

## Marcheshvan: A Month of Transformation

Monthly English Broadcast

### 1. CHESHVAN AND THE FLOOD

We've now just entered the second month of the year, the month of Cheshvan. Yesterday we read *parashat No'ach*, which recounts the story of the flood. The flood both began and ended in this month, the month of Cheshvan. The names of the months that we use today are not the original Biblical names.<sup>1</sup> The Biblical name of this month is Bul (בול),<sup>2</sup> which is an abbreviated form of the word "flood" (מבול). Though the flood happened in the time of Noach, more than 4000 years ago, the Zohar indicates that it has special relevance for our times. Based on the verse, "And it came to pass in the six-hundredth year of No'ach's life," the Zohar prophesizes that there will be a spiritual flood in the six-hundredth year of the sixth millennium. As it was during Noach's physical flood, the Zohar explains that the windows of the heaven will open during this great spiritual flood and Divine knowledge will come pouring down. At the same time, the waters of the abyss will erupt and cover the earth with mundane knowledge, or science. This spiritual flood, says the Zohar, will begin in the year 1840 leading to an eventual union between Torah and science.

### 2. FILLING OUR WORDS WITH LIGHT

Noach built the ark over one-hundred and twenty years (the lifespan of Moses). God told him exactly how to build it, that it should have three floors, its dimensions, width, length and height. Of the verses describing the ark's building plan, the most important phrase explained spiritually by the Ba'al Shem Tov is, "You shall make a *tzohar* for the ark" (צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה).<sup>3</sup> The word *tzohar* (צַהַר), according to *Rashi*, has two different meanings. Literally, the word means "light"; it is one of the thirteen synonyms for light in Hebrew.

From it stems comes the word "noon" (צַהַר יַיִם), the time of day when the light is most brilliant. To make a *tzohar*, i.e., to make light for the interior of the ark, means according to *Rashi* either that Noach was commanded to make a window, so that light can enter from the outside, or according to the second more mystical interpretation that Noach should find a precious stone that gives off light from itself and will serve as a lamp within the ark. This precious stone is called a *tzohar*. The need for light inside the Ark is clear, as there were no external sources of light during the entire course of the flood, which lasted an entire year.

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<sup>1</sup>. See in length in the Ibn Ezra's commentary on Exodus 12:2.

<sup>2</sup>. See 1 Kings 6:38.

<sup>3</sup>. Genesis 6:16.

### **Adding light to our prayers**

Starting with this idea of the *tzohar* being something that radiates light, the Ba'al Shem Tov explains that the verse is also instructing us about our daily service of God. To understand his explanation, we first have to know that the word for "ark" (תבה) in Hebrew is the same as the word for "word" (תבה). Most people are more familiar with "word" being *milah* (מלה), but actually there are two synonyms for "word" in Hebrew, the second being *teivah* the same word as "ark" (תבה). So if a *teivah* is a word, what does it mean to place a *tzohar* in it? The Ba'al Shem Tov explains that it is an instruction that in every word that we speak, we should place a precious stone. You could also apply the Ba'al Shem Tov's explanation using *Rashi's* first interpretation. The meaning would then be that you should open a window in the word, so that light can come in. Once that light is in the word, then the light goes out and illuminates the entire world, just like the *Menorah* in the Tabernacle. The light from the *Menorah* was not for the sake of illuminating the Sanctuary, rather it shined out and lit the world. Similarly, the intrinsic light in every word we say should illuminate the world. So now we have our first idea: that the month of Cheshvan is about the service of building an ark and placing a light in it—and according to the Ba'al Shem Tov, this means illuminating our words with light. Indeed, the precious stone that we place in every word that we speak is our personal manifestation of the soul root of the Jewish people, which is the Divine *ayin* (אין), the nothingness or state of nullification that we experience in the face of Hashem. This is one of the most important teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov.

### **The power of word permutations**

In another, related teaching, the Ba'al Shem Tov interprets the phrase, "You shall make a *tzohar* for the ark," in an additional way. He says that if we take the letter *hei* from *tzarah* (צרה), which means a hardship or a difficulty, and place it in the middle of the word, we get *tzohar* (צהר), the source of light that illuminates our words and our life. Thus, says the Ba'al Shem Tov, if a person is experiencing hardship, if he is able to reach an inner state of self-nullification in the face of Hashem, he can transform the hardship into *tzohar*, a precious stone that radiates light. This teaching is based upon permutation theory (permutation theory is very important nowadays in String Theory). Long before permutations were studied in mathematics, they are found in the first text of Kabbalah, *Sefer Yetzirah* (whose contents are attributed to Abraham), which deals with the permutations of the letters in Hebrew words.

The Ba'al Shem Tov here emphasizes the power that changing the order of letters in a word has. Everything in the world is dependent on the letters of its Hebrew name. If you have 3 different letters you can arrange them in 6 permutations, if you have 4, you can make 24, if you have 5 there are 120 permutations. Moses who lived for 120 years is related to this. The most important word in the Torah that has 5 letters is God's Name, *Elokim* (אלהים) and Moses is referred to as "the man of God" (איש אלהים). The first word in the Torah (בראשית) has six letters, so it has 720 permutations. If you have a word of 7 letters there are 5040 possible permutations. The rule is that the number of permutations of  $n$  letters is  $n!$  (read:  $n$  factorial), i.e., the product of the first  $n$  integers (so for instance that calculation for 7 letters is:  $1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4 \cdot 5 \cdot 6 \cdot 7 = 5040$ ). But, if two or more

of the letters are the same, then you have to divide the number of possible permutations by the factorial of the number of identical letters.

One of the greatest mystics, Rabbi Avraham Abulafia, who lived about 800 years ago, wrote much of his teachings around the power a person has to affect and transform reality with his inner ability to play with the permutations of words. So, the ability that the soul has to change reality through words, is alluded to in this verse, this phrase ( צהר תעשה לתבה ). You should understand it as saying: make your words illuminate by permuting the letters of the word that describes your present state of reality into a word meaning light. If your word happens to be “hardship” ( צרה ), your precious stone (the manifestation of your soul-root) has the power to permute and transform it into something good, into illumination.

### 3. THE PROPHETESS MIRIAM’S MANY NAMES

We saw in past classes that the Biblical book of Chronicles mentions names that we are not familiar with from other places in the Bible. Sometimes a Biblical figure might be known to us from other books of the Bible and then the sages will connect him with entirely unknown names found in Chronicles.

Interestingly, we find that the word *tzohar* ( צהר ) appears as a name in Chronicles.<sup>4</sup> In the Talmud,<sup>5</sup> the sages say that this name refers to Miriam the prophetess. Miriam has a number of different names, either 10 or 11 (depending on the opinion in the Talmud). Miriam’s lifespan was identical to Sarah’s, the first Jewess, 127 years. All three siblings, Miriam, Aaron, and Moses passed away in the same year, Miriam on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nissan, Aaron on *Rosh Chodesh Av*, and finally Moses on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar.

The sages explain<sup>6</sup> that throughout scripture, throughout the entire Bible there are 48 prophets and 7 prophetesses. The first was Sarah and the second was Miriam. Miriam’s prophecy was that Amram, her father would have a son who would redeem the Jewish people. After Yocheved, Miriam and Moses’ mother was forced to abandon Moses on the Nile, Amram thought that Miriam had lied about her prophecy. But, in spite of this setback, it turned out, when Pharaoh’s daughter adopted Moses, that Miriam was a true prophetess.

#### **Pu’ah and Tzohar**

In Egypt, we find that Miriam had another name, Pu’ah—one of the two delivery nurses that tended to the Jewish women there. When we turn to Chronicles we find that she has another 8 or 9 names, one of which is Tzohar, which as explained means either light entering, or light shining from within every word that we speak. Obviously the precious stone that illuminates every word is the precious soul that every Jew has. When a person speaks from his innermost heart, he can reach the innermost heart of the person that he

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Chronicles 4:7, note that this is according to the reading found in the Talmud; see following note. In the Bible, the name is *tzochar* or *vetzochar*.

<sup>5</sup> *Sotah* 12a.

<sup>6</sup> *Megillah* 14a.

or she is speaking to and affect the other person. This also leads, by feedback, to rectification in the person speaking.

### **Tzeret**

According to the sages, another of Miriam's many names that appears in Chronicles is Tzeret (צרת), which actually comes from the same root as "hardship" (צרה). The sages explain that this is because Miriam initially experienced a great deal of hardship in her life. She was very ill. Yet, from this state, she was able to perform a physical and spiritual transformation upon herself and was healed. When she was healed, she became healthier and more beautiful than any other woman on the face of the earth, all because she was able to transform her situation.

### **Efrat**

Another of Miriam's names in Chronicles, is Efrat. This is the name that became the basis for the entire house of David. David's father, Yisahi is described as an Efrati<sup>7</sup>—one who comes from Efrat. Ruth was the mother of Oved, the mother of Yishai, the father of King David, from who eventually comes the Mashiach. Efrat today is the name of a Jewish city near Bethlehem. Efrat is also used to refer to someone from the tribe of Ephraim.<sup>8</sup> According to *Rashi*, the title Efrati also designates an important individual.<sup>9</sup> It also implies a person who has favor in the eyes of others.

So after all of these usages of Efrat, why is Miriam called Efrat? Because the letters in Efrat (אפרת) can be permuted to spell a form of "healing" (רפאת). Thus, Miriam symbolizes a soul who is transformed and healed.

## **4. THE MOTHERS OF KINGDOM: TAMAR, MIRIAM, AND RUTH**

Miriam is one of the three mothers of kingdom that the sages mention: In Egypt, as a midwife, she was called Pu'ah. The reward for the midwives' self-sacrifice in Egypt was that God gave them houses. The House of Priesthood and the House of the Levites came from Yocheved (Aharon's mother) and Miriam received the House of Kingdom. The other two mothers of the kingdom were Tamar (Judah's wife) and Ruth. Tamar was the first.

### **Generations from Abraham**

If we count the generations from Abraham, then Tamar was the fourth generation (married to Judah, the son of Yaakov, the third from Abraham). Miriam is the seventh generation (just like Moses). And Ruth is the 11<sup>th</sup> generation. How did Miriam become the mother of Kingdom? She married Caleb who was the son of Chetzron, the son of Peretz, the son of Judah. Miriam herself was the seventh generation from Abraham and she married the seventh generation from Abraham through Judah. Tamar (the daughter of Shem the son of Noach) like Ruth was a convert. Miriam was the only one who was born a Jew. Ruth was a convert, but she married Boaz who was the 11<sup>th</sup> generation from

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Samuel 17:12.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Samuel 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Abraham. David was the 14<sup>th</sup> generation from Abraham, which is also the value of his name, **דוד**. So to remember the chronological order, the three mothers of kingdom are the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> generations from Abraham (4 plus 7 equals 11, a nice way to remember this).

### Connection with the Date-palm

Before we continue, let's see something interesting about their names. When we write them out according to their chronological order, Tamar, Miriam, Ruth (**תמר מרים רות**), we see that the initials spell "Tamar" (**תמר**) exactly in order. Additionally, the final letters (**תמר מרים רות**) also spell "Tamar" (**תמר**), but this time they are in reverse order. A Tamar is a date-palm. The Tamar is unique in that any single tree is either male or female. The female date-palm is the one that bears the fruit. This botanical fact is reflected in the fact that Tamar appears in both the initials and final letters of these three names. In Kabbalah, the masculine is direct light that descends from above to below. The feminine is reflected light that ascends from below to above. Reflected light is symbolized by a word that is written from the end to the beginning. So the name Tamar formed from the initial letters in order represents the Tamar's masculine dimension, while the name Tamar formed from the final letters in reverse order reflects the Tamar's feminine dimension.

