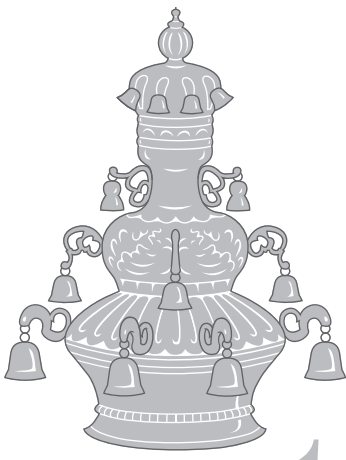




THE
TORAH

חומש

בראשית

∞
TORAH

CHUMASH BEREISHIT

The Book of Genesis

Parshat Noach

*A free excerpt from the Kehot Publication Society's
new Chumash Breishis/Book of Genesis with commentary
based on the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
produced by Chabad of California.*

The full volume is available for purchase at www.kehot.com.

*For personal use only. All rights reserved.
The right to reproduce this book or portions thereof,
in any form, requires permission in writing from
Chabad of California, Inc.*

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe*

THE TORAH - CHUMASH BEREISHIT

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Copyright © 2008
by
Chabad of California

A project of
Chabad of California
741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718

Order Department:
291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof, in any form, without permission,
in writing, from Chabad of California, Inc.

The Kehot logo is a trademark
of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-8266-0190-1
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America

חומש בראשית

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

CHUMASH BEREISHIT

The Book of Genesis

Parshat Noach



Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213



GENESIS

Bereishit

Noach 2 נח

Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot
Vayeitzei
Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayeichi

EXODUS

Shemot
Vaeira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Ki Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS

Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria
Metzora
Acharei Mot
Kedoshim
Emor
Behar
Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach
Korach
Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Ki Teitzei
Ki Tavo
Netzavim
Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



נח Noach

Overview

In the previous *parashah*, *Bereishit*, we saw how God created the world and gave humanity the mission of transforming it into His home, and how humanity then spurned that mission, abandoning it *en masse*.

This being the case, we would expect the next act in this Divine drama to be the inception of the Jewish people, the nation designated to cultivate Divine consciousness and steer humanity back onto the course of living life in God's presence. The time is seemingly ripe: the stage is set; all the props are in place; there even appears to be a suitable candidate for the protagonist who will serve as the progenitor of this new people: *parashat Bereishit* ends teasingly with the words, "Noah found favor in the eyes of God."¹

Yet the Torah keeps us in suspense, postponing the genesis of the Jewish people until the next *parashah*. Evidently, some additional groundwork needs to be laid before the world will be ready for the advent of a chosen people. The detailed description of this groundwork is the subject of *Parashat Noach*, which is named after its protagonist. Noah was the man whom God singled out to build the ark, through which human and animal life would be spared from the Flood that would wipe out the incorrigibly iniquitous human race, allowing it to begin anew.

What was this groundwork? What additional steps had to be taken before the world could begin its upward climb toward the birth of the Jewish people and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai? To address this question, we first need to take a closer look at the name of this *parashah*, since, as we have already pointed out, the names of the *parashiot* disclose their essential message and lesson.

The word (in this case, the name) *Noach* means "rest" and "tranquility." Yet the events in this *parashah* are anything but restful and tranquil. The cataclysmic flood that ruthlessly and indiscriminately destroys all life on earth is certainly the epitome of upheaval and unrest, as are the two remaining significant episodes of the *parashah*: the cursing of Ham and the forced dispersion of humanity from the Tower of Babel.

However, if we look at the underlying purpose of these incidents and their ensuing results, we can see that the name *Noach* is actually quite fitting. As physically turbulent as the flood may have been, its purpose was to cure the world of the even-more problematic

1. Genesis 6:8.

spiritual state that necessitated it. The antediluvian world was still relatively young, and all forms of life possessed the full vigor of youth—as evinced most strikingly by the extraordinary human longevity that characterized this era. Yet this strength was brittle: once creatures developed and matured, they became inflexible, almost immutable; it was almost impossible for them to change. This was no less true of the spiritual dimension of life than of the physical dimension: once people's characters were molded and their modes of behavior formulated, it was extremely difficult for them to change. And since societal norms were all the while becoming increasingly corrupt, the overwhelming majority of humanity became progressively entrenched in a downward spiral of degenerating moral attitudes and behavior.

The Flood changed all this. The battering waters softened the earth not only physically but spiritually, as well, making reality more pliable, more flexible, more receptive to change. The “new world” Noah beheld upon emerging from the ark² was one in which the winds of repentance (*teshuvah*) were blowing freely, accessible to all, no matter how chronically unwholesome their behavior might become.

Thus, when God declared after the Flood, “Never again will there be a flood that will destroy the earth,”³ He was not reconciling Himself to people continuing to sin as they had before, nor was He admitting that by flooding the earth, He had made some kind of blunder that He would never again repeat. Rather, He was saying that by flooding the earth, He altered reality in such a way that it would never again become *necessary* to bring on a flood—not because people's nature had improved for the better, but because He had now provided them with a novel mechanism that they could use to counteract and even eradicate the effects of negative behavior.

As such, the Flood was a highly significant and crucial step toward achieving the goal of Creation, namely, promoting and disseminating Divine consciousness in the world until it ultimately would be transformed into God's natural home. It was therefore also a crucial step in laying the groundwork for the genesis of the Jewish people. The message of hope that the Torah is supposed to convey to the world is that it is never too late; that God is always waiting to welcome us back with open arms; and that we can always begin anew, even going on to fulfill our Divine mission with a success we never thought imaginable.

The lesson of this *parashah* remains perennially pertinent to our lives. When we are confronted with a particularly trying situation or turbulent phase in our lives, it would serve us well to recall that, just like the Flood, its purpose is to cleanse and refine us. By following the example of Noah, who did not panic in the face of the impending floodwaters but rather resolutely stood his ground, we can not only come away unscathed from the ordeal but in fact stand to reap the potential benefits inherent within it, even emerging strengthened. By focusing on the opportunity inherent in the challenge rather than on the superficial difficulty with which we are confronted, we transform the destructive floodwaters into “the waters of Noah”⁴—the waters of tranquility and rest.

And if, as was Noah, we are wise enough to use the experience advantageously, we can thereby help transform the whole world into an environment more conducive to Divine consciousness, thus bringing it closer to its ultimate and true fulfillment.⁵

2. *Vayikra Rabbah* 30:8. 3. Genesis 9:11. 4. Isaiah 54:9. 5. Based on *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 285-287.

— ONKELOS —
 9 אֱלֹהִים תוֹלַדַּת נֹחַ גִּבֹּר וְכָבִיד
 שְׁלֵמִים הָיָה בְּדוּרוֹ בְּדַחֲלָתָא דִּינִי
 הָלִיךְ נֹחַ:

6:9 אֱלֹהִים תוֹלַדַּת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדוּרָתוֹ
 אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ:

— RASHI —

התהלכתי לפניו". נח היה צריך סעד לתומכו, אבל
 אברהם היה מתחנך ומהלך בצדקו מאליה: **התהלך**.
 לשון עבר. והוא שמושו של למ"ד: בלשון בבר,
 משמשת להבא ולשעבר בלשון אחד: "קום התהלך"
 להבא, "התהלך נח" לשעבר. "התפלל בעד עבדיך"
 להבא, "ובא והתפלל אל הבית הזה" לשון עבר, אלא
 שהיו"ו שבראשו הופכו להבא:

9 אֱלֹהִים תוֹלַדַּת נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק. הואיל והזכירו —
 ספר בשבחו, שנאמר: "זכר צדיק לברכה". דבר אחר:
 ללמדך, שעקר תולדותיהם של צדיקים מעשים טובים:
בדורתי. יש מרבוינו דורשים אותו לשבח: כל שכן
 שאלו היה בדור צדיקים היה צדיק יותר. ויש שדורשים
 אותו לגנאי: לפי דורו היה צדיק, ואלו היה בדורו של
 אברהם — לא היה נחשב לכלום: **את האלהים התהלך**
 נח. ובאברהם הוא אומר: "התהלך לפני", "אשר

1. משלי י, ז. 2. בראשית יז, א. 3. בראשית כד, מ. 4. בראשית יג, יז. 5. שמואל א יב, יט. 6. מלכים א ח, מב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

disparages Noah. The Maggid of Mezerich, however, finds cause to praise Noah even in this context: Since Noah lived in a generation of extremely wicked people, he was unable to elevate them, and moreover, they hampered his own spiritual growth. He was like a person on a rooftop, trying to pull up a heavy load with a rope: if the load is too heavy, the person eventually has to drop the load and is nearly pulled off the roof himself. This is why Noah needed God's assistance to maintain his righteousness.

In contrast, the people of Abraham's generation were not as evil. They therefore did not hamper Abraham's spiritual growth, so he was able to progress without being completely dependent upon God and even influence many of them to join his ranks.

Thus, even in the context of the "disparaging" interpretation, Noah was still righteous and faultless according to his ability under the circumstances. But had he lived in Abraham's generation, he, too, would have been able to grow in his righteousness on his own.⁷

(Although Noah died when Abraham was fifty-eight, he is not considered to have lived in Abraham's "gen-

eration," since it wasn't until Abraham left Charan at seventy-five that he began to truly influence his generation to think like he did and to thus merit being called "the generation of Abraham."⁸)

He lived in corrupt times: Although Noah was the only righteous person of his generation, this singularity incredibly did not negatively affect him!

