuk* states (*Vayikra* 19:18), "Love your friend like yourself; I am Hashem." It is as Hashem is saying, "When you truly love your friend like yourself, it is as if I, Hashem, join your friendship." You see then that only through unity are one's deeds deemed worthy by Hashem, until He also joins their partnership, as it were.



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Words of Mussar

We now see just how damaging dissention is and how all hatred and strife are disgusting in the eyes of Hashem. This is opposed to the benefit and success caused by unity, when even Hashem joins together with them. Even if, Heaven forbid, people are not adhering to the Torah and they worship idols, if they are united, they are not punished. We see therefore, how there is a requirement for everyone to unite and to increase love amongst Jews. For Hashem has said that He has not found a vessel that is better at containing blessing than peace. Especially now, in the period of the elections, when the *Yetzer Hara* fans the flames of strife and dissention – all in the name of the Torah, generating much hatred. This is to the extent that individuals are prepared to do things that run contrary to the Torah's perspectives – but they do it all for the sake of the Torah. For this is the way of the *Yetzer Hara*. But from our *parasha* we learn that to be protected from retribution and to succeed – the key is unity. For even the *Dor Haflaga*, who joined together for the sake of evil, could only be punished by dispersing them first. Hashem should help us that we should merit increasing *ahavat Yisrael*, and we should join as one to fulfill the Will of Hashem. Then the banner of the Torah and those who study it will truly be raised, and the Honor of Hashem will be increased, and all of our enemies will fall beneath us. This will usher in the redemption, speedily in our days, *amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka