

# THE PURPOSE OF CREATION PART III

*by Rabbi Aron Tendler*

## Universal Responsibility

Following the Mabul, in the year 1653 after creation, Noach and his family emerged from the Tayvah to repopulate the world. The lessons they had been taught while in the Tayvah were basic.

1. G-d was Creator and Master of the world. He created it and He could destroy it.
2. Humankind was created for a reason that was defined by G-d's intentions and not humanity's desires.
3. G-d's purpose for creating the non-free willed universe was to provide the setting for the free willed human to follow G-d's commandments.
4. So long as humans do as G-d commands, the rest of creation has reason to exist. If humans do not listen to G-d's commandments the rest of creation has no reason to exist.

Humanity's calling is to serve G-d by following His commandments. Creation's calling is to serve humanity by providing the setting where in which humanity can fulfill G-d's commandments. In the pre-diluvian world humanity ignored their given calling. They did not serve G-d and the rest of the world no longer had a reason to exist. Humanity could have chosen to serve G-d and thereby save all of creation; however, they did not. Therefore, humanity was reduced from billions of individuals to just eight members of Noach's family. Noach and his family were then forced to spend an entire year locked in a floating box with the survivors of the animal world.

Humanity's purpose during the year in the Tayvah was to physically serve the world that they neglected to spiritually serve before the Mabul. Through feeding, cleaning, and caring for all the animals, humanity immersed themselves in basic service to creation. Humanity was reduced to being zookeepers and caretakers.

The amount of work demanded in caring for the "floating zoo" was more than any one person could handle; therefore, the eight survivors and progenitors of humanity were forced to work together in order to accomplish their mission.

G-d wanted the future fathers and mothers of humankind to learn that continued purposeful existence depends on humanity working together, and doing so as a family.

Working together is necessary because no one person or group can do it alone. Working together as a family is essential because it reinforces what should be the commonality of values and goals between all the nations. Families share common ancestry, experiences, education, beliefs and culture; which in theory should make it easier for the nations to work together.

Noach's job was to transmit the power of family into the being of humanity so that they would always recognize and appreciate that humanity is really one big family. Just as all of humankind share the same ancestry, early experiences, and memories so too should humanity share the same basic values and goals. Only through shared values and goals can humanity accomplish its ideal of serving G-d and giving purpose to the rest of creation.

However, the lessons of the Tayvah were soon forgotten. Starting with Noach's son Cham, and quickly taking on a life of its own, the first lesson of "G-d is the Creator and Master of the world; He created it and He could destroy it," was buried beneath an avalanche of human avarice, paganism, and egoism. Cham's devastating attack on Noach's being revealed that humanity's shortcomings had survived along with humanity's potential for righteousness and nobility. The two would always be in conflict with each other. On one side is human subservience to G-d; and on the other side is self-centered, ego-driven, independence, and rebellion. Cham quickly returned to the ways of old and a philosophy of doing what he wanted rather than what G-d had commanded.

Cham's philosophy climaxed during the reign of his grandson Nimrod and the Tower of Babal. The Torah in last week's Parsha described that time in history (1996 years after creation - when Avram was 48 years old and Noach was 940) as, (11:1) "The whole earth was of one language and purpose." Rashi explained that their "one purpose was to rebel against G-d." The fact that they all spoke the same language made it much easier to share ideas and develop a single philosophy. Unfortunately, the vast majority of humanity joined hands in opposition to G-d, not in service to G-d. The value of unity and shared values that had been taught to the family of Noach had not been forgotten; however, following Cham's lead and ignoring the teachings of Noach and Shem, evil reigned with seeming impunity because of G-d's promise to the survivors of the Mabul that He would never again destroy the world.

As noted before, Noach, Shem, Ever, and Avram all lived at the time of Nimrod's bid for divinity. However, their voices of apprehension and teaching were silenced by the seeming success and dominance of Nimrod and his followers. The ego-driven philosophy of the post-diluvian world was far too attractive and powerful. Nimrod proved to be a brilliant leader of vision, and courage. He gathered the entire world under a single civilized banner and proclaimed his purpose and their purposes as one and the same. "To serve each other!" He saw himself as a great reformer of the human condition. The true G-d of the universe was the human himself! Therefore, the greatest calling of the human was to serve each other! What greater Chesed could there be than to selflessly serve each other and provide for each other's physical and materialistic needs and desires. Nimrod's philosophy used enough of the right terms to provide the kernel of truth needed to substantiate the

fallacy of his proclaimed agenda. In truth, Nimrod's plan was to hunt, trap, and take his greatest trophy - the crown of the world. He wanted to be declared King and god!

In many regards, Nimrod's approach at influencing his society was far more effective than the approaches of Noach and Shem. First of all, Nimrod was selling freedom from restrictions and considerations, whereas Noach and Shem were selling commitment, discipline, and inevitable self-sacrifice. Nimrod was a great hunter admired by the populace, a product of the new world order, while Noach and Shem were outdated, archaic, and out-of-touch. Noach and Shem preached reward in the world to come while Nimrod promised and delivered rewards in the here and now. Nimrod rationalized and justified human avarice and desire while Noach and Shem demanded the subjugation and redirection of all human desire and need.

At the same time as Nimrod's rise to popularity and dominance, Avram began to make his way into the consciousness of humanity. Soon it became known that a new philosophy had been born within the self-centered flesh markets of Mesopotamia. Avraham preached a dimension above freedom. Avram promised that service to G-d guaranteed an enhanced present in This World as well as a certain future in the World to Come. Avram began to attract those who had already been burned by the pagan world or those whose hearts led them toward the truth.

The battle between Nimrod the grandson of Cham and Avraham the great great grandson of Shem had begun. Nimrod represented ego and Avram represented G-d. Nimrod claimed that the human mission was to serve humanity by serving self while Avram professed to serve humanity by teaching humanity to serve G-d. Nimrod was motivated by selfishness while Avram was motivated by selflessness. Nimrod was the most arrogant of all and Avram the most humble of all.

Avram did not have to teach his students to fear cataclysmic retribution. Avram only had to add the dimension of spirituality to the human condition. Avram came to enhance and not to detract. The fact that he lived of this world and had married a wife whose external beauty was legendary, (story of Pharaoh) proved to all who sought the truth that life could truly be lived in the service of a power greater than oneself. Soon enough they discovered that Sarai's external appearance merely encased an inner beauty that far outshone and therefore enhanced her physical appearance.

Avram's approach to life was deeper and more intellectual. It demanded thought, practice, and determination. It demanded patience with self and patience with all others. More so than that, it required that once a person accepted Avram's philosophy of truly living and enjoying life in the service of G-d, it had to be shared with others. However, even after G-d destroyed Nimrod's plans by dispersing the people and destroying the Tower, Nimrod's approach remained a constant challenge, even within the household of Avram. (Story of Lot and Yishmael.)

At the end of the Parsha G-d changed Avram and Sarai's names to Avraham and Sarah. He added a letter of His own name to theirs as proof of their complete devotion to His service and purposes. However, Avraham required one last physical change to manifest the reality of his philosophy of life

lived within the service of Hashem. G-d's covenant - Bris of circumcision was gifted to Avraham and his children. In so doing, G-d stamped Avraham and his children with physicality in service to G-d. Sanctity not celibacy is among the most profound realities of G-d's world.

As Bereishis continues with the story of Avraham and the development of the Jewish people, Chesed - sharing the knowledge of G-d and His commandments - is woven into every historical note. Although all people will one-day embrace their G-d given task it will be the children of Avraham who with humility and by example will lead the way.

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