This thought can serve to inspire us when a defeatist inner voice taunts us: "Why do you even bother to study the Torah and fulfill God's commandments at all? After all, you are just one very small person in a very big world that is often cold and even hostile to goodness and holiness."

The story of Noah provides a fitting response to this defeatist inner voice: Noah resolved to behave properly despite the antagonistic behavior of his contemporaries, and furthermore, his conduct brought salvation to the entire world. If Noah, who was truly on his own, was capable of this, certainly we today, who are *not* alone in our commitment to Torah, should be able to courageously withstand the challenges of our world.⁹

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[9] The Torah first describes his righteousness: Why doesn't the Torah describe the righteousness of other outstandingly righteous individuals, such as the patriarchs, immediately after mentioning their names?¹⁰

In the case of the patriarchs, the Torah need not mention their righteousness immediately upon mentioning their names since it details their righteousness at length throughout the narrative of their lives. However, in the case of Noah, the Torah does not provide us with the details of his righteousness. Even the fact that he indeed carried out God's com-

mand in building the ark does not necessarily mean he was righteous, since: (a) the purpose of the ark was to save him, and (b) the Torah does not indicate that he went *beyond* what he was commanded to do. It must therefore immediately inform us that he was indeed righteous.¹¹

Alternatively, the Torah mentions Noah's righteousness to teach us the idea of praising the righteous. Once we have internalized this lesson, the Torah need not repeat it each time a righteous person is mentioned.¹²

7. Or Torah (Rimzei Torah), Noah 6a. 8. Likutei Sichot, vol. 20, pp. 13-21. 9. Hitva'aduyot 5743, vol. 1, pp. 412-413. 10. See Gur Aryeh and others. 11. Likutei Sichot, vol. 5, pp. 37-38, note 14. 12. Likutei Sichot, vol. 28, p. 136, note 40.

The Flood

6:9 The following are the descendants of Noah. Inasmuch as Noah alone was destined to perpetuate the lineage of the human race that began with Adam, the Torah begins a new history of humanity from him.¹ But before enumerating his offspring, the Torah first describes his righteousness, in order to explain why God singled him out to be spared from the impending flood and to demonstrate that our true “offspring” are our good deeds:

Even though his life spanned many corrupt generations,² **Noah was a righteous man;** he remained **faultless despite** the corruptive influence of **his generations**. Nonetheless, he did not possess sufficient moral fortitude to remain righteous on his own. Rather, in order to remain righteous, **Noah walked with God**, that is, he had to keep his mind constantly focused on Him. Thus, on an absolute scale, he would not have been considered exceptionally righteous; he was **faultless** only **relative to** the corruption of **his generations**.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

9 The following are the descendants of Noah: The Torah’s introduction to its account of Noah’s descendants provides us with two lessons in childrearing:

The Torah first describes his righteousness: From this we learn that we should articulate our reverence for the special, saintly people who grace our world. It is not enough to *think* about how grateful we are for these people; our children must hear us *talk* about them. At the mere mention of their names, we should start talking about their saintly behavior, just as the Torah does regarding Noah.

In particular, we should articulate our admiration over the fact that they, as Noah was in his time, are “complete” in their saintliness—meaning that it extends to all facets of their lives, even seemingly mundane acts like eating.

Our true offspring are our good deeds: From this we learn that we should raise our children to sense that our greatest aspiration for them is that they excel in good deeds, which carry on our lineage in the spiritual sense.

Blessed with such an upbringing, our children will follow the right path in their relationship with God, with their fellow human beings, and especially with their parents. Such an atmosphere will unite the entire family under the common goal of excelling in acts of goodness and kindness.³

The Torah first describes his righteousness: Speech activates dormant qualities. When we speak negatively about others, it strengthens their negative traits; to an even greater degree, when we speak positively of others, it strengthens their positive qualities.

In light of the above, we see that the purpose of praising the righteous is to affect them positively and give them strength to fulfill their Divine mission. When God Himself praises the righteous, this gives the righteous

enormous strength to fulfill their mission.

This teaches us that we must always try to see the good in others and speak about their good qualities. The result is twofold: we cause the other person’s goodness to be revealed to an even greater degree, and we assist them in fulfilling their Divine mission. Furthermore, by praising others, we elicit God’s blessings, since when our Father looks down upon His children and sees that they love and take care of each other, He is pleased and therefore happily showers His blessings on us.⁴

He was faultless despite (or relative to) his generation: These two different ways of reading the verse encourage us to emulate Noah’s attitude toward his milieu, even when we might be inclined to do otherwise:

When feeling spiritually robust, we might argue that we don’t need the protection of “entering the ark,” i.e., immersing ourselves in words of prayer and Torah study, for we do not feel threatened by any raging “floodwaters.” The first way of reading this verse negates this notion, since even the righteous Noah needed to “enter the ark.”

Then there are other times when, like Noah in the second way of understanding this verse, we are righteous only in comparison to those around us. We can then learn from Noah that, despite the “raging waters” threatening us, we nevertheless all have the capacity to save the entire world and ourselves. Our one good deed can tip the scales and cause the world’s merits to outweigh its demerits. Just as Noah “beheld a new world” after the Flood,⁵ so can we all build a new world.⁶

He was faultless relative to the corruption of his generations: This implies that had Noah lived in the generation of Abraham, he would *not* have been considered righteous. Rashi therefore says that this interpretation

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 42. 2. Nachmanides. 3. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, pp. xiv–xv. 4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 45–46. 5. *Bereishit Rabbah* 30:8. 6. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 282–283.

ONKELOS

10 וַיֹּלֶד נֹחַ תִּלְתָּא בְנֵין יְת שִׁם יֵת חָם וְיֵת יִפֶּת: 11 וְאַתְחַבְּלַת אֶרְעָא אֶרְדָּם יִי וְאַתְמַלְיַאת אֶרְעָא חֲטוּפִין: 12 וְחָזָא יִי יֵת אֶרְעָא וְהָא אֶתְחַבְּלַת אֶרִי חֲבִילו כָּל בִּשְׂרָא אָנֹשׁ יֵת אֶרְחָה עַל אֶרְעָא: 13 וְאָמַר יִי לָנֹחַ קֶצֶא דְכָל בִּשְׂרָא עַל לְקַדְמֵי אֶרִי אֶתְמַלְיַאת אֶרְעָא חֲטוּפִין מִן קָדָם עוֹבְדֵיהוֹן בִּישְׂאָ וְהָא אָנֹא מְחַבְּלָהוֹן עִם אֶרְעָא: 14 עָבִיד לָךְ תְּבוּתָא דְאָעִין דְקַדְרוֹם מְדוּרִין תַּעֲבִיד יֵת תְּבוּתָא וְתַחֲפִי יְתָה מְגוֹ וּמְבָרָא בְּכוּפְרָא:

10 וַיֹּלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יִפֶּת: 11 וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּמְלֹא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס: 12 וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחַתָּה בִּי־הַשָּׁחִית כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר אֶת־דֶּרְכּוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 13 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ קֵץ כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר בָּא לִפְנֵי בִי־מִלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: 14 עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גִפְרִית תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַתֵּבָה וּכְפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבִּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:

RASHI

לָךְ תֵּבַת. הרבה רוח והצלה לפניו, ולמה הטריחו בבנין זה? כדי שיראוהו אנשי דור המבול עוסק בה מאה ועשרים שנה, ושואלין אותו: מה זאת לך? והוא אומר להם: עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להביא מבול לעולם, אולי ישובו: עצי גפר. כך שמו. ולמה ממין זה? על שם גפרית שנגזר עליהם להקחות בו: קנים. מדורים מדורים לכל בהמה ודויה: בכפר. ופת בלשון ארמי, ומצינו בתלמוד "כופרא". בתבתו של משה, על ידי שהיו המים תשים, דיה בחמר מבפנים וזפת מבחוץ. ועוד, כדי שלא יריח אותו צדיק ריח רע של זפת. אכל כאן, מפני חוק המים, ופתה מבית ומבחוץ:

11 וַתִּשְׁחַת. לשון ערוה ועבודה ורה, כמו: "פן תשחתו", "כי השחית כל בשר" וכו'. וַתִּמְלֹא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס. גזל, שנאמר: "ומן החמס אשר בכפיהם": 12 בִּי הַשָּׁחִית כָּל בֶּשֶׂר. אפלו בהמה היה ועוף נזקקין לשאינן מינן: 13 קֵץ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר. כל מקום שאתה מוצא זנות ועבודה ורה — אנדרלמוסאי¹⁰ באה לעולם, והורגת טובים ורעים: בִּי מִלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס. לא נחתם גזר דינם אלא על הגזל: אֶת הָאָרֶץ. כמו "מן הארץ", ודומה לו: "בצאתי את העיר", מן העיר, "חלה את רגליו"¹¹, מן רגליו. דבר אחר: "את הארץ", עם הארץ, שאף שלשה טפחים של עמק המחרשה נמוחו ונטשטשו: 14 עֲשֵׂה

7. דברים ד, טו. 8. פסוק יב. 9. יונה ג, ח. 10. דבר קבד מאד. 11. שמואל ט, כט. 12. מלכיסא טו, כג.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

to God. By stipulating that Noah build the ark alone, God forced him to engage in an activity that would perplex the world continuously for a protracted period of time, thereby forcing him to reply to their questions about it.

To be sure, a standing, completed ark would also arouse everyone's curiosity, but in a far less effective way than would the drama of a lone man laboring endlessly. Thus, had the ark been built quickly, the world would have been less likely to pay attention to it and Noah even less likely to discuss its significance with them.²³

You shall caulk it inside and outside with pitch: The word for "caulk" (*kofer*) can also connote "atonement" (*kapharah*). Our sages teach us that Torah study and deeds of kindness effect atonement, cleansing a person from the spiritual contamination caused by sin. The phrase can thus be read as follows: When you are in need of atonement [as the generation of Noah was], you shall "caulk yourself" on the *interior* with the *kofer* of Torah study [an inward activity], and on the *exterior* with the *kofer* of deeds of kindness [an outward activity].²⁴

INNER DIMENSIONS

[14] Cypress (gopher) wood: Cypress wood embodies *gevurah* (severity), which is why the numerical value of the word gopher (283) equals the sum of the numerical values of the words *binah* (67) and *gevurah* (216), the two principal *sefirot* of the left axis. The pitch used to coat this wood embodied *chesed*, since its purpose was to coat the ark and pro-

tect its passengers. Hence, "you shall caulk it inside and outside with pitch." *Gevurah* needs to be sandwiched between elements of *chesed* to sweeten the severities. We find similarly that Isaac, who embodied *gevurah*, was sandwiched between Abraham, who embodied *chesed*, and Jacob, who embodied *tiferet*, which is biased towards *chesed*.²⁵

23. Likutei Sichot, vol. 15, p. 37, note 24, pp. 40-41. 24. Or HaTorah, Bereishit, vol. 3, 614a. 25. Likutei Levi Yitzchak, Igrot, p. 211.

10 Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, who would play the most pivotal role in the ensuing history of humanity; **Ham**, the youngest; and **Japheth**, the oldest.¹³

11 As recounted above, by the year 1536, the world had become corrupt before God, with idolatry and licentiousness rampant,¹⁴ and in addition, **the land was filled with robbery**.

12 God saw the world, and it was corrupt, for all flesh—even the animals—had perverted its way on the earth by engaging in cross-species relations.

13 In that year, God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for several reasons: Firstly, many of them are guilty of idolatry and licentiousness, and this type of indiscriminate behavior incurs the corrective response of indiscriminate destruction. Nonetheless, these two transgressions by themselves would not be enough to seal their fate; it is **because the world is filled with robbery due to them that I shall obliterate them from the earth**. True, many of them are below the age of 100 and thus cannot be held legally culpable,¹⁵ but society has degenerated to the point where there is no longer any hope that they will turn out righteous at a later stage.¹⁶ Even though I am not going to destroy the world in its entirety, I will wipe out the top layer of earth—as deep as can be reached by a plow—to express how their malevolent behavior almost made Me regret having created the world in the first place.¹⁷

14 Of all the ways at My disposal to spare you from this destruction, I want you to make yourself an enormous ark. Perhaps when everyone sees what you are doing and asks you about it, the news of the impending flood will inspire them to repent. You are to build it out in the open, and I want you to build it yourself, without any help from your sons or anyone else; this way it will take you a long time to build, giving your contemporaries ample time to consider repenting.¹⁸ Make the ark **out of cypress wood**, for the word for ‘cypress’ (*gofer*) is related to the word for ‘sulphur’ (*gofrit*), and the floodwater will be sulfurous,¹⁹ a fact that might further encourage the people to repent. **You shall make the ark with compartments** for each type²⁰ of animal, **and you shall caulk it inside and outside with pitch**. It will be necessary to caulk it both inside and out because the floodwater will hit it forcefully.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

14 I want you to build it yourself: God could have easily allowed Noah’s sons to help him build the ark, or even have allowed him to hire outside workers. But this would have accelerated the ark’s completion, which would have run counter to its purpose. God knew that

Noah was not terribly interested in saving his contemporaries from destruction, for he did not pray for them at all.²¹ The only way Noah would encourage his fellows to mend their evil ways if commanded to do so—and even then, only in order to discharge his obligation

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[10] Shem, Ham and Japheth: Noah’s sons are not listed according to the order of their birth but rather in the order of the root of their souls:

Shem is rooted in the right axis of the ten *sefirot*,

the axis of kindness; Ham in the left axis, that of strength and severity; and Japheth in the middle, the axis of harmony.²²

13. Above, 5:32. 14. Above, 6:1-4. 15. See on 1:28, above. 16. Implied in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 40, note 28. 17. Above, 6:6. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 72-73. 18. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 34-36. 19. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, p. 35. 20. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 29, note 16. 21. *Zohar* 1:67b ff, 254b, 3:14b ff. 22. See *Zohar* 1:73a; *Or HaTorah*, *Bereishit*, vol. 3, p. 595a, cited in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, p. 28.

— ONKELOS —
 15 וַיִּדֹּן דָּתֵעֲבִיד וְתֵהָ תֵּלֵת מָאָה
 אֲמִין אֶרְכָּא דְּתִבְוֹתָא חֲמִשִּׁין
 אֲמִין פּוֹתִיזָה וְתִלְתִּין אֲמִין
 רוּמָה: 16 נְהוֹר תַּעֲבִיד לְתִבְוֹתָא
 וְלִאֲמַתָּא תִּשְׁכַּלְלָנָה מְלַעֲלָא
 וְתִרְעָא דְּתִבְוֹתָא בְּסִטְרָה תִּשּׁוּי
 מְדוּרִין אֶרְעָאין תִּנְיִנִין וְתִלְיִתָאין
 תַּעֲבִידָנָה:

15 וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אָרְדָּה
 הַתֵּבָה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רַחְבָּהּ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אַמָּה קוֹמָתָהּ:
 16 צִהָר | תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה וְאֶל־אַמָּה תִּכְלֶנָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה
 וּפֶתַח הַתֵּבָה בְּצִדָּהּ תִּשֶׂים תַּחְתִּים שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים
 תַּעֲשֶׂה:

— RASHI —

כְּדִי שִׁזְזוּבוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִשְׁהָ: בְּצִדָּהּ תִּשֶׂים. שְׁלֹשׁ וְיָפֹל
 הַגִּשְׁמִים בָּהּ: תַּחְתִּים שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים. שְׁלֹשׁ עֲלִיּוֹת זֶה עַל
 גֹּב זֶה: עֲלִיּוֹנִים לְאָדָם, אֲמִצְעִים לְדּוֹר, תַּחְתִּים לְזָבֵל:

16 צִהָר. יֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים: חֲלוֹן, וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים: אֶבֶן טוֹבָה
 הַמְאִירָה לָהֶם: וְאֶל אַמָּה תִּכְלֶנָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה. כְּסוּיָה
 מְשַׁפֵּעַ וְעוֹלָה עַד שְׁהוּא קֶצֶר מִלְּמַעְלָה וְעוֹמֵד עַל אַמָּה,

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

surprise and puzzle us.

This is what it means to make a window: to break through the façade of nature and allow “Divine light” to enter, and to recognize that, beneath the façade of independence and self-sufficiency, nature is nothing more than God’s tool.

Luminous stone: Once we make the window and allow supernatural Godly light to permeate our awareness, we attain an even higher perspective: we learn to see nature *itself* as an object of light and revelation. In the

first stage, we look *past* the façade of nature and see that it is God who creates and sustains nature, but the façade itself continues to seemingly contradict the truth. In the second stage, the façade *itself* serves as a revelation of Divinity. For example, as we will see later,²⁸ nature’s consistent behavior is a reflection of God’s immutability.

This is alluded to by the “luminous stone”: A “stone,” which appears to be a lifeless and dim inanimate object, becomes a “luminous” source of revelation.²⁹

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] *Deed:* Through our holy deeds in performing the commandments, we draw Divine light into the world of *Asiyah* (the world of deed).³⁰

Its width 50 cubits: Noah embodies the “male” *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *Z’eir Anpin*, whereas the ark embodies the “feminine” *sefirot* of *malchut* and *binah*. Hence the ark’s width is fifty cubits, corresponding to the “fifty gates of *binah*.”³¹ It is particularly the *width* that alludes to *binah*, since *binah* develops and adds “width” to the concentrated essence of *chochmah*. Corresponding to these two elements of the ark, Noah’s name appears twice in the opening verse of this *parashah*, alluding to the two elements within Noah, *chochmah* and *Z’eir Anpin*, which he was to bring to the ark in order to unify *chochmah* with *binah* and *Z’eir Anpin* with *malchut*.

“Entering the ark” in our lives translates as acquiring understanding (*binah*) of the Torah, and accepting the kingdom (*malchut*) of Heaven by fulfilling the commandments. The commandments are related to *malchut* because they must be performed in total submission and selflessness, like a servant in the presence of his king. Torah study, in contrast,

is related to *binah* because it must be studied with understanding and self-awareness.³²

[16] A lower deck, a second deck, and a third deck: In their spiritual parallel, these three decks correspond to the three general dimensions of the soul as well as to the three general dimensions of the spiritual worlds from which the dimensions of the soul derive:

Level of the Ark	Dimension of the Soul	Spiritual World
lower deck	<i>nefesh, ruach, and neshamah</i>	<i>Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah</i>
second deck	<i>chayah</i>	<i>Atzilut</i>
third deck	<i>yechidah</i>	<i>Adam Kadmon</i>

As the soul descends, becomes submerged in the “floodwaters” of this world, and then enters the spiritual ark of prayer, it not only does not drown, it is uplifted, as was Noah’s ark.³³ This elevation occurs to all aspects of the soul, paralleled in the three decks of the ark, up to and including even the highest level, *yechidah*.³⁴

28. On 8:21, below. 29. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, p. 23; *Sichot Kodesh* 5731, p. 195. 30. *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, vol. 3, 639b. 31. *Rosh HaShanah* 21b. 32. *Sefer Ma’amaram* 5742, pp. 47-52. 33. See 8:4, below. 34. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 296 and note 26, citing *Or HaTorah*, citing Rabbi Moshe Zacut.

15 This is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits (144 meters, or 471 feet), its width 50 cubits (24 meters, or 77 feet), and its height 30 cubits (14.4 meters, or 47 feet).

16 Even though you will naturally build the ark with numerous windows and stock it with enough lamps to provide light, I want it to be especially well-lit.²⁶ **You shall therefore make an additional skylight and use a luminous stone for additional light in the ark. Taper the roof so that its tip is one cubit wide, so the water will run off it. Place the entrance to the ark in its side, so the water won't seep in from above. You shall make it with a lower deck for garbage, a second deck for the animals, and a third deck for the people.**

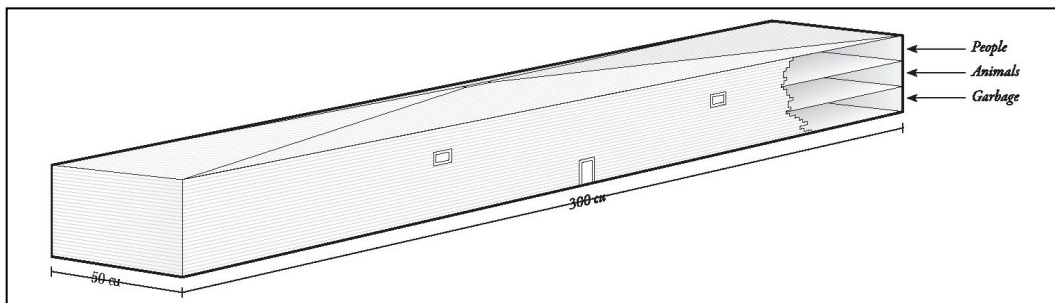


Figure 6: The Ark

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

16 A skylight and a luminous stone: A window creates no light of its own; it simply allows existing outside light to enter. A luminous stone, on the other hand, is in itself a source of light.

Metaphorically, creating light for the ark means bringing Divine consciousness into a world that obscures Divinity. This is achieved in two stages:

Skylight: The first step is to pierce through the façade of nature, which obscures God's presence and makes it appear as if the world is independent from God. The truth is that God is very involved in the world; we can often sense the hand of God at work in the "coincidences" that occur in our lives.²⁷ But in order to see God's presence clearly, we must first see past the veil of

nature that obscures it.

We must also train our children from a young age to view miracles as the "norm" and nature as "unnatural." Young children have not yet been "indoctrinated" by the façade of nature and can still be educated in the reality of the supernatural. The latter reality should be so tangible to them that, instead of finding miracles mysterious, they find nature mysterious! How can such a thing as "nature" exist in God's world? How can the physical be of more overriding importance than the spiritual? How can empty, brute strength prevail over purity and holiness? How can it be difficult to follow the Torah's precepts? If the world is, after all, God's creation, then it is nature, and not miracles, that should

∞ INNER DIMENSIONS ∞

[15] The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits: The generation of the Flood damaged and corrupted the three worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* [but not the world of *Atzilut*]. Noah was therefore commanded to build an ark whose length was 300 cubits, corresponding to the three worlds, each world comprising ten *sefirot* that further subdivide into 100 sub-*sefirot*. By entering this ark, he would rectify those three worlds.

In our own lives we rectify the three worlds through

holy thoughts, speech, and deeds:

Thought: Through our holy thoughts during prayer, Torah study, and contemplation on the meaning of the commandments, we draw Divine light into the world of *Beriah* (the world of thought).

Speech: Through our holy words spoken during Torah study, prayer, and reciting the blessings over the commandments, we draw Divine light into the world of *Yetzirah* (the world of speech).

26. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 21-23. 27. See *Hayom Yom*, 7 Tishrei.

— ONKELOS —
 17 וְאָנִי הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת־הַמָּבּוּל מִיָּם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחַת
 כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רֹיחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם כָּל אֲשֶׁר־
 בָּאָרֶץ יָגוּעַ: 18 וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבֵאתָ אֵל־
 הַתֵּבָה אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְנִשְׁי־בְנֶיךָ אִתְּךָ: 19 וּמִכָּל־
 הַחַי מִכָּל־בָּשָׂר שְׁנַיִם מִכָּל תָּבִיא אֵל־הַתֵּבָה לְהַחֲיָה
 אִתְּךָ זָכָר וְנִקְבָּה יְהִי:

17 וְאָנִי הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת־הַמָּבּוּל מִיָּם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחַת
 כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רֹיחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם כָּל אֲשֶׁר־
 בָּאָרֶץ יָגוּעַ: 18 וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבֵאתָ אֵל־
 הַתֵּבָה אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְנִשְׁי־בְנֶיךָ אִתְּךָ: 19 וּמִכָּל־
 הַחַי מִכָּל־בָּשָׁר שְׁנַיִם מִכָּל תָּבִיא אֵל־הַתֵּבָה לְהַחֲיָה
 אִתְּךָ זָכָר וְנִקְבָּה יְהִי:

— RASHI —
 מִבּוּל: 18 וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת בְּרִיתִי. בְּרִית הָיָה צָרִיךְ עַל
 הַפְּרוֹת שֶׁלֹּא יִרְקְבוּ וְיִעָשְׂפוּ, וְשֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה רָשָׁעִים
 שֶׁבְּדוֹר: אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ. הָאֲנָשִׁים לְבָד וְהַנָּשִׁים
 לְבָד. מִכָּאן, שֶׁנֶּאֱסָרוּ בְּתַשְׁמִישׁ הַמִּטָּה: 19 וּמִכָּל הַחַי.
 אֶפְלוּ שְׂדִים: שְׁנַיִם מִכָּל. מִן הַפְּחוּת שֶׁבָּהֶם לֹא פָּחוּתוּ
 מִשְׁנַיִם, אֶחָד זָכָר וְאֶחָד נִקְבָּה:

17 וְאָנִי הִנְנִי מְבִיא. הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן לְהַסְפִּים עִם אוֹתָם
 שְׁזָרוּגִי וְאָמְרוּ לִפְנֵי כְּבָרִי: "מָה אָנוּשׁ כִּי תִזְכְּרוּנוּ":
 מִבּוּל. שֶׁבִּלָּה אֶת הַכֹּל, שֶׁבִּלָּבֵל אֶת הַכֹּל, שֶׁהוֹבִיל אֶת
 הַכֹּל מִן הַגְּבוּהָ לְנִמּוּךְ, וְזֶהוּ לְשׁוֹן אֲנָקְלוֹס שֶׁתִּרְגֵּם:
 "טוֹפָנָא" — שֶׁהִצִּיף אֶת הַכֹּל וְהִבְיִאֵם לְכָבֵל שֶׁהָיָה
 עֲמוּקָה, לְכָף נִקְרָאת "שְׁנַעַר" שֶׁנִּזְעָרוּ שָׁם כָּל מַתִּי

13. תהלים ח, ה.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

nonetheless his actions might serve as an inappropriate example for future generations. Rabbi Yitzchak therefore "criticizes" Noah, not because he was at fault, but to discourage us from emulating Noah's behavior. In this light, we can assume that Noah himself would welcome this critique, since it transforms his otherwise blameworthy behavior into a positive didactic tool.⁴⁷

Before the Flood, the concept of repentance was extremely foreign. Although Adam and Cain managed to repent, we can attribute this to their having been born in the Garden of Eden. Moreover, while there were some individuals who were righteous, the majority was wicked and did not repent. Thus, although Noah rebuked his contemporaries who mocked him,⁴⁸ he did not succeed in inspiring them to repent. Methuselah and Enoch also tried to inspire the masses to repent⁴⁹ but apparently were unsuccessful, since only Noah and his family were saved from the Flood.

This resistance to repentance and character refinement was due to the coarseness of the physical world at that time. After the Flood, Noah "saw a new world,"⁵⁰ meaning a world that had been purified and refined to the point where repentance was no longer only a remote possibility.

This explains why Noah did not pray for his contemporaries nor seek to judge them favorably: in order to judge another person favorably, one has to have gone through a similar experience of failure and repentance. Thus, the Ba'al Shem Tov once caused one of his stu-

dents to arrive at his court just prior to the onset of the Sabbath, almost making him desecrate it. This allowed him to taste the difficulty of keeping the Sabbath and thereby enabled him to judge favorably those whose observance of the Sabbath was lacking in some way.⁵¹ Indeed a true judge—and this is how the Messiah will judge—takes into consideration the background and causes of a crime, not just the crime itself.