The date-palm is the seventh of the Seven Species with which the land of Israel was blessed, the species that corresponds to the *sefirah* of kingdom (**מלכות**), the seventh of the seven emotive attributes of the heart. In the Torah<sup>10</sup> it is referred to by the word, "honey." The kingdom of the Mashiach that we are waiting for is thus symbolized by the sweetness of the honey of the date-palm. Surprisingly, the names Tamar (**תמר**) and Miriam (**מרים**) both contain the word for "bitterness" (**מר**), which has only two letters. Ruth also experienced much bitterness in her life (when she returned with her mother-in-law Naomi to Efrat, her mother-in-law said "Don't call me Naomi [which means pleasantness], rather call me Marah [**מרא**, which means bitterness], for God has made me [and my daughter-in-law, both were widows and childless] very bitter"). So all these three women first experienced bitterness in their lives and then merited that it became transformed into sweetness. This is the inner power of kingship.

Among the 11 names of Miriam we find another strange sounding name, Ardon<sup>11</sup> (**ארדון**), which according to one sage means a rose and represents her when she healed and blossomed out of her initial state of bitterness.

## 5. CHESHVAN'S BITTERNESS TRANSFORMED

So the transformation that these three women experienced is related to kingdom and it manifests particularly in this month of Cheshvan. Actually the full name of the month is Marcheshvan. The letters Mar before the name, literally means a "drop [of water]," alluding to the flood that occurred in this month. But, these two letters, as above, also

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<sup>10</sup> Deut. 8:8.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Chronicles 2:18.

refer to bitterness (מר), because this is the month in which we can transform the bitterness into something positive.

In the Torah, there is a place called Marah (lit. the feminine form of “bitter”).<sup>12</sup> This is the place that the Jewish people came to upon leaving the Red Sea. It was so-called because the waters there were bitter and undrinkable. God told Moses to take a branch—which was actually a branch of the bitter olive tree—and the waters were transformed into sweet waters. This story is seminal in that it is the one and only instance in the Pentateuch where the word “sweet” appears—alluding to the final stage of submission, separation, and sweetening taught by the Ba’al Shem Tov. Following the sweetening of the waters at Marah, the Torah tells the story of the manna that we ate during the 40 years of travelling through the wilderness, until we came to the land of Israel. In order to receive the Torah (which is described in Yitro, the next Torah portion after *Beshalach* where all this is described), one has to eat manna. This is symbolic of the power to transform the bitterness into sweetness.

Let’s see a beautiful finding that illustrates how these three women are related to manna. Once the manna begins to fall, God commands Moses to take a jar and fill it with manna, so that all coming generations will see that a person who places his trust in God, God will provide for him even in the wilderness. Many people read the portion of the Torah describing the events surrounding the manna every day as it reinforces our trust in God, the spiritual source of our livelihood.

The verse describing this command that Moses received is:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הוִי' מִלֵּא הָעֶמֶךְ מִמֶּנּוּ לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְדַרְתֵּיכֶם לְמַעַן יֵרְאוּ אֶת הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר  
הֵאֱכַלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּהוֹצִיאֵי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

We have highlighted some of the final letters in this verse. We see that the names of Ruth, Tamar, and Miriam all appear in the final letters of the words of the verse and in order! In *gematria*, the average value of these three names (which together equal 1536) is 512 or  $2^9$ , the number of all possible permutations of positive integers whose sum is equal to 10, the number that symbolizes kingdom in the Torah (the tenth of the 10 *sefirot*). The entire verse comprises 100 ( $10^2$ ) letters while the names of the three mothers of kingdom alluded to in the verse comprise 10 letters, which are thus comparable to the “tithe” of the entire verse—the tithe is described as “holy for God” and thus these 10 letters are like the select part of the verse. The remaining 90 letters of the verse equal 6016, or the product of 47 and  $2^7$ , where 47 is the value of the word “selflessness” (בטול), alluding to the Divine *ayin* mentioned above, the spiritual level attained by Moses and the soul-root of the Jewish people. The common denominator of the 10 letters and the 90 letters is thus  $2^7$  and the ratio of the 90 letters to the 10 letters is thus 47:12 where 12 is the value of the word “this” (זה), the word that refers to the Moses’ unique level of prophecy. It was Moses who saw the word of God spoken to him through “a transparent pane,” through a *tzohar*.

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<sup>12</sup> Exodus 15:23.

So this is the salient point of our talk tonight, that Marcheshvan is the special time of the year which allows us to transform ourselves and heal ourselves. This is a totally feminine image, linked with Tamar, Miriam, and Ruth.

