


[Parashat Noach](#)

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LEAD LIKE A LION

Alexander the Great once said, *I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion.* What are the qualities of lion-leadership, and what type of leaders are “sheep” leaders?

A lion-hearted leader instills in you his fearless beliefs, the determination to lead others and be responsible for them, while a sheep-hearted leader instills within you fear, the complacency of being a follower and the expectation that others will be responsible for you.

נֵה אִישׁ צָרִיק תְּמִימָם הַיָּה בָּלֶרֶתְיוֹ As great as Noach was, he was great only in *his* generation. But had Noach lived in Avraham’s generation, Noach would not be considered great. (See Rashi) Why? What was the difference between them? The passuk explains, at its end: אַתָּה־הָאֱלֹהִים קָתַחְתָּךְ נֵה: The difference between Noach and Avraham was that Avraham was a leader, but Noach needed G-d to lead him. (See Rashi)

Noach, as nice a guy as he was, was not Noach Avinu. Only Avraham Avinu was called Avinu, and the Father of the Jewish Nation. Why is that so? Why is it important for us that our leader is Avraham, and not Noach? After all, you and I are here today in Noach’s merit! The answer is because we follow only leaders who are lion-hearted. Noach just did not fit the bill. How so?

The hint is in the Haftarah. The Haftarah refers to the flood as נֵה, Noach’s Flood, because Noach could have changed the people of his generation, or

at least have taken responsibility for the wicked of his day by praying for them. (See Zohar page 42a;2) Noach could have been more influential, by not just saying, while building the Ark for 120 years, “I am building this to save myself and my family from the flood.” (See P’DRE) Noach could have prayed for the wicked to return, no matter how low, immoral, cruel, or addicted they were, just as Avraham felt it was his responsibility at least to pray for the people of Sodom. And because Noach did not rise to the challenge, because Noach did not fill G-d’s expectations of responsibility, he was held somewhat responsible.

The question of the whole story of Noach and his Ark almost jumps out at you. G-d has so many ways to save Noach, i.e., bring him to the Land of Israel, which was not affected by the Flood. (Zevachim 113) According to Google Maps, it is only a 340-hour walk from Mt. Ararat to Israel, and a 260 hours’ walk from Babylon to Israel! Why, then, did G-d ask Noach to be so busy for 120 years building an Ark, when there were seemingly more simple solutions?! The answer is... because G-d wanted Noach to change the world and make it a better place! (See Rashi) G-d wanted Noach to make a BIG statement with his BIG Ark - Hey, guys! Something scary is going to happen!!!

But scaring people in order to lead them just does not work. A leader is great only if he truly leads. If he can be there for the sheep when they need him most, and make them into lions. The only way you can truly lead people is Avraham Avinu’s way. Just



like Avraham Avinu figured out the tricks of the trade of Kiruv, going out of his zone to be there for people when they would need him the most, from whichever direction they came, with his iconic 4-entrance tent in the desert. Noach was given a 120-year assignment of kiruv outreach, but he failed.

This is a lesson relevant to anyone who is in a position of power to persuade, influence, or educate. The Rambam begins the laws of Talmud Torah – about the ***Mitzvah of teaching... before the Mitzvah of learning!!*** The Mitzvah of teaching is at the root of the Mitzvah of Torah. This is the most important part of the Mitzvah. **וְשִׁנְגַּתְמָם לְבֵן־קֶרֶב** The meat and potatoes. The Rambam is teaching us that the greatest Torah-learning aspiration should be to be the best teacher possible. The most meaningful and affective time in a person's life is in his youth. That's when a teacher or mentor can engrave a deep impression that lasts. *When young people work on their Middot and personality and conquer their Yetzer Hara while still young, it is much easier for them to stay strong throughout their life.* As the passuk says, פֶּן יִצְאֶר לְבֵן־הַעֲמָם רַע מִנְעָרִי (- see Baal Haturim Breshit 8; 21) And as the Imrei Emet quoted the Arizal, that *the main spiritual energy a person has is from the Mitzvot and good deeds that he did while in his youth, before tasting the taste of sin.* As the passuk in Yirmiyah says, זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נֹעֲרִיךְ (2;2) Helping a student in whatever level they are on is the greatest level of learning Torah! It could be that this is why Hashem gave you your 120 years, to help this one kid to be able to understand this one passuk!