Noah, however, had never experienced the terrible temptations his contemporaries had, and therefore could not fathom a person not obeying the word of God. He had never fallen and repented, since repentance did not yet exist. He therefore did not judge them favorably or pray for them.⁵²

Today, however, we have no excuse to behave as Noah did, to "don a fur coat," so to speak, to protect ourselves from the cold winds of the world. We must light a fire that not only provides warmth for ourselves, but also for everyone else around us and, indeed, for the entire world.⁵³

19 Of all living beings and of all flesh: Metaphorically, this teaches us that it is our duty to bring anyone and everyone in danger of spiritually "drowning" into the shelter of our personal, spiritual "ark." The doctrine of Divine Providence implies that when God arranges for us to find out that someone needs help, it is because we are meant to draw him into our lives and bring him closer to Godliness.⁵⁴

47. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 19-22, *Hitva'aduyot* 5743, vol. 1, p. 446. 48. *Sanhedrin* 108ab. 49. *Sefer HaYashar*, cited in *Torah Sheleimah* on Genesis 5:32. 50. *Bereishit Rabbah* 38. 51. See also *Igrot Admor HaRayatz*, vol. 3, p. 379. 52. *Hitva'aduyot* 5721, vol. 1, pp. 158-161. 53. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 880; *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 22, p. 118. 54. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 10.

17 And as for Me, I am ready to agree with those angels who opposed the creation of humanity.³⁵ **I am about to bring the Flood of water upon the earth, to destroy from under the heavens all flesh that has in it a breath of life.** The water will cause total disorder and disarray, and everything will rot. The surface of the earth will remain submerged underwater for one full year.³⁶ **Everything on earth shall perish.**

18 But I shall establish My covenant with you: I promise you that the food that you bring with you into the ark will not rot during the entire time that you are in it, and that the people will not kill you when they find out what you are doing. **You and your family shall enter the ark**, but men and women are to live in separate quarters: **you will be together with your sons, and your wife will be with your sons' wives.** It is not appropriate to engage in marital relations while the earth is being destroyed. The animals will likewise not be allowed to mate in the ark.³⁷

19 Of all incorporeal living beings—the demons,³⁸ and of all flesh, you shall bring a minimum³⁹ of two of each species into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

17 A flood: The word for “flood” (*mabul*) is related to the word for “confusion” (*balal*).⁴⁰ 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. The truth is that the purpose of the soul’s descent into this world is to fulfill its Divine mission. Furthermore, the soul’s relationship to material matters, such as eating, is also a part of that mission since, as Maimonides writes, keeping the body healthy is a religious obligation. But when the soul is confused, the awareness of its true mission becomes submerged and forgotten. We then go about our material lives “soul-less,” lacking Divine meaning and purpose.⁴¹

18 You and your family shall enter the ark: The *Zohar*⁴² cites two opinions regarding Noah’s failure to pray for his generation: Rabbi Yehudah says that, unlike Moses, who prayed for the worshippers of the Golden Calf, Noah had no righteous forebears in whose merit his prayers would be accepted. He therefore cannot be faulted for not having prayed for his generation. Rabbi

Yitzchak, however, criticizes Noah and maintains that Noah should nevertheless have prayed for them.

It seems strange that Rabbi Yitzchak would criticize Noah’s behavior when he could have justified it, as Rabbi Yehudah did. After all, we are enjoined to always judge others favorably.⁴³ Furthermore, if the Torah (in its instruction to Noah!) takes pains to not even speak disparagingly of a non-kosher animal, how much more so in regard to a human being. Similarly troubling is the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan in the Talmud, who interprets the phrase “faultless in his generation” to mean that he was only righteous relative to his contemporaries but would have been considered as naught in the days of Abraham. Given the option of interpreting the phrase positively, i.e., that he was righteous *despite* the corruption of his generation, why does he indeed interpret it negatively?

The answer is that, although Noah cannot actually be faulted for being less righteous than Abraham, since the corruption of his time impeded his spiritual growth,

❧ A CLOSER LOOK ❧

[18] It is not proper to engage in marital relations while the earth is being destroyed: This applies any time that a calamity, such as a famine,⁴⁴ befalls a community. However, a childless couple is permitted to try to procreate even during times of calamity. Why, then, were Noah’s *children*, who were childless at the time, prohibited from procreating? The

answer is that, since the world and all the planets were in a “frozen” state, God knew that they would not become pregnant. We are told, in fact, that although the dog, the raven, and Ham transgressed this prohibition and *did* cohabit with their mates,⁴⁵ there is no record of any offspring having been born in the ark.⁴⁶

35. Above, 1:26. 36. Rashi on 8:14, below. 37. Rashi on 8:17, below. 38. Above, 1:30. 39. See below, 7:2. 40. See below, 11:9. 41. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5745, pp. 218-219. 42. *Zohar* 1:67b. 43. *Avot* 1:6. 44. *Ta’anit* 11a; *Y. Ta’anit* 1:6. 45. *Sanhedrin* 108b. 46. *Reshimot*, vol. 3, pp. 41-42.

— ONKELOS —

20 מעופא לזוהי ומן בעירא
לזנה ומכל רחשא דארעא לזוהי
תרין מבלא יעלון לזנה לקמא:
21 ואת סב לך מכל מיכל
דמתאכל ותכנוש לזנה ויהי לך
ולזון למיכל: 22 ועבד נח ככל
די פקד יתה יי בן עבד: 7:1 ואמר
יי לנח עול את וכל אנש ביתך
לתבותא ארי יתך חזיתי ופאי
קדמי בדרא דדין: 2 מכל בעירא
דכיתא תסב לך שבועא שבועא
דכר ונוקבא ומן בעירא דליתקא
דכיא תרין דכר ונוקבא:

20 מהעוף למינהו ומן-הבהמה למינה מכל רמש
הארמה למינהו שנים מכל יבאו אליך להחיות:
21 ואתה קח-לך מכל-מאכל אשר יאכל ואספת אליך
והיה לך ולחם לאכלה: 22 ויעש נח ככל אשר צוה אותו
אלהים בן עשה:

שני 7:1 ויאמר יהוה לנח בא-אתה וכל-ביתך אל-
התבה בי-אתך ראיתי צדיק לפני בדור הזה: 2 מכל
הבהמה הטהורה תקח-לך שבעה שבעה איש ואשתו
ומן-הבהמה אשר לא טהרה הוא שנים איש ואשתו:

— RASHI —

אדם בפניו, וכלו שלא בפניו: 2 הטהרה. העתידה
להיות טהורה לישראל. למדנו, שלמד נח תורה: שבועה
שבועה. כדי שיקריב מהם קרבן בצאתו:

20 מהעוף למינהו. אותן שדבקו במיניהם ולא השחיתו
דרכם. ומאליהם באו, וכל שהתבה קולטתו הכניס בה:
22 ויעש נח. זה בנין התבה: 1 ראיתי צדיק. ולא
נאמר "צדיק תמים". מכאן, שאומרים מקצת שבוו של

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

entering the "raging waters" of the world, the liturgy of the Prayer Book has us thank God for returning our souls to us. We thereby recall that the vitality we feel within us stems only from God. Through the other blessings we recite in the morning, we recognize that everything we have—clothing, food, etc.—is constantly being created by God and could otherwise not exist. (Hence the tale of the man who would pray for his food even as it lay before him on his plate—he was praying that God continue to enliven it so that it would still be there when he would bring the fork to his mouth.⁶³)

Once we have come to the recognition that: (a) the physical world cannot exist on its own, (b) it requires God to recreate it constantly, and (c) the entire purpose of its existence is to be a home for God, we can enter the world and involve ourselves in its activities without fear of the "raging waters."

Before morning prayers, the world seems to us to exist self-sufficiently, independent of God. Through praying, we come to realize that, in reality, there is no independent existence outside of God. With this realization we are ready to enter the world, since we will then consciously avoid engaging in any activity that does not further the goal of making the world into a home for God, and instead see every moment of our lives as an opportunity to fulfill this mission.⁶⁴

You and your entire household: Although we have said that "entering the ark" metaphorically signifies immersing ourselves in the words of Torah study and prayer, this does not imply that we should be oblivious

to the needs of others. We must not be content with our own self-preservation alone. We are obligated to bring our families, our children, and ultimately the entire world into a wholesome, safe haven of Torah study and prayer. The plight of our fellow should give us no rest, for we are all like one organism—if one of us is spiritually ill, we are all affected.⁶⁵

2 Animals that are not ritually pure: Instead of referring to the non-kosher animals bluntly as "ritually impure," God refers to them indirectly, as "those that are not ritually pure," thereby adding eight seemingly superfluous letters to the Torah. This teaches us that we, too, should go out of our way to use only clean speech and euphemistic expressions.⁶⁶ True, the expression "ritually impure" (*tamei*) appears numerous times in the Torah, but in these instances, the Torah is stating a law, and a law must be stated clearly and unequivocally. Besides, the direct term is not considered negative in such contexts, since the issue is the law and not the impurity. However, in a narrative—even when the narrative serves as the basis for a legal ruling—the euphemism is preferred.

The Kabbalistic explanation of this is as follows: When God first had the *thought* to create the world, it immediately came into existence, but only spiritually. Afterwards, when God *spoke* the words of creation ("Let there be light," etc.), the world came into *physical* existence. The state of the world as it exists spiritually in the realm of thought is called "rest" (*menuchah*). Noah's ark also expressed the concept of rest, as alluded to in

63. Zohar 1:199b. 64. Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 6-8. 65. Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 8-10. 66. Rashi citing Pesachim 3b.

