

How to Waterproof Your Life

Genesis, Chapter 6

12. And G-d saw the earth, and behold it had become corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth.

13. And G-d said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth has become full of robbery because of them, and behold I am destroying them from the earth.

14. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with compartments, and you shall caulk it both inside and outside with pitch.

Genesis, Chapter 7

1. And the L-rd said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen as a righteous man before Me in this generation.

12. And the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Genesis, Chapter 8

1. And G-d remembered Noah...and the waters subsided.
11. And the dove returned to him at eventide, and behold it had plucked an olive leaf in its mouth; so Noah knew that the water had abated from upon the earth.

And G-d said to Noah... Come into the ark

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov

The Hebrew word for "ark," teivah, also means "word." "Come into the word," says G-d; enter within the words of prayer and Torah study. Here you will find a sanctuary of wisdom, meaning and holiness amidst the raging floodwaters of life.

Chassidic Masters

The word for "flood" (mabul) is related to the word for "confusion" (balal). Metaphorically, the waters of the flood drown us, along with our minds, by confusing us as to what is primary and what is secondary in life.

Zohar

Noah's failure to try and influence his generation is why the flood is called "the waters of Noah" (Isaiah 54:9), implying that he was responsible for the flood.



פרק ו

יב. וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ וַהֲגִיחַ נִשְׁחָתָהּ כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בְּשָׂר אֶת דְּרָכָו עַל הָאָרֶץ:

יג. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ קַץ כָּל בְּשָׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּגִיעֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מִשְׁחִיתֶם אֶת הָאָרֶץ:
יד. עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי גִפְרִית קְנִימִים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת הַתֵּבָה וְכִפְרָתָהּ אֲתָה מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:

פרק ז

א. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְנֹחַ בֵּא אִתָּהּ וְכָל בֵּיתְךָ אֶל הַתֵּבָה כִּי אֲתָךְ רְאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בְּדוֹר הַזֶּה:
יב. וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה:

פרק ח

א. וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נֹחַ...
יא. וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו הַיּוֹנָה לְעֵת עֶרֶב וַהֲגִיחַ עֲלֶיהָ זַיִת טָרֶף בְּפִיהָ וַיַּדַּע נֹחַ כִּי קָלוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ:

Forty days and forty nights

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

The flood served not only as a punishment but also as a spiritual cleansing. This is why the waters of the flood are called “the waters of Noah,” (Isaiah 54:9) meaning “the waters of [Divine] pleasure and satisfaction [nachat].” This is why the flooding lasted for forty days and nights, since the number forty is related to purification and rebirth: it takes forty days from the time of conception for a fetus to become completely formed. Similarly, the minimum amount of water that must be present in a mikveh (a ritual pool used for spiritual cleansing), through which a person becomes spiritually “reborn,” is 40 se’ah.

And G-d spoke to Noah, saying: “Go out of the ark...”

The Chassidic Masters

This, too, is a Divine command. G-d commands us to “enter into the ark,” into the sanctums of spirituality we are to create in the material world. But then we must “go out of the ark” to carry forth its sanctity to the ends of the earth.

Rashi

From the 17th of MarCheshvan when the rains began, to the 27th of MarChesvan the following year, when Noah was finally able to leave the Ark, was a full solar year, making 365 days that the earth was uninhabitable.

The dove came back...an olive leaf in its bill

Rashi

By bringing back a bitter olive leaf in its mouth, the dove was saying symbolically, “Better that my food be bitter but from G-d’s hand, than sweet as honey but dependent on mortal man.”

SUMMARY

- Mabul, flood, also means disorder, a confusion in our priorities.
- When the floodwaters of life churn, enter the tevah, the words of Torah study and prayer.
- Like the gopher wood, which is soft and flexible, strive to have a yielding nature. “Better be as soft as a reed than hard as a cedar.” (Taanit 20a)
- The dove is a symbol of peace. One who is at peace with himself can see the beauty in all creation, even a bitter olive branch.
- Noah emerged and “beheld a new world.”