R' Chaim Friedlander has a whole essay on this fundamental principle of Judaism: that life is not about you, but about into what type of utensil G-d made you, what talents, abilities and tools G-d gave you in order to bring about His Honor in some way. (See Siftei Chaim- Emunah A, page 33) In his essay, he quotes the Rambam. The Rambam writes that it could be that G-d gave a rich man his wealth to build a huge building, for the sole purpose that just one time, a tzaddik would sit in its shade. (Intro to Zeraim) G-d could have you busy

with a family project for 120 years, so you could affect just one person, one time!

This is the perception of the lion-hearted spiritual leader. He perceives that his whole role in this world is to be G-d's tool to change the people he leads from sheep into lions. To produce more leaders, not more followers.

This lesson is sourced in the Talmud. *Tornusrofus the Wicked challenged R' Akiva: If your G-d loves the poor people, why doesn't He support them, Himself? R' Akiva answered him: In order for us to be saved from Gehinom, in the merit of the Mitzvah of Tzeddaka.* (Bava Batra 10)

What?!?!?! How could this be? This poor guy needs to live a life of poverty, a life of pulling out his hair, of struggles, of embarrassment, in order to save you and me from hell?

As unfair as it sounds, this is that fundamental tenet of Judaism. We are not here for this world; we are here for the next world. The merit the poor person has for saving another from Gehinom is so great, it is worth it to live 120 years of poverty!!!!

Your Tafkid, your life's purpose and mission, is not about you: it is about everyone that is in your world that you have a chance to affect. G-d put you in this world, and He is keeping you here, to make it a better place.

So, how does one lead like a lion?

Here are the Selfie- Steps. The self-help steps that can make you a great leader.

1. Notice where there is a great need that only you can fulfill, how can you lead the "sheep", and help them face their fears by bringing them optimism and hope.
2. Know yourself. Know that you, just one man, can change humanity. You, with your unique position, knowledge, strengths, ambitions, ideals and background, can help those who lack or are in need, in your unique way.



3. Always be a giver.
4. Ask your Rabbi for direction in how to balance helping others, while protecting yourself and your family.

5. If you cannot change your world, pray for it. If you cannot help, at least show that you care.

MR. IFONLY

Mr. Ifonly sat down and he sighed, “I could have done more, if only I had tried. If only I had followed my true intent. If only I had done the things that I meant. If only I had done the things that I could. And not simply done the things that I should. If only a day had lasted a year. And I had not lived in constant fear.”

Mr. Ifonly sat down and he cried: “I could really have lived, if only I had tried! Now life has past me by and it’s such a crime”, said Mr. Ifonly, who had run out of time.

This poem was written by Brian Patten, February 7, 1946, Liverpool, England.

But Mr. Ifonly is more advanced today. He has Whatsapp. He has an electric car. And he cries to a different tune. *If only I had more in life, I would be happier, better, or even... holier.*

Mr. Ifonly sat down and cried. If only I had more money, I would be happy and give more charity. If only I had a better wife, my home would know no strife. If only I had more strength, wit and courage, my life would begin to flourish. If only I would get more respect, my life would be perfect. If only I had more financial security, I would once and for all, stop to worry. If only I had more wealth, I would not only think of myself. If only I had another app on my phone, I would be more focused and in the zone.

This poem was written by Yosef Farhi, October 10, 2018, Jerusalem.

How many of us feel that if only we got better grades growing up, if only we were natural valedictorians, we would be ahead of life. But after her 14 year study of achievement and life choices of valedictorians, Karen Arnold wrote in her book, *Lives of Promise: What Becomes Of High School Valedictorians*, the following

conclusion: *Even though most of the valedictorians are strong occupational achievers- accountants, physicians, lawyers, engineers, physical therapists, nurses and teachers – the great majority of former high school toppers do not appear headed for the very top of adult achievement arenas. They typically settle into the system, instead of shaking it up.* It seems that those who actually made it, have been successful without the valedictorian IQ.

How many of us feel that we need money to make money. It is so interesting that in the Syrian community where I came from, the people that I know who had become wealthy started from below zero! Those who become great did so without resources, some even without an American education. They own one of the most important elements to become successful. The trait of resourcefulness. And resourcefulness comes from accepting, humbly, that from what you have, from where you are, is where G-d wants you to win the game. So why is the Mr. Ifonly of 2018 so stuck in life? Because he believes that if he only had more, the resources that G-d decided *not to give him*, life would be better...

