



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

15 - 21 October, 2017

25 Tishrei -

1 Cheshvan, 5778

Torah:

Genesis 6:9 - 11:32

Second Torah:

(Shabbat Rosh Chodesh):

Numbers 28:9 - 15

Haftorah:

Isaiah 66:1 - 24

Isaiah 66:23

■ **CALENDARS**

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask your Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us for more info.

■ **ALEPH LIBRARY**

The Aleph Institute Library, is available to you, thru the institution library.

Please ask to see our catalog in the chapel in every institution.

You can then ask the librarian to order that book

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THE SURVIVOR

Everybody makes jokes about Noah and his Ark. There's the one about Noah being the first stock market manipulator in history -- he floated a company while the whole world was in liquidation!

The Rebbe saw Noah in a far more serious light. Noah was a survivor.

Noah was saved from the deluge of destruction that engulfed his world and his greatest contribution is that he set out to rebuild that world. We don't read about him sitting down and crying or wringing his hands in despair, although I'm sure he had his moments. The critical thing the Bible records is that after Noah emerged from his floating bunker he began the task of rebuilding a shattered world from scratch. He got busy and picked up the pieces and, slowly but surely, society was regenerated.

Only one generation ago a great flood swept over our world. The Nazi plan was for a Final Solution. Every Jew on earth was earmarked for destruction and the Nazis were already planning their Museum of the Extinct Jewish Race. Not one Jew was meant to survive. So even those of us born after the war are also survivors. Even a Jewish child born this morning is a survivor -- because according to Hitler's plan, which tragically nearly succeeded, he or she was not meant to live.

This means that each

of us, like Noah, has a moral duty to rebuild the Jewish world.

When I was growing up in Brooklyn, I prayed in a small shul in Crown Heights where every other man at the morning minyan (prayer quorum) bore a holy number on his arm. They were concentration camp inmates and the Germans tattooed those numbers onto their arms. Sadly, today, the ranks of those individuals have been greatly diminished. Every time one of them would roll up his shirt sleeve to put on tefillin, the number was revealed. They seemed to hardly notice it, as if it was nothing special, but to me they were heroes. Not only for surviving the hells of Auschwitz or Dachau but for keeping their faith intact, for still coming to shul, praying to G-d, wearing His tefillin.

Today as I am older and more sensitive to the feelings of fathers and children, of family and friends, those men have gone up much more in my estimation. They have become superheroes. After all they went through, to be able to live normal lives again, to marry or remarry, to bring children into this world, to carry on life, businesses, relationships, are mind boggling achievements.

My own father was not in the camps but he is the only survivor of his entire family from Poland. Some years ago, he recorded his story and recently it was published in book form -- From Shedli-

Parshat Noach

tz to Safety: a Young Jew's Journey of Survival. We, his children, never knew half of what he went through. When I imagine him sitting as a teenage refugee in Shanghai, China and discovering that his entire family was wiped out and that he was left all alone in the world, I go numb. How did he continue? How did he stay sane? How did he keep his faith? Thank G-d he did and he started a family all over again, otherwise I wouldn't be here to write these lines. My own father has become a superhero to me.

Says the Rebbe, we all have that same responsibility -- because we are all survivors.

Who will bring Jewish children into the world if not you? Who will study Torah if not you? Who will keep Shabbat? Who will keep the Jewish school afloat? Who will rebuild the Jewish world if not you and I and each and every one of us?

In the smaller country communities of South Africa, where I make my home, there are still small bands of dedicated Jews who come together in someone's home to make a minyan, or who serve as an ad hoc chevra kadisha to bury the Jewish dead according to our tradition. These are not rabbis, cantors or cheder teachers. They are ordinary people. In the big city they would probably not be nearly as involved, but in their small town they know that if they don't do it nobody will.

We need that same conviction wherever we are.