20 From each species of bird, from each species of livestock, and from each species of creature that crawls on the ground, two of each kind will come to you on their own to be kept alive; you will not have to trap or gather them. Nonetheless, the ark will allow only the animals that did not crossbreed to enter; you are to escort these animals to their designated compartments.

21 And as for you, take for yourself some of every kind of edible food and gather it in for yourself, so that it shall be for you and for them to eat."

22 Noah did everything that God commanded him to do regarding the construction of the ark **exactly**. Even though he built it alone, he managed, remarkably, to finish it within the allotted 120 years.⁵⁵ The people, however, did not repent when they found out why Noah was building the ark. Instead, they vowed that if he would try to enter it once it was finished, they would destroy the ark and kill him.⁵⁶ In part, this was due to the fact that the spiritual makeup of the antediluvian world was not very conducive to self-refinement and repentance.⁵⁷

◆ *Second Reading 7:1* So, on the 10th of Marcheshvan 1656, **God said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and your entire household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation."** Although the Torah records earlier⁵⁸ that Noah was both righteous and faultless, God only praises Noah for his righteousness, for it is not appropriate to enumerate all a person's merits when addressing him directly.

2 God continued, "Since you are acquainted with the teachings of the Torah, you know precisely which animals are ritually pure—i.e., those which will eventually be permissible to the Jewish people as food—and those which are not. **You shall take for yourself seven pairs of every kind of ritually pure animal, each pair consisting of a male and its mate, but take only two of the animals that are not ritually pure, a male and its mate.** You are to take an additional number of ritually pure animals because only these are to be permitted to be offered as sacrifices."⁵⁹

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

1 Come into the ark: Metaphorically, "entering the ark" refers to entering the words of Torah study and prayer, which serve to protect us from the "flood" of worries that threaten to inundate us. When enveloped

by these letters and words, we are impervious to harm, just as Noah and his family remained completely safe despite the flood that raged outside the ark.

This is why, immediately upon awakening and prior to

∞ A CLOSER LOOK ∞

[20] Will come to you on their own...the ark will allow only the animals who did not crossbreed to enter: There were additional miracles that enabled Noah to save the animals. For example, it is totally unnatural for predatory animals to remain constrained in a compartment for a complete year. A regular zoo needs to employ a sizeable staff, both to control the animals and to ensure their safety. The ark, however, was only "staffed" by Noah and his

children, who were constantly occupied with feeding the animals, which was such an enormous and painful burden by itself that they never slept soundly throughout their stay on the ark.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, peace reigned in Noah's ark, a taste of the messianic times in which the wolf will lie peacefully with the lamb.⁶¹ We must assume, then, that the nature of the predatory animals miraculously was transformed during their stay in the ark.⁶²

55. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 36. 56. Rashi on 7:13, below. 57. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 53. See above, 2:14, 6:7. 58. 6:9. 59. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, p. 26, note 35. 60. See *Sanhedrin* 108b. 61. *Sefer HaMa'amarim Ethalech Liozna*, p. 57; *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, vol. 3, 666a, et al. 62. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 29-30.

ONKELOS

3 אף מעופא דשמאי שבועא
שבועא דכר ונוקבא לקומא
ורעא על אפי כל ארעא: 4 ארי
לזמן יומין עוד שבועא אגא מחת
מטרא על ארעא ארבעין ומיין
וארבעין לילון ואמחי ית כל
יקומא די עבדית מעל אפי ארעא:
5 ועבד נח בכל די פקדה יי: 6 ונח
בר שית מאה שנין וטופא הוה
מאי על ארעא: 7 ועל נח ובנוהי
ואתמה ונשי כנוהי עמה לתבותא
מן קדם מי טופא: 8 מן בעירא
דכנא ומן בעירא דליתא
דכנא ומן עופא וכל די רחש על
ארעא: 9 תרין תרין עלו לות נח
לתבותא דכר ונוקבא כמא דפקד
יי ית נח: 10 והוה לזמן שבועא
יומין ומי טופא הוה על ארעא:
11 בשנת שית מאה שנין לחיי
נח בירחא תנינא בשבעת עשרא
יומא לירחא ביומא הדין אתבועו
כל מבועי תהומא רבא וכוי
שמאי אתפתח:

3 גם מעוף השמים שבועה שבועה זכר ונקבה לחיות זרע
על־פני כל־הארץ: 4 כי לַיָּמִים עוֹד שְׁבַעַה אֲנֹכִי מִמַּטֵּיר
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה וּמַחֲיִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־
הַיָּקוֹב אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: 5 וַיַּעַשׂ נֹחַ כֹּכַל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּהוּ יְהוָה: 6 וְנֹחַ בֶּן־שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וְהַמְבּוּל הָיָה
מֵי־עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 7 וַיָּבֹא נֹחַ וּבָנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְנִשְׁי־בָנָיו אִתּוֹ
אֶל־הַתֵּבָה מִפְּנֵי מֵי הַמְבּוּל: 8 מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה
וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנָה טְהוֹרָה וּמִן־הָעוֹף וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־
רָמַשׁ עַל־הָאָדָמָה: 9 שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם בָּאוּ אֶל־נֹחַ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה
זָכָר וְנִקְבָּה כָּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ: 10 וַיְהִי לְשִׁבְעַת
הַיָּמִים וּמֵי הַמְבּוּל הָיוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 11 בַּשָּׁנָה שֵׁש־מֵאוֹת
שָׁנָה לְחַיֵּי־נֹחַ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בִּשְׁבַעַה־עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ
בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִבְקְעוּ כָּל־מַעֲיֵנוֹת תְּהוֹם רָבָה וְאַרְבַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם
נִפְתְּחוּ:

RASHI

לכד והנשים לכד, לפי שנאסרו בתשמיש המטה, מפני
שהעולם היה שרוי בצער: **מפני מי המבול.** אף נח
מקטני אמונה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שביבא המבול,
ולא נכנס לתבה עד שדחקוה הפנים: 9 **באו אל נח.**
מאליהן: **שנים שנים.** כלם השוו במנין זה, מן הפחות
היו שנים: 11 **בחודש השני.** רבי אליעזר אומר: זה
מרחשון. רבי יהושע אומר: זה אדר: **נבקעו.** להוציא
מימיהן: **תהום רבה.** מדה כנגד מדה, הם חטאו ב"רבה
רעת האדם", ולכן ב"תהום רבה":

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

structions to the letter; the rest was taken care of by
God Himself.

Similarly, if we commit ourselves absolutely and pas-
sionately to our Divine mission, and act on that com-
mitment, we will be blessed with miraculous success.

Once, when the Ba'al Shem Tov was raising money for char-
ity, he knocked on the window of a home but then immedi-
ately went on his way without waiting for a response. Eventu-
ally, the resident of the home came to the Ba'al Shem Tov and
gave him a donation. Later, the Ba'al Shem Tov was asked:
"If you needed that person's help, why didn't you wait for
him to come to the window? And if you didn't need his help,
why did you knock on his window?" The Ba'al Shem Tov
explained: "God wants us to make a natural 'vessel' for His

3 גם מעוף השמים וגו'. בטוהרים הכתוב מדבר, ולמד
סתום מן המפרש: 4 **בי לַיָּמִים עוֹד שְׁבַעַה.** אלו שבועת
ימי אבולו של מתושלח הצדיק, שחס הקדוש ברוך הוא
על כבודו ועבב את הפרענות. צא וחשב שנותיו של
מתושלח, ותמצא שהם כלים בשנת שש מאות שנה
לחיי נח: **בי לַיָּמִים עוֹד.** מהו "עוד"? זמן אחר, זמן זה
נוסף על מאה ועשרים שנה: **אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם.** כנגד יצירת
הולד, שקלקלו להטריח ליוצרים לצור צורת ממורים:
5 **וַיַּעַשׂ נֹחַ.** זה ביאתו לתבה: 7 **נח ובניו.** האנשים

blessings. I accomplished this by knocking on the window.
However, I had many important things to take care of, and I
didn't have time to wait for him to come to the door, ask me
what I need, etc. I already had made my vessel, so I was ready
to move on to my next task."⁷²

11 In the six hundredth year: The Zohar interprets this
verse as a prophecy: "In the six hundredth year of the
sixth [millennium, i.e., around the year 1840, the gates
of supernal wisdom and the wellsprings of earthly
wisdom will open up. This will prepare the world to
be elevated in the seventh [millennium, i.e., the mes-
sianic era]."

"Supernal wisdom" refers to the wisdom of the Torah,
while "earthly wisdom" refers to secular knowledge.

72. Hitva'aduyot 5745, vol. 1, pp. 517-518; Likutei Sichot, vol. 5, p. 344.

3 You shall also take seven pairs of the ritually pure birds of the heavens, each pair consisting of a male and its mate, in order to keep its seed alive over the entire face of the earth.

4 For today, your only surviving ancestor, Methuselah, died. In another seven days, after the customary seven-day period of mourning for him is over, I will bring rain on the earth. The rain will last **for forty days and forty nights**, corresponding to the forty days it takes for an embryo to be considered a human being, because the wicked people of the earth caused Me to fashion their illegitimate offspring. With this flood, **I will obliterate every being that I have made from the face of the earth.**"

5 Noah did all that God had commanded him regarding settling the animals in the ark and stocking it with provisions, but he himself tarried at the entrance, because he didn't fully believe that God would actually go ahead and implement His plan.⁶⁷

6 Noah was in his six hundredth year when the Flood occurred and water covered the earth.

7 When it started to rain, Noah, together with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came into the ark, fleeing from the waters of the Flood.

