Assembly Notes

PARSHAS NOACH, ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN 5784

Assembly Theme: The greatness of efforts from below

"Noach saw a new world". This is stated in the Medrash on our Sedra. Question: what's **new**? When one wants to purchase a new car or laptop or any appliance, there is a choice. There is a difference between something which is brand new and something that's renewed, refurbished, "good as new", etc. Only brand new is really new. Noach did not see a world that's new. We can describe the world after the Flood as changed, cleansed, renewed, good as new; but how is it "new"? The Torah is precise in its descriptions!

The Rebbe answers this question by describing Hashem's purpose in creating the universe. First came Creation (יש מאין ex nihilo -something from nothing). But the ultimate purpose is that the Jewish People should **change** the world and make it into a "dwelling place for G-d below". This is a truly "new" world, because it is something that **we** create. In fact the Gemara (Talmud) says: "Greater are the deeds of the Tzadikim than the handiwork of Heaven and earth" (Kesubos 5a).

The world of Breishis was about Hashem's creation; but this creation was merely a means to facilitate a new creation, by us, when we refine and elevate the world, creating a "new" world. Until Noach the world could not change from the given situation. After the Flood there is a world of hope for change through our actions.

Sedra Breishis is always read in the month of Tishrei, which is replete with festivals and special days. We seem to be spending almost all of our time in Shul! Noach is a Sedra which is read in Cheshvan (this year on Rosh Chodesh, the first of the month). Cheshvan contains no festivals. The purpose of all the special days of Tishrei is to enable us to bring holiness into the mundane, thus creating our own **new** world.

OHEL

My wife and I spent Sukkos in the USA. I went to the Ohel one day, to give the Rebbe all your Panim. It was Chol Hamoed and there were hundreds of people there, mostly not Chabad.

STORY OF THE REBBE

There's a small town in northern Ukraine, not far from Russia, called Sumy. There is a Shliach there called Rabbi Yechiel Shlomo Levitansky. He and his wife Rochi have built a nice community, even though it was a real challenge at the beginning.

When they first arrived in Ukraine, Rabbi Levitansky's wife and family stayed in Kharkov (three hours drive away) while he looked for a suitable apartment. It was very difficult. Many houses didn't even have running water indoors. Over two weeks passed and he was coming back to his hotel room at night, and he began to wonder whether the whole idea was realistic. Maybe they should look elsewhere. He grew up on Shlichus in California, a very different type of place! He asked the Rebbe to pray to Hashem, that He should show him a sign if he was on the right path.

Suddenly he heard loud footsteps and saw a burly Ukrainian man in front of him. He said in Russian: Good evening! The man responded: Good evening. Are you from Chabad Lubavitch? Rabbi L said: Yes, I am. The man said: So am I. The rabbi asked: are you Jewish? The man said: No, I'm not but I am Lubavitch. How is that? The man explained that a few years ago he won a lottery for a Green Card (a permit to live in the USA) and he moved to New York. There he worked as a caretaker at the Rebbe's Ohel. "I am proud of my connection to the Rebbe and that holy place. It's a place of blessings. I know Rabbi Refson and Rabbi Krinsky. You can check with them!"

Rabbi Levitansky had his sign! This Ukrainian is proud of his connection to the Rebbe and his working for him. I am a Chossid of the Rebbe. I shouldn't have any doubts that I will succeed in the Shlichus. The very next morning he found a suitable apartment!

In the many years there Rabbi and Mrs Levitansky have built a beautiful community with a daily Minyan, a Kolel, a Mikveh and many men, women and children who are now proud and knowledgeable Jews. There have been challenges with the current war, but they are Baruch Hashem thriving.

Good Shabbos! Good Chodesh

גוט שבת!