### **From sickness to health**

There are another pair of names in Chronicles, which also refer to Miriam: חלאה נערה. They appear together. First she is “sick” (חלאה), then she became a “maiden” (נערה). And then she is called “hardship” (צרת) and then she becomes “brilliance” (צהר). So the motif of Miriam being able to transform herself from sickness to health repeats again and again. Her reward is the birth of her children. In order to take the soul root of Tamar and bring it into Ruth, you have to have Miriam in between.

## **6. THE WEASEL AND THE WELL**

Now, we’ll tell a beautiful story, which happened about 2100 years ago in the generation of Yehoshua ben Prachyah, one of the early Tannaim (before Hillel and Shamai) about 50 BCE. This is one of the most beautiful stories related to us and is called the story of the weasel and the well (מעשה מחולדה ובור). The animal mentioned here is sometimes translated as mole. In Modern Hebrew it is a rat, but in the time of the Talmud it refers to either a weasel or a mole. The word well alludes to Miriam, since all the waters that the people had in the wilderness came from Miriam’s well. The well-travelled with the people throughout the wilderness.

The story of the weasel and the well is a story of faithfulness between a young man and woman who promised to marry each other. In popular culture, a weasel is used to describe someone who is disloyal. When the sages bring it in the Talmud,<sup>13</sup> they just mention, the well-known story of the weasel and the well. Rashi tells it in short, the *Tosafot* add a few more details, but the most complete account is in *Sefer Ha’aruch*.

The weasel (חולדה) is actually the name of one of the seven prophetesses. She was the cousin of Jeremiah the prophet who prophesized in the generation of the first Temple’s destruction.

Nowadays we don’t have prophets (until prophecy will return with the Mashaich). What does a prophet mean in Hebrew? It means a “spokesman [for God]”. In Modern Hebrew a “spokesman” is called a “dover” (דובר). Altogether there were 48 male prophets or spokesmen in the Bible, and 7 prophetesses or spokeswomen. In some ways, the females were more important than the males. So, even though we don’t have prophets today, we still have to have spokesmen for God, to explain the Torah and its position. In every generation, we need these “prophets.”

### **The story**

The story is that a young maiden lost her way in the wilderness and she became very thirsty and there appeared a well. In the well there was a pitcher that you could lower into the water and bring it up. The pitcher was large enough for her to lower herself down directly into the water. She did so and drank to her fill but she couldn’t get back

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<sup>13</sup> *Ta’anit* 8a.

up. She started yelling for help. A young man passed nearby and heard her cries. He saw her figure, but didn't know if it was a real human being or a demon. So he asked her if she was a human or a spirit. She said she was human and he made her swear to it. She swore and then he said, if I get you out of the well will you marry me. She had no choice. He was a young man so he wanted to consummate the marriage on the spot. She asked him if he was Jewish. He said not only that, he is a Cohen. So she said, how can we consummate the marriage now, we have to do things according to *halachah*, come to my parents and we'll be married properly. She convinced him. But, she asked who would be a witness to their vow, their *wort* (their decision to get married). He looked around and said the well will be a witness and at that moment a weasel passed by and the young man said that the weasel would be the second witness.

The young maiden went home and waited for him. He went home and forgot about the whole thing. He married someone else and was disloyal. He had a child who after a short time was choked by a weasel and died. His second child died by falling into a well. The wife said that since these were two unnatural deaths, there must be something behind them. She asked her husband whether anything had happened in the past that might relate to these deaths. He remembered the whole story with the weasel and the well. The wife decided they should divorce and he should go look for that girl.

The conclusion of the story is that if a well and weasel hold a person to his vow, all the more so that God (the witness of all of our deeds and the One in whom we should swear loyalty by) does. Her parents pressured the girl to get married but in order to keep her vow, she played an epileptic and insanity. At some point, no more offers to marry her were made. When the young man came, he asked the father for her hand in marriage. The father said, but she's sick. The young man told him the whole story and said that he would marry her regardless. The sages say this exact same thing about Caleb and Miriam. Caleb married her when she was sick and in merit of his commitment to her, she became healthy. Here too, the moment she saw him, she became well again, and this is a story that teaches us the power of loyalty.

### **Women and loyalty**

Now, from the story we see that the girl remained loyal. The Maharal of Prague said that in her essence, a woman is more loyal than a man, and that is actually the reason that a man can marry more than a single woman. The fact that Rabbeinu Gershom Me'or Hagolah made a *cheirem*, a severe decree, against whomever marries more than a single woman implies that men should adopt this feminine trait. The world is actually becoming more and more feminine.

The loyalty between a bride and groom is the essence of the precious stone that we talked about earlier. The stone that illuminates every one of our words. We as a people are the bride of the Almighty, and like the girl in the story, our nature is to be loyal.

It teaches us God's loyalty to us (by providing us with sustenance regardless of what our situation is) and our loyalty to God (learnt from these three righteous women).

So we talked about loyalty and transformation tonight which go together. All the bitterness became sweetness. The power that we have to affect this transformation is through our loyalty.

## Questions and Answers

Q: If Adam was created on Friday, why is Rosh Hashanah not always celebrated on Friday?

When Mashiach comes this might be possible. But, now with our calendar that is pre-calculated, the first day of Rosh Hashanah can never be on Friday. There are many Jews who have the custom to commemorate this by reading the relevant account of the day of creation on the six days from the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Elul, which is the first day of creation. According to this custom one reads the account of the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation on the first day of Rosh Hashanah every year (and by reading the account of the creation of man on the 6<sup>th</sup> day we relive they experience). There are many good reasons in *halachah* which make it impossible today for Rosh Hashanah to be on Friday.

Q: If a woman is loyal, why is there an entire tractate called *Sotah* (a disloyal woman) and not *Soteh* (a disloyal man).

A: Simply the nature of a woman is to be loyal and therefore when she is not it is considered an aberration: *Sotah*. But, in the man's nature it is not so natural, so the fact that he is not is not such an aberration (unfortunately) and so it is not called *Soteh*. But, in our generations, as we come closer to Mashiach, the man has to adopt the women's loyalty. Indeed, all the names of Miriam we mentioned today are discussed in the tractate of *Sotah*.

Q: The 41<sup>st</sup> date of the year is the 11<sup>th</sup> of Marcheshvan, the day of passing of the Matriarch Rachel. But, since Noach equals 58, what is the significance of the 28<sup>th</sup> of Marcheshvan, the 58<sup>th</sup> day of the year?

A: Some people might know why this is a loaded question (the 58<sup>th</sup> day of the year is the Rav's birthday). But, relating to what we talked about, the number 58 is "grace," חן (Noach, נח, spelled backward, the first example of permutation theory related to Noach and the ark. The verse reads, "And Noach [נח] found favor [חן] in the eyes of God"), whose two letters are the initials of the two names of Miriam, חלאה נערה. There is a book of ours that has not yet been published called the Seventy Faces of Chen, describing 70 different pairs of words that form idioms in the Torah whose initials are חן. This is one of these pairs. In the chapter of Proverbs known as the Woman of Valor, we find that there is false grace (חן) and true grace. Grace and beauty are praiseworthy when the woman is God fearing. So the word "grace" (חן) itself can be both positive or negative and indicates the transformation from negative to positive. That's why the 58<sup>th</sup> day, the Chen day, the grace day of the year, is in this month of transformation.

Q: Is it possible that the Mashiach can be a woman and if so will she be married?

A: Let's ask the opposite. If the Mashiach is a man will he have a wife? If he does she will be Mrs. Mashiach and everything comes from the woman. Indeed, he will have a wife. In both cases they have to be married. There is a mitzvah to be married in the

Torah. Of the seven prophetesses, Devorah was the judge of her generation. Since the judge of the generation (in the Book of Judges) is the leader of the generation, the Mashiach of the generation, she was like a Mashiach. She was the third of the seven prophetesses. This is a clear indication that a woman can be a leader.

Q: As you led with *parashat* Noach and closed with a Jewish marriage story from the Talmud, how should a Noachide properly conduct marriage?

A: This is one of the most important things we are trying to teach. Our generation is faced with the challenge of teaching the gentiles what the Torah says for them. The righteous gentiles have a crucial task in bringing Mashiach. From personal experience, many gentiles ask for a wedding ceremony (what should we say and what should we do). In our book *Meditation for the Nations*, we explain in short, what the customs that should be taught them should be. In addition, we also have to write a prayer book (a siddur) for non-Jews. This is a very important challenge that we still have to compile in our generation a *Shulchan Aruch* (code of law) and a siddur for non-Jews.

Q: Souls return in cycles of rectification. It seems that objects do also. How does the "tzohar" of the ark reappear in our generation?

A: According to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* everything mentioned in the Torah is applicable in every generation. Physical symbols may relate to psychological states. Today's teaching related the "tzohar" in Noach's ark to the brilliance of our words of prayer and learning (and teaching) Torah. We merit this by loyalty in our heart and our mouth to God, to our spouse, and to our fellow. To speak what is exactly in your heart. If I put my heart into my words, that is putting the *tzohar*, the precious stone, into my words. It might be that in every generation the heart manifests in a particular way that is fitting for those times. Emotion evolves. One must be sensitive to whatever is now the present state of the heart's evolution. The one who is most sensitive to the heart of the generation is the king. That is in the Rambam even the definition of the king of Israel, "the heart of all of Israel." He is sensitive to the emotion of the generation. Rebbe Elimelch of Lizhensk explains that every generation has a special mitzvah that is most important to it. And so in relation to the emotions of the heart. The heart is full of many emotions, and each generation has its special color or hue of emotion. A true king is the one who is most sensitive to this color. The color of the stone in each generation is different. This would be the color of the *tzohar* in each generation (on the breastplate of the High Priest there were 12 precious stone, each with a different color). That is the emotion that the king teaches us to put into our words, allowing us to best connect with one another with heartfelt emotion.

Q: How will Judaism evolve in our generation when there are so many people who don't see the difference between an alef and a bet?

A: How did you come here? [A *ba'al teshuvah* from the US who because of a traumatic experience came back to Yiddishkeit]. It is your mission to go and bring all the people

that you are connected to back to Yiddishkeit. That is how things work in our generation.

Q: Why was Noach unable to bear any more children after the Flood?

A: The Torah says that Noach had his children only at the age of 500, far later than all his predecessors. God did this for him so that he would not have many offspring for whom he would have to build many arks. It's not that once he came out of the ark God prevented him from having more children, rather this is what happened: Noach wanted to have another child, but his son Cham decided that it was a bad idea, thinking that they would fight over the earth, so he castrated him. The whole essence of the story is that God wanted him to have more children, even though he was very old (600 years old). He had children at 500 because the commandment "be fruitful and multiply" (פרו ורבו) is equal to 500.

Q: What does it mean that speaking from the heart transforms something in the individual speaking.

A: One of the deepest secrets in Kabbalah is called the union of voice and words (קול דבור). Voice is the power to take an emotion out of the heart and put it into a word. It is not yet letters, just the sound that originates in the heart and enters the mouth. That is the power of Yaakov ("The voice is the voice of Yaakov", הקל קול יעקב). The power of words (דבור) is the power of Rachel. Actually, when we speak from the heart, we are creating a union between the Yaakov and Rachel in each of us. Through that rectification in oneself, the Yaakov coming from the heart, the voice coming from the compassion of the heart; the voice is the vector force that takes the compassion out of the heart and puts it into the mouth. Then Rachel articulates the voice into words that are spoken. When a union happens in oneself it must give birth, first to Joseph, the first son of Yaakov and Rachel. Joseph is the power to bring back people, outreach as it is called today. Yosef (יוסף) is so called because Rachel said, God should give me another son (יוסף ה' לי בן) (אחר). To have another son, is to add another son, to bring another person back to God. Every time that I speak from the heart, it gives birth to Joseph, the power to find and bring back lost souls. Rachel's second son, Benjamin (her day of passing, the 11<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, is his birthday), represents the arousal of the Jewish people, which awakens something spontaneously in Jews. This is the feminine arousal from below. Both Joseph and Benjamin are born from this union of emotion with words.