Mr. Ifonly cannot change, until he humbles himself to G-d. That the place and the circumstance and the financial state he is in, the wife, kids and family that he has or does not have, is exactly what G-d packed in his suitcase for life, for him to make things work. From exactly where you are, and with what you've got. To live within your means. And make the best of “it”.

People ask me, “Rabbi Farhi. Humility is out of style in the Self-Help world for ages. The Novardoks were the Last of the Mohicans. Why do you keep bringing humility into 2019? How does it apply to the fast-track millennials, or to the selfie Generation Z? And how does humility give us a



better life? What more can humility help me, than the philosophy that if you are humble, you can never fall? That “the man who sleeps on the floor can never fall out of bed”? The answer is that humility detonates the If-only thinking. It destroys the false belief that if I had more, I would be better. Humility teaches us that what you got is what you were supposed to get. Having more will not help you *be* more. That thought, that I deserve more, comes from haughtiness.

The Flood was the worst punishment G-d ever brought on mankind. Why did G-d punish mankind so severely? The Torah tells us, *ותמלא הארץ חמס* (Bereshit 6:11) Rashi interprets this to mean that what sealed the decree was the sin of stealing. Although they served idols. Although they had improper relations. Thievery is what sealed the decree (Sanhedrin 108).

How does this make sense, that a decree of such measure should be enacted for thievery? For the sin of the Golden Calf, for idol worship, 3000 men died. For the sin of promiscuous relations of the Midianite women, 24,000 perished. But for the sin of stealing, which is not even one of the cardinal sins, the whole world needs to be destroyed?!? Also, how, in any way, was the Flood considered an exact punishment, measure-for-measure for stealing?

The Yalkut Shimoni teaches, that the Torah tells us the reason why they were punished this way. It was because they were not only evil, but their wickedness was about “more”. *כי רביה רעת האדם* *The generation of the Flood became haughty because of the good that HKBH bestowed on them.* “Do we need the drops of rain from G-d?! We have rivers and springs that suffice! HKBH said, In the good waters that I bestowed on them, they anger Me? With the water, I will punish them! That is one opinion. Here is the other. *R Yochananan said, the generation of the Flood became corrupt due to abundance. So, they were judged with abundance.* (Yalkut Shimoni 58)

What does the Y. Shimoni mean, due to abundance? Or haughtiness? I thought the punishment was for *טנה*, stealing?!

The answer is that someone who steals needs to be haughty enough to think, “I deserve more. What G-d has given me, is not enough. The little that G-d has given me prevents me from achieving all that I can. I am bigger than what G-d decided I am. I should be richer than G-d decided I should be. And that is how I will become a better person. Once I have more. Once I have *רבה*. A lot more than what G-d lets me have”. All the Mr. Ifonly’s in the time of the Flood believed that Ifonly I could have more in life than G-d gives me, I would be happy. More money. More desires. More power... Why did they think so haughtily? G-d gave them everything. So, they did not “need” G-d. A person who has no bed, a person who has no food needs G-d more, so he is more humble. The haughtiness of the mistaken thought that one does not need G-d is the root of all sin. When Moshe reprimanded the Jews for serving the Golden Calf, he hinted at it in his words *ודי זהב* (Devraim 1:1). Rashi comments that the reason why they served the Golden Calf was because they had *רובה זהב*, so much, gold! We sometimes think that if only we had more money, respect, power,etc..., we would be better parents, better Rosh Yeshivas, better teachers, better kollel guys. Wrong!!!! The “more” is what brought about one of the greatest sins in history.

This was the measure-for-measure. G-d said to the people of the Flood, you don’t want My boundaries? I will take away the boundaries of the seashore. I will take away the boundaries of the clouds, and the boundaries of the springs. I will plague them with My blessing to humanity: rain, but with no limits. With *רבה*, plagued with plenty.