8 In contrast, all the animals had already entered the ark before it began to rain: Of the ritually pure animals, and of the animals that are not ritually pure, of the birds, and of all the creatures that crawl on the ground,

9 one pair of the ritually impure and seven pairs of the ritually pure, male and female, they had come on their own to Noah into the ark, as God had said when He commanded Noah to enter the ark.

10 After the seven days of mourning for Methuselah passed, the waters of the Flood came upon on the earth. During the ensuing forty days, the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars did not shine, and it was therefore completely dark.⁶⁸

11 The flood began in the six hundredth year of Noah's life — 1656 — in the second month, Marcheshvan, on the seventeenth of the month. Because of the gravity of the people's misdeeds, ordinary rain did not suffice to cleanse the earth. Rather, **on that day, all the wellsprings of the great abyss burst open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.**

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

his name, Noah (*Noach*, related to *menuchah*, "rest"). Thus all the inhabitants of the ark existed on the plane of "thought," which is why they lived peacefully together.⁶⁹

This is the reason that the ark's non-kosher animals are not referred to as "impure." When in the ark, each animal reverted to its spiritual root, where impurity cannot exist. For example, the terrestrial lion is a non-kosher animal, while its spiritual antecedent is one of the holy beasts of the Divine Chariot!⁷⁰

This, then, is the deeper meaning of the instruction that one should seek to use a clean expression: one should try to see everything as it exists in its pristine state within its spiritual roots.⁷¹

9 On their own: Obviously, the fact that the animals came to the ark on their own was miraculous. It was likewise miraculous that no one was able to prevent Noah from entering the ark and that, as has been mentioned, the animals he sheltered dwelled together peacefully. Noah was only required to fulfill God's in-

⁶⁷ Rashi on v. 7, below. ⁶⁸ Rashi on 8:22, below. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 20-21. ⁶⁹ See above, on 6:20. ⁷⁰ Ezekiel 1:10. ⁷¹ Or *HaTorah*, vol. 3, p. 1228.

— ONKELOS —
 12 וַיְהִי מִטְרָא נָחַת עַל אֶרֶץ
 אֲרֶבְעִין יָמִין וְאַרְבָּעִין לַיְלָו:

12 וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל-הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה:

— RASHI —
 לֵילֹ עֲמוֹ, שֶׁהָיָה כְּתִיב⁷⁵: "בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִבְקְעוּ כָּל מְעִינֹת",
 נִמְצְאוּ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם כָּלִים בְּכ"ח בְּכֶסֶלֹ, לְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר,
 שֶׁהֶחֱדָשִׁים נִמְנִין בְּסֻדְרָן אֶחָד מִלֵּא וְאֶחָד חֹסֶר, הָיָה
 שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִמִּדְּרָגָתָן וְעֶשְׂרִים וְשִׁמוֹנָה מִכֶּסֶלֹ:

12 וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל הָאָרֶץ. וְלֵהֲלֹךְ הוּא אוֹמֵר: "וַיְהִי
 הַמִּבּוּל?" אֵלֵא, כְּשֶׁהוֹרִידֵן — הוֹרִידֵן בְּרַחֲמִים, שֶׁאִם
 יִחֲזְרוּ יִהְיוּ גִשְׁמֵי בְּרָכָה, וּבְשֵׁלֵא חֲזָרוּ הָיוּ לְמִבּוּל:
 אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וָגו'. אֵין יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן מִן הַמִּנִּין, לְפִי שֶׁאֵין

14, ז. י. 15. פסוק יא.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

temptation.)⁷⁶

In the second month, Marcheshvan: The metaphoric Flood also begins in Marcheshvan. During the month of Tishrei, we spend most of our time in the "ark" of the High Holy Days, Sukot, and Simchat Torah. Only in the following month, Marcheshvan, do we return to our ordinary lives. Although this progression appears to be a spiritual descent, there is, in fact, an advantage to the mundane lives we resume in Marcheshvan, since we fulfill the goal of creating a Divine home in this world specifically by infusing mundane existence with Divine consciousness.⁷⁷

The wellsprings of the great abyss...the floodgates of the heavens. As mentioned above, the raging waters of the Flood symbolize the worries that flood a person's mind. These worries can take two forms:

The great abyss: These are worries over *lowly*, material matters, such as finances;

The floodgates of the heavens: These are worries over more spiritual and *lofty* matters, such as community service, which impede a person from studying the Torah and fulfilling the commandments. While it is, of course, important to be involved in community service, it must not come at the expense of Torah study and observing the commandments, for it is precisely through observing the commandments that a person connects to God and thereby earns His assistance. Therefore, the argument that we are too busy to perform God's commandments because we are inundated by the "floodgates of the heavens," i.e., lofty spiritual matters, would never be put forth by our Divine soul, for the Divine soul would never put forth an argument that contradicts the Torah, which requires us to fulfill the commandments regardless of our inundation with communal matters. When such an argument occurs to us, we should be aware that it is being voiced by our ego, which thinks it has found the perfect excuse to avoid performing our religious obligations. Rather, it is only by maintaining a proper balance between our communal activism and personal religious observance

that can we hope to succeed in both.⁷⁸

12 A final chance to repent: Although God had forewarned about the impending Flood one hundred and twenty years earlier, the people did not repent during that entire span of time. Even after watching Noah enter the ark and witnessing the attendant miracles, they still didn't repent. And yet, if they had repented at this point—even after the rain started—not only would they have been spared the Flood, they would have been showered with rains of blessing. This demonstrates the incredible power of repentance.

If repentance wielded such power in the generation of the Flood, even before the Torah (and the commandment to repent) had been given and the world was still spiritually estranged from God, how much more so is it true that nowadays, repentance has the power to transform all misfortune into good, even in a split second.⁷⁹**Rain fell upon the earth:** Until the third day of creation, the world did not appear to be independent from God; it was evident that its entire existence consisted of nothing more than the Divine energy that created and sustained it. This had its parallel in the physical realm: until the third day of creation, the entire earth was covered by water. The earth's submersion under water was a reflection of its self-nullification; its identity as a creation that appeared independent from God was concealed and nullified. This metaphor of submersion in water is also used to describe the Divine awareness that will prevail in the messianic era.⁸⁰

On the third day of creation, however, God caused the dry land to emerge, which meant in spiritual terms that Divinity was obscured; the world began to appear independent from God. This condition continued until the Flood, when God caused the world to revert back to its original state of submersion under water.⁸¹ During the Flood, the world's spiritual state resembled its lofty state at the beginning of creation, when it was covered by water.

How can we possibly reconcile this lofty interpretation of the Flood with its plain significance, i.e., a means to

the Holy Temple." 76. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 42-48. 77. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 289-290. 78. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 5-6. 79. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 520. 80. Isaiah 11:9. *Mishneh Torah*, *Melachim* 12:5. 81. *Bereishit Rabbah* 5:1.

12 Nonetheless, initially, ordinary **rain fell upon the earth**, to give the people a final chance to repent. Had they repented, the rain would have continued to fall in a normal, beneficial fashion. However, when they failed to take advantage of this opportunity to repent, it became a deluge. Although God released the entire amount of water that would descend during this flood from the heavenly store-houses of water all at once, He made it fall evenly over a period of **forty days and forty nights**.⁷³

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

Indeed, the era referred to in the *Zohar's* prophecy saw an explosion of knowledge, both in the realm of rational articulation of the inner secrets of Torah as well as in the realm of revolutionary scientific discoveries. On the one hand, we can readily understand how the revelation of the inner dimension of the Torah prepares the world for the messianic era; we are taught that these revelations are a foretaste of the Divine knowledge with which the world will be filled at that time. On the other hand, in what way do the revolutionary revelations in the realm of secular knowledge serve to prepare the world for the messianic era?

The answer is threefold:

(a) Firstly, the newly-revealed technologies provide us with a foretaste of the spiritual climate of the messianic era. At that time, our perception of Divinity will not be limited to intellectual appreciation alone. On the contrary, the *physical eye* will be able to see the Divine energy that sustains the world.⁷⁴ Modern technology affords us a glimpse into such empirical perception of Divinity. For example, the knowledge that a telephone or radio can enable us to hear a voice from the other side of the world gives us an *empirical* example of the concept that God sees and hears all that occurs in the universe.

Without this and similar examples, our appreciation of God's omniscience would be limited to an abstract, intellectual understanding, which does not always affect us fully. Now, however, with the aid of such examples, we can meditate upon the concept of God's omniscience based on our own empirical experience. Such meditation has a much more powerful impact, both on our emotions and on the three "garments" of thought, speech, and deed.

(b) Furthermore, new technologies can not only serve as an *example* of Divine concepts (as above); they themselves can be used to convey the new revelations of Torah's inner dimension in a way that helps prepare the world for the messianic era. In fact, this is their true and primary purpose.⁷⁵ When the secrets of Torah are broadcast over the radio waves, for example, they can be physically heard wherever they are broadcast throughout the entire world. This is a foretaste of the

messianic era, when Divine wisdom will spread without any restriction or limitation throughout the *entire* world and will be perceptible by our physical flesh (just as the teaching of Torah's inner dimension on the radio can be heard *physically* and instantaneously).

