



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

# TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

7 - 13 October, 2018  
28 Tishrei -  
4 Cheshvan, 5779

**Torah:**  
Genesis 6:9 - 11:32

**Haftarah:**  
Isaiah 54:1-20

## ■ CALENDARS

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

## ■ TORAH STUDIES

We have many Judaic topics for you to study. We will provide the material and courses. Please write to us for more information.

## ■ 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 to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

## ■ CHANUKAH GELT

Please ask the chaplain for the 'Chanukah Gelt Form'. Your children will receive Chanukah Gelt from you.

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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 Sheldlitz 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.

## Parshat Noach

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 Noachs. Let us rebuild our world.

*By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

# IT'S ALL UNDER CONTROL

In this week's Parsha we read about the descendants of the survivors of the great flood who sought to unite by building a city with a great tower. The Torah relates:

Now the entire earth was of one language and uniform words. And it came to pass when they traveled from the east, that they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and fire them thoroughly"; so the bricks were to them for stones, and the clay was to them for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make ourselves a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the entire earth." (Genesis 11:1-3)

G-d is alarmed by their actions and steps in to foil their plan. He disrupts their unity and the project collapses. As G-d tells the angels:

"Come, let us descend and confuse their language, so that one will not understand the language of his companion." And the L-rd scattered them from there upon the face of the entire earth, and they ceased building the city. (Genesis 11:7-8)

*Why is building a city a terrible sin? What is wrong with building a tower?*

The story of the tower is relevant today, perhaps more than ever, for it is not a story about an ancient construction site, but about the development of cutting edge technology.

The building of the Tower of Babel represents a dramatic leap in the development of industry. Up to that point, people had built homes out of stone. Stone is a divine creation. Places like Babylonia, where there were no mountains and thus no stones, were considered inhospitable to the building of cities. Human ingenuity, however, created a new technology—the brick.

The people said to each other:

"Come, let us make bricks and fire them thoroughly"; so the bricks were to them for stones, and the clay was to them for mortar. (Genesis 11:3)

Fascinated by their ability to create a man-made stone, they sought to demonstrate that the brick was far superior to the stone created by G-d. They wanted to show that the brick, not the stone, was the material of choice in building the tallest tower in the world, within the greatest city in the world.

The Torah does not state clearly that they rebelled against G-d, lest we mistakenly think that developing technology is a sin.

*What then was the problem?*

The Midrash relates that during construction of the tower, when a person fell off the tower and died nobody cared. However, if a brick fell and cracked, they all stopped to mourn the lost brick (Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer, 24.). This is a powerful Midrash. It teaches us that a single-minded drive to achieve power and independence, with no higher purpose, can lead to totalitarianism where human life is devalued.

The message of the story is relevant, now more than ever. The past century has witnessed the "floods" of the most devastating wars in the history of humankind, as well as the explosion of human scientific knowledge and technological advances.

The message of the tower of Babel is that the towers and cities we create must have a higher purpose. Advancements in technology do not necessarily mean advances in human rights, and certainly do not automatically lead to us being better people with a closer relationship with G-d.

Each and every one of us can choose how to approach the ever increasing technologies introduced into our lives. We can become the builders of the tower of Babel, or we can emulate Abraham.

The Midrash tells us that Abraham watched the building of the tower, and he saw the lack of deeper meaning. He understood that a building with no higher purpose is dangerous. He realized that humanity's purpose cannot merely be to make a name for itself, to achieve material success.

In next week's Torah portion we read how in contrast to the builders of the tower, whose only purpose was to make a name for themselves, Abraham made it his life's mission to proclaim the name of G-d. He made it his goal and purpose to teach anyone who would listen, that all human achievement should just be a tool for a higher, more spiritual, purpose (Likutie Sichos Noach vol 3). Please make necessary arrangements.

## CHANUKAH

*December 3 - December 10*

Please make necessary arrangements.

### *In Jewish History*

**Monday, 29 Tishrei, 5779 - October 8, 2018**  
**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).

**Friday, 3 Cheshvan, 5779 - October 12, 2018**  
**Passing of R. Israel of Ruzhin (1850)**

The 3rd of Cheshvan is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of the famed Chassidic master Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin (1797-1850), known as "The Holy **Ruzhiner.**"

Rabbi Israel was a great-grandson of Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch; a close friendship existed between the Ruzhiner Rebbe and the 3rd Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch.