

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

Noach - Zayin MarCheshvan

The Context:

The parshah of Noach is always read leading into the week of the 7th of Cheshvan. This was the day on which the inhabitants of Israel would begin reciting the daily prayer for rain in the daily amidah, “*v’sein tal umatar.*”

Even though the rain season in Israel started before that date, the people would refrain from praying for rain until the 7th of Cheshvan because that is when the last travelers would return to their homes on the border of Israel after ascending to Jerusalem for the Sukkos holiday. Out of consideration for their journey, the prayers began after those last Jew had finally settled back home.

What is the significance of reading Noach in conjunction with this date?

The Preface to the Explanation:

Even though the departure of the Jewish people from Jerusalem seems to be a descent from the heights of spiritual connectivity they experienced there, there must be a spiritual benefit to it, being that in matters of holiness we only ever ascend.

By returning to the mundane reality of home, the people began to implement the inspiration of their ascent to Jerusalem in making the world itself into a home for G-d. In a way, the joy associated with this labor is more pristine and primal than the joy experienced in Jerusalem itself. The joy of the Jew who came to the Beis Hamikdash was his own subjective delight in experiencing the Divine. But the joy the Jew has upon engaging with the world to fulfill G-d’s own desire is not his joy. It is not personally pleasurable for him to do this work. He rejoices in the limitless joy that G-d has from the effects of his work.

This joy might seem to be dependent on each individual’s return to their own home. When those closer to Jerusalem reached home, they should already attain the joy

received from beginning the labor of the land. Yet this is not the case. The home for G-d is built when the lowest and farthest of places is brought close to G-dliness. As long as there remains a corner of the land that is not yet inhabited and uplifted, the home for G-d is incomplete. Just as a home has many rooms with varying importance, and can only be considered truly complete if every room, even those of lesser prominence, are furnished and prepared, so, too, G-d's home is complete when the farthest place from Jerusalem is elevated.

Therefore, the joy of making a home for G-d was only fully manifest when the final Jews reached their homes at the farthest reaches of the Land of Israel.

The interdependence needed to achieve this home for G-d is evident from halacha as well. There are certain halachic mechanisms which only apply when the entire Jewish people dwells in the Land of Israel. But it is not enough that the entire nation is gathered there, each tribe must be settled in its assigned portion, and each individual family must be on its plot. Thus, there is a unique spiritual reality that can only be

realized when we are separate from one another, each tending to our own unique portion of the world.

The Explanation:

This is the relevance of the parshah of Noach to this time of year. After the flood, Noach is explicitly commanded by G-d to leave the ark and inhabit the earth. Subsequently, the narrative shifts to the building of the tower of Babel. Commentaries explain that the generation desired to dwell in one place, to share the same language, society, and objectives. But G-d dispersed them across the face of the earth because the Divine desire is for humanity to populate, dwell within, and thereby elevate the entire earth.

Thus, prior to the 7th of Cheshvan, when we complete the reintegration of the Jewish people into the mundane world of work, we read Noach which encourages us to not remain safely in the ark, to not remain cloistered with those who share our ideals, but to go out into the wider world and transform it into a Divine home.
