

20 October, 2001

\* At this week's Gemorah Brachos shiur at Mark Franck's @ 5:15pm Shabbos afternoon, there will be a siyum.

Katanga

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# Caulfield Beth Hamedrash Weekly Newsletter

D'var Torah

## THE ARK OF RESPONSIBILITY

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons (aish.com)

So why did Noah have to bother building an ark? And why did it take him 120 years?!

The Midrash says that Hashem specifically wanted Noah to undertake a strange and unusual project, to arouse people's curiosity. That way, Noah could engage them in discussion about the global crisis, and how catastrophe could be avoided if people would change their ways.

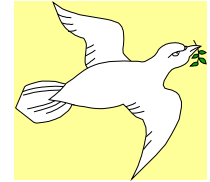
Well, 120 years is a long time, and you would think that Noah would have convinced a lot of people to get back on track. But alas, instead of reaching out to influence others, Noah saw the Ark as his own ticket to survival - a chance to build a big wall and insulate himself from the evils of society.

In one sense it is true that we have to protect ourselves and our families.

Maimonides warns us about the danger of living next to neighbours who don't share our system of values. Where there's corruption, the good frequently get swept up with the bad. And we have to guard against this.

But there's a second side to this. The "Ark" cannot be completely insulated; it must be porous as well. We have to reach out and try to make a difference in the world. The Chasidic writings compare this to a wealthy person who needs to warm himself in the winter. He could build a fire, in which case everyone in the room would benefit. But

imagine instead that he warms only himself with a heavy coat and blankets. In both cases he's warmed; the only question is to what degree he's concerned about others.



Even if we aren't willing to fix things out of altruistic love for others, then at least we should do so for ourselves. Because the reality is that no matter how hard we try, some "bad" does seep in. And in the end it will get us as well.

Every Jew recognises that all the Jewish people are bound together. When there is a terrorist attack in Israel, we all feel it. The Talmud says "Kol Yisrael areivim zeh la-zeh" - every Jew is responsible one for another.

Today, the Jewish people are fighting wars on many fronts. The very existence of the State of Israel is being questioned in world forums.

Anti-Semitic acts around the world are mindful of 1938. And there is the cancer of assimilation, where every year, over 50,000 Jews between the ages of 20-29 opt out of the Jewish people, lost to us forever.

Noah's failure to try and influence his generation is why the Flood is called "the waters of Noah" (Isaiah 54:9). Don't think the problem isn't affecting you. Because it is.

Let's commit to taking responsibility - for ourselves, our family, our community, our world.

Thoughts for the week:

"You can't direct the wind, but you can adjust your sails."

"Everyone hears what you say. Friends listen to what you say. Best friends listen to what you don't say."

"Ever stop to think and failed to start again?"

### Other Developments

\* After a month of Yom Tov festivities, as we settle into a New Year, it is Be'ezras Hashem, an appropriate time to thank all the people who keep our Shule ticking. There are many to thank for all the varied jobs they do, all-year round, for the benefit of all Shule members. These range from the President and the Committee, the Gabboim, those who help with the general maintenance and cleanliness of the Shule to those who help maintain decorum and those responsible for producing the weekly Shule timetable. Of course our biggest thanks goes to you, our valued Shule members who make Katanga what it is. Thankyou to all of you and may you all continue to contribute this year and in years to come.

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### MAZAL TOV

**Y** A very hearty Mazal Tov to Alon Ledder and Danielle Laser on the occasion of their marriage this coming week.

**Y** Katanga would like to wish them, their parents and extended families much naches and simchas in the future.

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### A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

by Rabbi Rafael Stephansky

"A window you shall make for the ark..." (6:16)

As any real estate agent will tell you, the three fundamentals of real estate are: Location, location, location.

One of the things you can't change about a property is the view. A room with a view is a precious jewel. When G-d instructed Noach to build the ark, He included specific instructions to include a tzohar. Tzohar has two possible meanings. It can mean either a "precious stone" or a "window." A precious stone might fill the ark with a beautiful light as the sun's rays were refracted, bathing the inside of the ark with a multicolored glow. A precious stone is to let the light in. A window, on the other hand, is for looking out. But what were they supposed to look out at? An empty waterscape of grey in every direction?

G-d wanted Noach to have a window on the world to see the world's destruction and have a feeling of pity. In life, it's easy to think if I'm okay - the world's okay. Life's biggest jewel is to look out of our own arks and take up the yoke and the heartaches of others.

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### Announcements

- Rabbi David Blackman, the Director of the Jewish Learning Centre, will present a Shiur on Monday, October 22nd at 8.00 p.m. "When the West Confronts the East - An analysis of the current global conflict based on Sefer Bereishit" at 280 Orrong Rd Caulfield. Charge: \$5.00

- Anyone interested in joining the roster for presenting shiurim in the Youth Minyan should speak to Ezra May, or email us here.

### Parsha Overview - NOACH

The Almighty commands Noah to build an Ark over a period of 120 years.

People deride him and Noah explains that there will be a flood if people do not correct their ways. The generation does not do Teshuva and God brings a flood for 40 days.

The water covers the earth for 150 days. The Almighty makes a covenant and makes the rainbow the sign of the covenant that He will never destroy all of life again by water. Noah plants a vineyard, gets drunk and then occurs the mysterious incident in the tent after which Noah curses his grandson Canaan. The Torah portion concludes with the story of the Tower of Babel and then a genealogy from Shem to Abram.

Suggestions or comments regarding our website or newsletter? Email us - we would love to hear from you.

- Minyanim times for this coming week are: Mornings: first minyan @ 6:15am, second minyan @ 7:00am. Mincha at 6:40pm followed by shiurim. Ma'ariv at 7:20pm.

- Please join us for our Katanga weekly Squash game on Sundays @ 6pm at Gardenvale Squash Centre. If you are interested in attending, please let Mendi Slodowitz know.



**Wishing everyone a Shabbat Shalom & Gut Shabbos!**  
**"The Editors"**