

PARSHAT NOACH-2014, 5775

No'ach and his generation were given seven Mitzvot and these became known as the "SHEVA MITZVOT BNEI NOACH." The fact is, however, that six of these Mitzvot were already given to Adam HaRishon and his generation. (Rambam Hilchot Melachim 9:1) Only the seventh Mitzvah, was added on to Noach, the commandment not to eat Eiver Min Hachai, eating from a limb of an animal while it is still alive (Bereishit 9:4,5). That commandment was unnecessary for Adam because he was forbidden to eat anything from the animal kingdom. Adam HaRishon was only permitted to eat from the fruit and vegetable of the land (Bereishit 1:29). Only after the Mabbul, did HaShem permit Noach and his generation to indulge in eating the meat of the animal kingdom (9:2).

Now that Noach had an additional Mitzvah, over and above Adam, No'ach had a higher Kedusha level than Adam. Kedusha, is not measured by any abstract factor, but simply by Mitzvot. That is precisely what we say in our Brachot for performance of a Mitzvah, "ASHER KID'SHANU BEMITZVOTOV", He sanctified us, HaShem gave us Kedusha, through the Mitzvot that we are commanded to do. The more Mitzvot the higher level of Kedusha. If Adam had six levels of Kedusha, then No'ach had a seventh level.

Comes Avraham, and he is given an eight Mitzvah; the Mitzvah of Brit Milah. Consequently, Avraham's level of Kedusha was now raised over and above Noach. Yitzchak was given the ninth Mitzvah – of separating Maasrot, and Yaakov Avinu the tenth Mitzva of not eating the Gid Hanasheh. And that's how it remained, until the days of Moshe Rabbeinu and we were given 613 Mitzvot.

With this in mind we can now understand the Mishna in 5th Perek of Pirkei Avot, which state: "There were ten generations between Adam and Noach" Then it further states: "There were ten generations between Noach and Avraham". Why is Noach counted twice, first together with Adam, and then together with Avraham? Furthermore, why couldn't the Mishna merely state that there were 20 generations between Adam and Avraham? I suggest that the Mishna is categorizing the generations in terms of Kedushat HaAdam. The first 10 generations, through the first half of Noach's life, had a very low level of Kedusha, only 6 Mitzvot. Beginning with the second half of Noach's life the Kedusha was upgraded to 7 Mitzvot, and that's how it remained through the first half of Avraham's life. Only in the second half of Avrahams life, when given the 8th Mitzva, was a new counting of generations begun.

That is true with all aspects of Kedusha. The land of Israel has a higher level of Kedusha than the rest of the world, because there are Mitzvot that can be performed in Eretz Yisrael and nowhere else (Trumot and Maasrot). The city of Yerushalayim has more Kedusha than the rest of Eretz Yisrael because there are Mitzvot that pertain only to Yerushalayim (eating from the Korbanot of Kodshim Kalim). And of course, the Har HaBayit has more Kedusha than Yerushalayim.

Let us hope we will soon be Zoche to benefit the full extent of the Kedushot that are potentially available to us, Bikdusha, U'vetahara, B'shira, U'vezimra.