

# THE PURPOSE OF CREATION PART II

*by Rabbi Aron Tendler*

## Selected Beginnings

After Kayin killed Hevel Adam and Chava had a third son named Shais. The Torah records that he was given the name Shais because, (4:25) "G-d has given me another son to replace Hevel whom Kayin killed."

The fifth generation after Kayin was Lemech. Lemech married two women, Ada and Tzilah. Reflecting the degenerative values of that generation, Lemech married Ada to bear children and he married Tzilah as window dressing-plus.

Tzilah did not follow Lemech's program and she became pregnant. She gave birth to two children, a son named Tuval Kayin and a daughter named Naamah. The Torah identifies Naamah as the sister of Tuval Kayin. (4:22) Rashi referenced the Medresh naming Naamah as the wife of Noach and the mother of all humanity.

Noach, the 9th generation after Shais, was named Noach because; (5:29) "This one will comfort us... from the ground that G-d has cursed."

We established in last week's Rabbi's Notebook that G-d's purpose in creating the universe and populating the earth with free willed humans was for humans to do Chesed. In doing so they emulate their Creator Who founded the universe on the principal of Chesed.

We also explained that Chesed is the act of sharing goodness with others. The greatest good is knowing G-d and thereby having the choice whether or not to be close to Him; therefore, the ultimate Chesed is sharing the knowledge of G-d with others.

In support of this "Chesed principle" we explained why G-d first created the Adam creature as a hermaphroditic species and afterwards divided Adam into his male and female components. As a self-sustaining and regenerating species Adam may have been unique among all of G-d's creations; however, in his uniqueness he was also completely alone. He had no one with whom to share his knowledge of G-d's goodness. Therefore, G-d separated the single Adam creature into its male and female components creating two human beings who could share the knowledge of G-d's goodness with each other.

This week's Parsha details the destruction and recreation of our world. The pre-diluvian world had

obscured the "image of G-d" and degenerated to the level of animal. They ignored the divine demarcations separating species from species and canonized personal desire and ambition. Personal rights ceased to exist and the value of person and property was as great as the might of the perpetrator and as little as the impotence of the victim. Yet, within the decadence and amorality of that world society a single family was deemed worthy of being saved. (7:1) "For it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation."

The saving of Noach was predicated on his being the distillation of ten generations of greatness and prophecy. Naamah on the other hand was the single saving grace from five generations of murderers, thieves, and idolaters. This is not intended to suggest that all of Shais's descendents were equally worthy - clearly they were not. However, Noach, son of Lemech, grandson of Mesushelach, and great grand son of Chanoch came into the world with a sense of personal destiny and mission. (5:29) "This one will comfort us... from the ground that G-d has cursed."

Noach descended directly from Shais. In contrast to his older brother Kayin, Shais merited to birth the chain of transmission of the knowledge of G-d from his father Adam to his great-great-grandson Noach.

Adam was the first in the line of transmission. Having been fashioned by the hand of the Divine Himself, he was endowed with an unequaled awareness of G-d. He taught his faith in G-d and his developing knowledge of G-d to all his sons, but it was Shais who fully embraced the implied and imposed obligations for serving G-d and His intentions for creation. Carrying on after Shais were the subsequent generations of prophets and teachers culminating in Noach, father and progenitor of our world.

Shais's name is very revealing. Having been born after the tragedy of Hevel's murder, Shais was saddled with the responsibility of "replacing" Hevel. (4:25) "G-d has given me another son to replace Hevel whom Kayin killed."

From the moment of his birth Shais was asked to live his life "for another." Whether for the sake of his heartbroken parents or for the sake of carrying on the name of his deceased brother, his life was not lived for himself. Shais could have rebelled in the course of the 912 years of his life; however, if there were moments of rebellion against parental and religious pressures to live for others they did not define the character or accomplishments of Shais. Instead, the Torah presents him as an individual who faithfully transmitted the awareness, knowledge, and faith of his father Adam to the generations that followed. It was not an accident that nine generations later his grandson Noach would become the Tzadik of his generation.

Naamah's history is equally revealing. Her mother Tzilah married Lemech, a fifth generation descendent from Kayin. Naamah's father Lemech had married Tzilah for the sole sake of personal pleasure and ego. Tzilah was a beautiful woman and it was her beauty that Lemech wanted to possess through marriage. Fearful of marring her beauty, Lemech instructed Tzilah not to become

pregnant. At first Tzilah accepted the condition of her contract with Lemech; however, at some point she decided that her purpose in life was to have children. Going against Lemech's wishes, she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, Tuval Kayin, and a daughter Naamah. Rashi explains that Tuval Kayin followed in the ways of Kayin and espoused a philosophy that was distant from G-d and the teachings of Adam. On the other hand, his sister embraced the intent of the Creator and became "his sister," attempting to influence Tuval Kayin and reverse the degradation perpetrated by his namesake Kayin on the soul of humanity. As we know, she was unsuccessful in saving her brother, but she merited becoming the mother of all humanity and thereby saving the soul of humanity.

Noach's birth history is equally revealing. Born into a G-d fearing family attempting to survive in a G-dless world, Noach's birth heralded a feeling of redemption and comfort. The land that had been cursed since the time of Adam's expulsion from Gan Eden had frustrated all attempts at mastery and cultivation. When wheat was planted weeds and thorns were harvested - until the birth of Noach. Upon the occasion of his birth a new era was ushered in. As Rashi recorded, it was Noach who invented the farming tools that eased the work and soon yielded the earth's dormant bounty.

In many ways his birth was both the fulfillment of a prophecy that the curse would end with the death of Adam, (Noach was the first generation born after Adam's death.) and a foretelling of the future potential for continued redemption. Unfortunately, Noach's world, the pre-diluvian world, was unwilling to embrace the opportunities for doing Teshuvah. Despite Noach's warnings that they were headed for destruction, the generation continued to perpetrate their evil actions and philosophies on the world and ignored the intentions of their Creator.

Noach and Naamah were not accidents of evolution. In the merits of Shais and Tzilah these two unique personalities were born into G-dless times as the intended bridge for humanities future and eventual redemption. The past was destroyed. The bridge of Noach and Namah could only lead forward. However, the bridge was founded upon the eternal bedrock of service to G-d and commitment to Chesed. They were raised to fulfill the intent of their Creator and gave the world its second chance to exist on a foundation of Chesed.

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The author is Rabbi of Shaarey Zedek Congregation, Valley Village, CA.

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