

Noach 5786

Rashi on Genesis 11:1

ONE LANGUAGE — The Holy Tongue (Hebrew) (Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 19).

AND ONE SPEECH — They came with one plan, saying: “He has no right to select the heavenly regions exclusively for Himself; let us ascend to the skies and make war upon Him”. Another explanation (of דברים אחדים which is taken to mean “words referring to “One”): words regarding the Sole Being (G-d) in the Universe. Another explanation of ודברים אחדים is: they spoke דברים חדים “sharp” words; they said, “Once in every one thousand six hundred and fifty six years (the period that elapsed from the Creation to the Flood) there is a heaven-shaking, just as there was in the days of the Flood. Come. then, and let us make supports for it” (Genesis Rabbah 38:6).

Rashi on Genesis 11:2

AS THEY JOURNEYED FROM THE EAST where they were then dwelling, as it is written above, (Genesis 10:30) “And their dwelling place was ... the mountain of the East”. From there they journeyed to search out for themselves a place that would accommodate them all, but they found none except Shinar.

Sforno on Genesis 11:4

Thus we will make for ourselves a name. This “name” was the idol that was to be placed in the tower. They hoped that on account of the grandeur of the tower and the city this idol would come to be recognized universally as the supreme deity. In this way the king of the city would achieve dominion over the entire world.

Rashi on Genesis 11:7

COME, LET US GO DOWN — He took counsel with His Judicial Court because of His exceeding meekness.

THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND — One asks for a brick and the other brings him lime: the former therefore attacks him and splits open his brains.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 101:4

One may pray in any language one desires; and this applies [when one is praying together] with a congregation. But when [one is praying] alone, one should only pray in the Holy Language. And some say that this [requirement to only pray in Hebrew] only applies when one is asking for one's own [personal] needs, for example: one who has prayed for someone who is ill, or for some affliction in one's household; however, [when reciting] the regular liturgy established for

the congregation, even an individual may recite it in any language. And some say that even an individual requesting his own personal needs may request them in any language one wishes, except for in the Aramaic language.

Radak on Genesis 14:13

A member of the tribe of Ever, he and all his descendants proudly regarded Ever as their ancestor. They were the only people who still spoke Hebrew, the original language of man. Subsequent descendants, other than the line which ran through Avraham and the Israelites, changed their language to Aramaic, and were called Aramim, i.e. members of the people of Aram, in recognition of their specific language. Even Lavan, a third or fourth generation descendant of Ever, was already known as לבן הארמי, Lavan who spoke Aramaic. The tribe called עבריים was Yaakov and his offspring.

Genesis Rabbah 63:6

“She went to inquire of the Lord” (Genesis 25:22) – were there synagogues and study halls in those days? Did she not go only to the academy of Shem and Ever? It is, rather, to teach you that anyone who enters before a Torah scholar, it is as though he enters before the Divine Presence.

Bavli Megillah 17a

Rather, learn from here that the fourteen years that Jacob spent in the house of Eber are not counted here. **As it is taught** in a *baraita*: **Jacob was studying in the house of Eber for fourteen years while in hiding** from his brother Esau. If we were to calculate the life spans recorded in the Torah, we would find that **Eber died** when Jacob was seventy-nine years old, **two years after Jacob our father went down to Aram-naharaim**, to the house of Laban. When Jacob **left** after completing his studying **there**, he **then went** immediately to **Aram-naharaim**. Therefore, **when Jacob stood at the well** upon his arrival in Aram-naharaim, **he was seventy-seven years old**.