

Parshas Noach

“The Live Ones are Dead and the Dead are Alive”

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Video: “What Should We be Feeling?”

<https://www.torahanytime.com/#/lectures?v=260697>

Terach took his family out from Ur Kasdim. They settled in Charan, which was on the way to Eretz Canaan.¹

“*Vayamas Terach BiCharan.*” – And Terach died in Charan.

Rashi points out that Terach did not die upon his arrival in Charan. He lived more than 60 years afterwards.

Rashi explains that the wicked are considered dead even during their lifetimes.² Although Terach existed on this earth for an additional 60 years, he was a *rasha*. And he “died” in Charan.

Rav Chaim Stein³ raised a question. The mention of Terach’s death in Charan was due to his wicked stature. Did Terach’s “career” as a *rasha* begin in Charan? Terach was a *rasha* before he arrived in Charan. His son, Avram was guilty of rejecting *avoda zara*. It was Terach who delivered his son into the hands of Nimrod, who cast Avram into a fiery furnace. He did this while living in Ur Kasdim. Why didn’t the Torah state that Terach’s “death” occurred in Ur Kasdim?

Rav Stein explained by saying, “We are not the ones who define “*chayim*” and “*mav’es*” (life & death). What appears as death could actually be life. What seems to be life can be death.

The Kuzari divides the entities of the physical world into separate categories – *Domem* (the inanimate), *Tzomayach* (plant life), *Chai* (the animal kingdom), *Medaber* (capable of human speech), and Yisrael.

Yisrael is a separate category all of its own. In what way is Yisrael different from all mankind? The difference lies in the life force of Yisrael.

Hashem granted life to man. It is the nature of man to be born into this world alive, just like it is natural for an apple to fall down from a tree. This nature is granted to all people, regardless of their righteousness or lack of righteousness.

Yisrael is different.

The Torah says, “*Vi’atem hade’veikim baHashem chayim kul’chem hayom*”⁴ – And you cling to Hashem, you are alive today. “*Ki im’cha mekor chayim*”⁵ – With you is the source of life. In *birchos hatorah* we recite, “*vi’chayei olam nata bisocheinu*” – And the life of the world you implanted within us.

The life of a “Yid” is defined by the direct (and constant) connection between him and the Creator. Yisrael does not receive life through an indirect life force created by Hashem (in order to sustain life

¹ Bereishis 11:31-32

² Berachos 18b

³ Rosh Yeshiva, Telshe Cleveland

⁴ Devarim 4:4

⁵ Tehillim 36:10

in general). Hashem is the direct source of life for a Ben Yisrael. Hashem implanted this life force within us. We cling to Him and thus, are alive.

Terach was a *rasha*. But that doesn't necessarily mean that Terach was disconnected from the direct source of life. Terach had a son. His son, Avram, embarked on a journey. Avram's journey was one of discovery. He left the place of his birth, where the Creator's presence was smothered. And Avram embarked on the journey of his destiny, to Eretz Yisrael. He was accompanied by his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot... and his father.

But Terach's journey ended in Charan. It was in Charan that Terach and Avram parted company. He had no interest in entering the land where Hashem's presence is revealed. And so, Terach did not follow Avram into Eretz Yisrael.⁶

(Lot, on the other hand, joined his "lot" with that of Avram. And so, Lot is infused with the same life-force as Avram's. As a result, Lot is part and parcel of Avram's destiny – through his descendants, Ruth the grandmother of Dovid Hamelech, and Naama, the wife of Shlomo Hamelech).

In Ur Kasdim Terach was still connected to Avram. He was still alive. By not accompanying Avram to Eretz Yisrael, Terach severed his final connection with life.

And so... Terach truly "died" in Charan.

⁶ Seforno 11:32