



לזכות ולרפ"ש
הרה"ת ר' יוסף שלמה בן רישה לאיוש"ט

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אברהם צמח הלוי
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שיחי'ן
ראזענפעלד

The Building Project

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN WILL FEATURE AN ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

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עשה לך תבת עצי־גפר (י, ט)

עשה לך תבת: הרבה רוח והצלָה לפניו, ולמה הטריחו בבנין זה? פדי שיראהו אנשי דור המבול עוסק בה ק"כ שנה, ושואלין אותו מה זאת לה, והוא אומר להם עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להביא מבול לעולם, אולי ישוּבו: (רש"י)

Make for yourself an ark

"Make for yourself an ark: [Question:] Many ways to bring relief and salvation are available to Hashem; why, then, did He burden Noach with this construction? [Answer:] In order that the people of the Generation of the Flood should see him occupying himself with it for one hundred twenty years, and ask him, 'For what do you need this?' And he would say to them, 'The Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to bring a flood upon the world: Perhaps [upon hearing this] they would repent.'" (Rashi)

Why did Noach spend such a long time—120 years(!)—building the *Teiva*? If it was in order to arouse the people in his generation to do teshuva—just seeing the finished product alone would have been enough to accomplish that! Definitely an unusual sight, it surely would have prompted the people to ask Noach about its purpose, and Noach would then inform

them of the impending *mabul*, encouraging them to do teshuva. Why the need to drag out the construction for so long?

The reason it took Noach such a long time is that when Hashem instructed Noach to build the *Teiva*, He said, "עשה לך—Make for **yourself**"; which means—as the Abarbanel explains—that the *Teiva* was to be built by Noach *alone*. Since Noach was not allowed to involve anyone else in the work, it makes sense that it took him this long. (Actually, it is astonishing that it took him *only* 120 years to complete such an enormous task by himself!)

With this explanation in hand, we gain new insight into Rashi's opening question: "למה הטריחו בבנין זה?": The simple understanding of Rashi's question is: How come Hashem put Noach through the whole hassle of building a *Teiva*, and didn't employ an easier method of saving him?

But, actually, this isn't a question at all—a *Teiva* is the most natural means to save oneself from a flood.

Rather, what is bothering Rashi is this: How come Hashem instructed Noach to build the *Teiva* specifically by *himself*, allowing no one to help him? After all, if the point of the *Teiva* was to save Noach and his family from the flood, what difference does it make who built it?

It is in response to this question that Rashi gives his answer: The command given to Noach to build the *Teiva* was not only as a means to an end—so that he and his family



could be saved from the flood—but also an end unto itself. The act of *building* the *Teiva* was a mitzvah in and of itself, whose purpose was to warn the people of the generation about the impending flood, and inspire them to do teshuva.

If others had assisted Noach with the building, then the anticipated positive impact it would have had on the people would not have been a direct result of Noach's actions (aside from the fact that the construction would have been completed much sooner, which would have detracted from the impact that a slower construction project would have had).

This interpretation is also supported by the order of the *pesukim* which, at first glance, seem puzzling:

1. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְנוֹחַ קֶזֶץ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי-מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ.

And Hashem said to Noach, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth has become full of robbery because of them, and behold I am destroying them from the earth.”

2. עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי-גֹפֶר...

Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood...

3. וְאֶנִּי הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת-הַמָּבּוּל...

And I, behold I am bringing the flood...

According to the order of these three *pesukim*, Hashem instructed Noach to build a *Teiva* even before telling him about the flood (from which the *Teiva* was meant to save him)?!

We see here that the intent in Hashem's command to build a *Teiva* was (not only in order for Noach to save himself, but also) the very act of building—in order to awaken the people of his generation and inspire them to do teshuva.



We find a similarity between the *mitzvos* of building a sukka and building the *Teiva*: The Torah writes “עשה לך” about the *Teiva*, and “תעשה לך” about a sukka.

Practically, though, we find a difference between the two mitzvos:

From the words “עשה לך” said by the *Teiva* we learn two things: 1. The interpretation of Abarbanel—that Noach had to build the *Teiva* by himself. 2. The Rogatchover's interpretation—that “לך” means “משלך”; Noach had to build the *Teiva* using his own assets.

Whereas by the mitzvah of sukka, the halacha is different in both of these aspects: 1. One is not obligated to build their

own sukka—someone else can build it. 2. One is able to fulfill the mitzvah by using another person's sukka—it does not have to be your own.

The difference between the two mitzvos stems from a general difference in conduct between Noach and the tzaddikim that followed him:

The Zohar writes that Noach did not *daven* to Hashem to spare his generation from the *mabul*, and that therefore, the waters of the flood are named after him—“*Mei Noach*—The Waters of Noach”—since they came about (in a sense) because of him.

The tzaddikim who came later, on the other hand, displayed *mesirus nefesh* for their flocks; like Moshe Rabbeinu, for example, who said, “ואם אין מחני נא מספרך”—If you won't [forgive the Jewish people] erase me from your book...”

Since Noach was concerned only for himself, not *davening* for the rest of his generation, he was told by Hashem to build the *Teiva* by himself; without help from others, and with his own resources.

After Matan Torah, however, when Yidden had become one, single entity (similar to the conduct of the tzaddikim following Noach, who—seeing themselves as being one with their flocks—cared and *davened* for them), the sukka of one Yid can be built by another Yid, and one can fulfill their obligation using the sukka of another—because we are all really one.

Takeaway:

1. When given a *shlichus* from Hashem to save people *b'ruchniyus* or *b'gashmiyus*, don't delegate the responsibility to others. Do it yourself—no matter how important you are.
2. If Hashem gives a person two missions (or more), it is impossible that they conflict with each other; one can surely fulfill both.
3. Fulfill the mission Hashem has given you with the utmost alacrity (just like Noach, who—although working alone—was able to fulfill everything that Hashem asked of him in just 120 years!).

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 39)