How much Hishtadlut to make in life is one of the hardest questions we all need to answer. How hard should we try to make money, versus relying on G-d? I once had a business idea, so I discussed it with one of my Rabbis. He told me that the fine line between proper Hishtadlut and too much of it is the difference between “making” money and “taking” money. Overworking, trying *too* hard, is like trying



to get more than what G-d has allotted to you. And there is no Beracha in the money that you “take”. Some commentators believed that the only lesson we can learn from Parashat Noach, for our generation, is to learn from the episode of the drinking of Noach, how dangerous it is to get

SECRET (OF) CHARM

Some people have charm. Wherever life takes them, people are drawn to them like a magnet. I used to believe that charm is something that you either got from Heaven or you didn’t. Time has taught me that some people who have charm can lose it, while others who did not have it suddenly figure out how to turn it on, consciously or subconsciously. Charm is important, for it is the secret recipe for getting people to like you. It can get people to want to have you around. There are a few ingredients in the recipe for gaining charm. Many people who have charm did not break it down to a science. They do not know that they naturally stumbled onto the secret recipe. They just naturally put into play the behavior that creates it. Not being aware of just what it is that they are doing right can sometimes result in trying other modes of behavior and losing the charm.

There is a Hebrew word consisting of only two letters that, despite its brevity, can take you very far in life, if you really know what it means. חן. The translation of the Hebrew word חן is grace or favor. Grace is so important that we pray to G-d three times a day in שְׁלֹמִים shalom at the end of the Amidah, asking him to grant us grace. We pray for it immediately upon awakening in Birkot Hashachar. People know, at least subconsciously, what grace is. But most people do not or cannot define it in cognitive terms. Once you know what grace is and you implement it, you have what we call charm. Charm and grace are really dependent on a few factors. We are going to focus on the most important one, the one that has to do with our ancestor, Noach.

There are two main characters in the תנ"ך that won this title of חן, two people that had grace. Noach is the first one. In Havdallah, Sefardim say the last passuk in parashat Bereshit ונח מצא חן בעני

drunk, how it happens unexpectedly, and how it splits families.

But I believe that we can learn from the Flood a lot about humility. And that whatever we have from G-d is all we really need.

SECRET (OF) CHARM

נ' , And Noach found favor in G-d's eyes. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 105) writes that the decree of the Flood applied to Noach, as well as to the other people in his time אַחֲ עַל נָה נִחְתַּם גּוֹר דֵין אֶלָא שְׁמַצָּא חָן בְּעַנִּי הָ . Noach was spared from the outcome of the decree because he had this favor, this grace. Grace saved his life! The power of grace is so great that one who possesses it can be rewarded royally, without even deserving it. Moshe Rabbeinu beseeched G-d to forgive the Jewish Nation of the sin of Golden Calf in the merit of grace. And G-d answered him – וַחֲנֹתֵיתִ אֶת אָשָׁר אָחָזָן I will act with grace to those in whom I find grace. Rashi comments (Berachot 7a) “[I will act graciously with him] Even though the one who possesses grace is not worthy of My grace.

It is obvious, then, that one who has grace gets much more out of life than he deserves. And, people forgive such individuals much faster. But what is this grace thing, and how does one get it?

The next person who won the title of חן was Queen Esther. From all of the girls that were candidates to be Achashverosh’s queen, Esther was chosen. And here are the words of the psukim וְתִהְיָ אֲסֹתֶר נִשְׁאָתֶת חָן בְּעַנִּי כָּל רָאִיה And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. Then the passuk says,

וַיַּאֲהַב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת אֲסֹתֶר מִכָּל הַנְּשָׁיִם וְתַשְּׁא חָן וְחַסְדָּךְ לִפְנֵי מִכָּל הַבְּתוּלֹת And, of all the women, the king loved Esther, and she found favor and kindness before him more than all the virgins.” What did Esther do to get this חן, specifically in the בית הנשיות, the place where all the female candidates were busy with jewelry, perfumed oils and beauty treatments? And another point. It seems that חן and חסד go together, both in the case of Esther and in the Amidah, in שְׁלֹמִים shalom. What is the connection?



There are two approaches to life, exemplified by the way people relate to others. When joining company, some will walk into a room and say, “Well, here I am!” There are others who walk in and say, “Ahh, there you are.” The first person shines the spotlight of the conversation *on his own* life’s interests, while the other shows genuine concern for *what is important to his fellow*. You have two tracks of thinking that you can run in any given relationship: *What can I do to that will make it more enjoyable for me when I have this person around?* Or, *What can I do to make things enjoyable for the other person to have me around?* What is the difference between the two? **חן**. Grace. Favor.