Thank G-d for His mercies in that our world is, to a large degree, being rebuilt. Miraculously, the great centers of Jewish learning are flourishing today once more. But far too many of our brothers and sisters are still outside the circle. Every one of us needs to participate. We are all Noahs. Let us rebuild our world.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

WHERE BIN LADEN WENT WRONG

It's a safe bet you've not traveled to Hadhramaut, never mind heard of the location. Yet it does exist, though it may not feature high on the list of places to visit before you die. Hadhramaut is an ancient region, located somewhere in the hardscrabble deserts of eastern Yemen. Its name, according to many linguistic scholars, stems from the Arabic words for "death has come." An old fable related to this name would suggest a locale with a morbid fascination with death.

I learned of all this, and a lot more, from a book I recently read. A book dedicated to tracing the origins of a well-known family that hails from this region: the Bin Ladens. A seemingly well-suited name for the native land of a person who has wreaked havoc and destruction, and caused an untold number of deaths.

Interestingly, the Torah mentions a locale with a similar name, which may very well have been the inspiration for the name of this region, or may even be the region's original name.

In describing Noah's offspring born after the flood, the Torah (Genesis 10:26) speaks of an individual named Chatzarmavet—or "Courtyard of Death."

It would seem to be very poor judgment on the part of parents to name their child "Courtyard of Death." Imagine the psychological effects on a child in a playground setting saddled with a name like this! What is even more curious about this narrative is that according to our tradition, the father of this child, Joktan, was a fine fellow, not to mention a humble and upstanding citizen!

Our sages address this question by teaching that Chatzarmavet was not the given name of Joktan's son, but the name of the location where he settled. And it is a testament to the profound effect this person had upon his community that he earned the accolade of having an entire region named for him.

The citizens of Chatzarmavet were known for their inclination to forgo the instant gratification of transitory consumerism that plagued the milieu they lived in—favoring instead a life of enduring value and infinite existence. These were a good, simple folk, unfazed by credit crunches, toxic debt, or loss of equity and monetary value. These people lived a simple and austere lifestyle, eschewing a life of glitz and glamour in favor of a thrifty but happy existence.

They personified the teaching of our sages (Talmud, Shabbat 153a), "Repent one day before you die." Since

we never know when that day will come, we must always be repenting . . . They always contemplated death—i.e., that since life is so fragile and temporary, it is foolish to waste time on acquiring, or worrying about, possessions that are of fleeting value. Instead they chose to focus on permanent and lasting ideals, those that will be of enduring value long after the soul departs the body.

Thus they were named "Courtyard of Death." They eschewed the temporal "life" that so many pursue.

But from Hadhramaut comes one who chose to be defined by the literal meaning of the name of his ancestral home; hence a 9/11 atrocity is conceived and executed, resulting in the wanton murder of thousands of innocent people.

From Chatzarmavet, however, comes an idea of personal responsibility, of an ethos that ensures the perpetuation of a people focused on values that reject temporal materialism and the flavored soundbites of mass consumerism—in favor of a more difficult, yet ultimately more rewarding task of spiritual and moral growth, ensuring that we will overcome Hadhramaut with Chatzarmavet.

By Rabbi Sholom Lew

In Jewish History

Sunday, 25 Tishrei, 5778 - October 15, 2017 Passing of R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1809)

Passing of the great Chassidic leader and advocate for the Jewish people, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810). Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was a close disciple of the second leader of the Chassidic movement, Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezritch. He is best known for his love for every Jew and his impassioned words of advocacy on their behalf before the Almighty.

Passing of Chatam Sofer (1839)

Tishrei 25th is the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg (1762-1839), known as "Chatam Sofer" after his work of Rabbinic responsa. Rabbi Moshe was an outstanding Halachic authority and community leader, and was at the forefront of the battle to preserve the integrity of traditional Judaism in the face of the various "reformist" movements of his time.

Thursday, 29 Tishrei, 5778 - October 19, 2017 Passing of Rabbi Don Isaac Abravanel (1508)

Today is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi Don Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508), one of the leaders of Spanish Jewry at the time of the 1492 expulsion. A minister in the king's court (after having served as treasurer to the king of Portugal), he chose to join his brethren in their exile. He began writing his extensive and highly regarded commentary on the Torah in 1503 in Venice (where it was published in 1579).