Noach’s father gave him the name **נח** saying, **זה ינח לנו ממעשנו ומעצבון ידינו מן הארץ אשר נח** This (son) will make things easier for us to deal with the land that was cursed by G-d. The Hebrew word **נוח** means “comfortable”. Noach lived up to his name, making things comfortable for the people he shared the world with. The Midrash tells us that Noach invented the plow, the spick, and all other tools for working. Until then, people would just plow with their hands, cut wheat with their hands – and everything was very difficult. Thorns and thistles were in abundance, due to the curse that G-d gave the land when Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge. But Noach invented the solution to a global problem. Noach did not become rich from this. There was no way to patent a shovel or a rake. But he thought how to make life easier for the people in his generation. Everyone else was just busy solving his own life’s problems. No one invested time designing things that could help mankind. Noach, however, genuinely cared for other people. This is what gave him grace and favor. And, this is what saved his life. G-d knew that the right man for the job to care for the animals in the Ark had to be Noach. This explains why Noach got punished severely the one time he brought food late to the lion. The lion slashed his

leg, making Noach limp and bleed heavily- **וישאר נח** (see Rashi 8;23). Why was Noach punished so severely for just a little delay? But, now we understand that Noach was, in fact, not worthy of being saved. He was actually part of the decree of annihilation in the flood. The only thing that kept him alive was grace: caring for others, showing interest in others. When he slacked off in that even a bit, he lost his merit for a minute; he lost his grace, and was now punished as part of the original decree.

Esther’s **חן** had the same basis as Noach’s: caring for others. The Talmud (Megillah 13a) tells us that the source of Esther’s **חן** was in her making each person feel that she was from his nation. How did Esther make people from so many varied backgrounds feel that she was a “landsman” – a fellow compatriot? She showed them that she loved them and cared about what was going on in their lives, with such warmth that they felt she was part of them. Despite her being queen, she behaved with humbleness, treating each person as a **צלם אלקיים**. (see Me’am Loez 2; 15) This is what brings a person grace. And it can take a person very far in life. It seems that this is the connection between **חן** and **חסד**, kindness and grace.

King Solomon teaches in Mishlei the main variable for this charm. **ולענויים יתנו חן** (Mishlei 3 ;33) *And G-d gives favor (or grace) to those who are humble.* Humbleness means putting yourself on hold for a bit. All sensible etiquette is connected to recognizing that there is someone else in the picture. There are infinite details of how to express this recognition: the way one acts, talks, and even one’s body language. All these bring about the grace, the favor, the charm. Respecting that there is someone else, and caring that he is there. We ask G-d that we merit this humbleness, have that charm, and show that we care that there are people in our world other than “me”.

TO BE AN IVRI

“Street-smart” people know how to deal with sticky situations. Not all of us are blessed with

their talents. Indeed, even *they* may not be aware of how they naturally behave. I would like to



examine one of the techniques used by the “street-smart personality,” and suggest that it may also serve the rest of us in certain situations. I will call it “defensive-to-offensive positioning.” Ironically, we can learn the technique from none other than Nimrod, King of Ur Kasdim, and sworn enemy of our Patriarch Avraham. As we study the famous Midrash about Avraham smashing the idols – and its aftermath – we will notice the centrality of this technique in the first disputation Judaism ever experienced.

Let’s consider a situation almost all of us encounter at one time or another: having to defend our religion, beliefs, and/or identity against the attacks of an anti-religious Jew. More often than not, the questions or attack of the critic are not rooted in a search for truth as much as they are rooted in self-defense. At some point in the argument, we usually have the following challenge thrown at us: “*Prove to me that G-d exists.*” And many people foolishly attempt to do so.

The attempt is foolish because a Jew who is in denial of G-d’s existence – and is not looking to change as much as he is looking to defend himself – will not be willing to accept our beliefs unless he can feel, see, and hear G-d. The facts and phenomena that point clearly in the direction of a Creator will be ignored. The harmony of creation will never be enough for such a person. Even if the religious Jew succeeds in defending his beliefs and his religion, the anti-religious critic will often avoid giving the subject any serious thought, and simply proclaim that he simply does not “buy it.”

This is the place for the offense/defense technique. Every athlete or person who enjoys sports knows that it is better to be on the offense rather than on the defense. When on the offense, you never lose. You either gain a point or you do not. On the defense, however, you either lose a goal or save yourself from losing one. In every debate as well, one will always find himself either in the offensive or defensive position.

When you are defending Judaism against someone who is not really seeking the truth, he or she will

never let you feel that you defended your religion or beliefs successfully.

What should you do? Stop defending, and go on the offensive. Turn the tables and say something like this: “*I challenge you to prove to me that G-d does not exist.*” This usually scares them off because this was something they attempted unsuccessfully throughout their lives. Such people may have convinced *themselves* about their proof against G-d’s existence in order to avoid responsibilities. The non-believer defends his own weak position by attacking you instead. The best way to deal with such a person is to defend yourself by quickly and smoothly shifting position and putting him on defense. By doing so you are in the “no-loss” position in this debate. The only defense the attacker has is to put *you* back into defense mode. Never let him do it.

In the following famous Midrash (Rabba 38), the “defensive-to-offensive positioning” technique is clearly seen throughout the debate between Avraham and Nimrod. Avraham Avinu’s father Terach was an idol manufacturer and retailer. Terach asked Avraham to manage the business while he was away. When the first customer walked in, Avraham asked him how old he was. The man responded that he was sixty, and immediately realized how foolish he was to bow to a one-day old idol. Needless to say, he left the shop with an empty shopping bag.

Later, a woman walked in with a bowl of soup which she left as an offering to the idols. When Terach returned, he was taken aback by the wreck in his shop. Avraham pointed an accusing finger at the big idol with a sword in his hand, and explained that the idols quarreled over the sacrifice. The big one had destroyed all the other smaller idols. Terach told Avraham that he does not believe the story because the idols cannot move. Avraham took this opportunity to question his father about believing in and promoting such a “god.”



Now, news of this episode reached the ears of the ruler of Ur Kasdim, Nimrod, and he was hardly willing to close his eyes to Avraham's "apostasy." He commanded Avraham to bow down to fire, his god. Nimrod believed in fire as almighty because fire can destroy anything on earth. Avraham responded by bravely pointing out to Nimrod that water is more powerful than fire because water extinguishes fire. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to bow down to rain clouds? Nimrod proceeded to command Avraham to bow down to the clouds. But Avraham challenged him again: Isn't wind more powerful since it can push around the clouds? Perhaps it would be more appropriate to bow down to the wind? Nimrod then commanded Avraham to bow to the wind. This went on a few more rounds until Avraham made it crystal clear to Nimrod that the most powerful force in the universe – and the Creator of fire, rain, wind, etc. – is an immortal Almighty G-d.

What was Nimrod's response? Denial. Nimrod forced Avraham to prove the existence of his G-d. "I bow only to fire, and I will throw you into it! Let us see your G-d come and save you!"

At first glance, Nimrod's response is rather hard to fathom. Didn't Avraham prove to him that fire cannot be all-powerful? How did Nimrod stick to his belief in this public debate without first defending his position? The answer is that Nimrod just switched from defense to offense. By turning the tables and having Avraham and his G-d prove themselves, Nimrod avoided having to defend himself. This is what street-smart people do. They just go on the offensive instead of defending their shaky positions.

Of course, we *can* defend Judaism against any and all attacks, but we do not feel obliged to do so when challenged by people who are not seeking the truth.

Now, Avraham's brother Haran was not sure if Avraham was right about his belief in G-d. As Avraham was thrown into the fire, Nimrod asked Haran if he agreed with his brother. After witnessing Avraham's success in his disputation with Nimrod – capped by his brother's miraculous salvation from the fire – he decided to answer in the affirmative, and was promptly tossed into the fire. But G-d did not make a miracle for Haran. Why not?

G-d was not willing to make a miracle because Judaism is not based on successfully defending ourselves in a debate or successfully exposing the fallacies of other religions. Judaism is about realizing – through the Book of Torah and the Book of Nature – that there is a Creator who wants us to serve Him and perform His Mitzvot. Judaism is about being an *Ivri* – one from the "other side." The whole world may disagree with us, and stand on the other side of the "river," yet the authentic Jew, like our great Patriarch Avraham, will stand alone with his belief even if it looks like no one bought into his side of the debate. Haran was not willing to be that "lonely man" of faith. This essentially meant that Haran was not willing to be Jewish. And this is a lesson for all of us about Judaism: We should develop our faith in G-d and His Torah to the point where we live as Jews even if everyone around us is telling us to worship the idols of money, pleasure, or anything else.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A" H