(c) Furthermore, scientific advances do not serve merely as a *tool* to broadcast the secrets of Torah, a means to an end; rather, they *themselves* reflect the concepts expounded in Torah's inner dimension.

This concept of God's oneness, for example is evidenced in science itself: scientists used to believe that every organism comprises many, distinct elements. But as science develops further, the more it recognizes that the diversity within the universe is only superficial and that the universe is essentially the *unification* of form and matter.

This explains the intrinsic connection between the development of the sciences and the revelation of Torah's inner dimension as a preparation for the messianic era: The revelation of Torah's inner dimension automatically leads to the development of the secular sciences. It is indeed through the latter that the foretaste of the Divine knowledge that will fill the world in the messianic era is experienced in an empirical way. When we see the world's oneness through the eyes of science, we realize that this oneness is identical to the oneness of Divinity (which is revealed through Torah's inner dimension). This, in turn, "prepares the world to be elevated in the seventh" millennium.

(The value of secular knowledge does not justify exposing ourselves to the spiritual dangers present in the vast majority of academic institutions devoted to study of secular knowledge. The atmosphere in these institutions is so saturated with atheism that it is considered an obvious truth requiring no proof. Most of these institutions also discourage modesty and chastity, tacitly if not officially, and people who do adhere to a moral code are mocked. The licentious climate on the campuses and in the dormitories is well known. All this makes college a challenging place to be a religious person. Some claim that they will not be affected by the atmosphere, but even the most righteous of people is not allowed to intentionally subject himself to

73. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 25. 74. See Isaiah 40:5. 75. See *Shemot Rabbah* 35:1: "Why was gold created? For the Tabernacle and

ONKELOS

13 בכרן יומא הדין על נח ושם
יחם ויפת בני נח ואתת נח ותלת
נשי בנוהי עמהון לתבותא:
14 אנון וכל חיותא לונה וכל
בעירא לונה וכל רחשא דרחש
על ארעא לונה וכל עופא
לונה כל צפר כל דפרח:

13 בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּא נֹחַ וְשֵׁם־יָחֵם וַיִּפֹּת בְּנֵי־נֹחַ
וַיֵּאֲשֶׁת נֹחַ וַיִּשְׁלָשֶׁת נְשֵׁי־בָנָיו אֵתָם אֶל־הַתְּבֹה: 14 הָמָּה
וְכָל־הַחַיָּה לְמִינָהּ וְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ
הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְכָל־הָעוֹף לְמִינָהּ כָּל צֶפֶר
כָּל־כָּנָף:

RASHI

כָּנָף. דבוק הוא, צפור של כל מין כָּנָף, לרבות חגבים.
"כָּנָף" לשון "נוצצה", כמו: "וששע אתו בכנפיו", שפאפלו
נוצצה עולה, אף כאן: צפור כל מין מראות נוצצה:

13 בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. לַמֶּדֶךְ הַכְּתוּב, שְׁהָיוּ בְּנֵי דוֹר
אוֹמְרִים: אֵלּוּ אֲנִי רוֹאִים אוֹתוֹ וְנִכְנָס לַתְּבֹה, אֲנִי שׁוֹבְרִין
אוֹתָהּ וְהוֹרְגִין אוֹתוֹ. אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: אֲנִי
מַכְנִיסוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָלֶם, וְנִרְאָה דְּבַר מִי יָקוֹם: 14 צֶפֶר כָּל

16. ויקרא א, יז.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

bath we become "new" people. Similarly, immersion in a *mikveh* is an integral part of the process of conversion, in which the convert becomes a "new" person.^{92,93}

Metaphorically, the floodwaters correspond to our financial worries, which likewise serve to purify us spiritually, as will be explained presently. In fact, the parallel between financial worries and the *mikveh* goes much deeper:

The waters of the *mikveh* represent Divine awareness. When immersing ourselves in these waters, we are meant to envision ourselves submerging in Divine awareness, such that our normative awareness becomes swallowed up and submerged in Divine consciousness.⁹⁴ (This relationship between immersion and self-nullification is alluded to by the fact that the letters used to spell the word for "to immerse" [טבול] can be rearranged to spell the word for "to nullify" [בטל].)

This is why a *mikveh* is required to contain a minimum of 40 *se'ah*: this is the amount necessary to ensure that the entire body is immersed in it at once.⁹⁵ In other words, immersing oneself in a *mikveh* means to transcend oneself and thereby rise to a level in which one is able to become receptive to holiness.

This is also the reason why God gives us financial worries. True, they temporarily distract and confuse us, but they simultaneously also break down our walls of self-assuredness, thereby enabling us to go beyond our ego. It is then that we become receptive to holiness.

Since the true purpose of financial woes is not, God forbid, to punish us but rather to deflate our inflated ego, this can be accomplished in one short moment: if we quickly extract the inner message hidden in the financial worries, thereby enabling us to transcend our

egos, we no longer need the financial worries to rectify ourselves, and can henceforth enjoy *nachat* (pleasure and calm), both physically and spiritually.⁹⁶

13 God protected Noah by summoning lions: Despite all his efforts and arduous work, ultimately Noah needed Divine intervention in order enter the ark. Similarly, if we enter the ark of Torah and prayer with only our own strength, we are not assured spiritual protection. Sometimes we can study the Torah diligently yet forget about its Author,⁹⁷ thus forfeiting its protective properties. Similarly, if we are immersed in our prayers without actually internalizing their message, we will fail to imbue our mundane activities with their spirit.

In order for our study and prayer to be as they should, we need Divine assistance—we need God to "seal" the door of the ark behind us. And how are we deemed worthy of receiving just such assistance? By devoting ourselves to helping others. Working to save others from the "raging waters" with earnest dedication and warm devotion is the surest way to ensure that we ourselves remain unharmed.⁹⁸

Noah...entered the ark: One of the lessons we can derive from this part of the narrative is that we should never despair in the face of what is occurring in the world around us. Even when threatened with a devastating Flood, we should retain our optimism, for God watches over us and shelters us, and for Him, anything is possible. Furthermore, we should realize that by entering our spiritual "ark," our prayers and study of the Torah can save the entire world and even raise it to a higher level of being, just as Noah "beheld a new world"⁹⁹ when he emerged from the ark.

24 Noah often groaned or even spit blood from sheer exhaustion. Once, he was late in delivering

91. See *Sha'ar HaKavanot, inyan tevilat erev Shabbat*; *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaShabbat*, chapter 3 ff. *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShana* 5666, p. 387. 92. See *Yevamot* 22a, et al: "[A convert is] like a newborn." 93. *Reshimot*, vol. 3, p. 40. 94. See *Mishneh Torah, Mikva'ot* 11:12. 95. *Chagigah* 11a. 96. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 4-5. 97. See *Nedarim* 81a. 98. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, pp. 8-10. 99. *Hitva'aduyot* 5743, vol. 1, p. 400.

13 Because of the people's threats,⁸² God protected Noah by summoning lions and bears that prevented the people from harming him or damaging the ark.⁸³ Thus **Noah entered the ark in the very midst of that day**, the 17th of Marcheshvan, **with Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them.** Noah took some vine branches and fig-tree shoots along with him.⁸⁴

14 **And with them, every kind of beast, every kind of livestock, every kind of creature that crawls on the ground, and every kind of flying creature—every bird and every winged creature, even locusts.**

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

destroy all flesh?

The answer is that the Torah exists on two levels: (a) in its original, spiritual pre-creation state, as in the Talmudic statement, "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years";⁸⁵ and (b) in its descent into this material world, where it takes on terrestrial meaning. In its primordial state, every word of the Torah has a spiritual meaning, according to which it is studied in the spiritual worlds. This refers both to the laws of the Torah as well as to its narratives: although every detail of all of the narratives in the Torah actually took place in this physical world, nevertheless, since the Torah preceded the existence of the world, it follows that the Torah's narratives also possess a spiritual meaning that is coherent in the spiritual worlds in which physicality does not exist.

In other words, it's not that the Torah can *also* be explained spiritually. On the contrary: the Torah speaks primarily about the supernal and alludes only secondarily to the terrestrial.⁸⁶ The Torah exists originally in a heavenly, spiritual state and from there descends into this world and "dons" terrestrial garb.

In addition, nothing in the primordial Torah is evil, since there is no evil in the supernal worlds. Everything that appears negative in the Torah's terrestrial meaning is, in fact, good and holy in its primordial origin. In a similar vein regarding the Flood: the statement that the Flood came to punish the people and even to purify the world only holds true in the Torah's *terrestrial* context. In its supernal context, where evil and impurity do not exist, it cannot be claimed that the purpose of the Flood was to destroy evildoers or to cleanse the world from its impurity; it can only be the expression of an increase in holiness. Indeed, in Jewish law, immersion in a *mikveh* not only purifies the impure, but also elevates someone who is already pure to a higher level of purity. For example, on Yom Kippur, the High Priest would immerse himself five times, even though he was already technically pure after the first immersion. The subsequent immersions were intended to elevate him

to progressively higher levels within the realm of holiness.

Moreover, the supernal version of events affects the terrestrial version as well. Thus, the physical waters of the Flood, which wiped out all flesh and cleansed the world of impurity, also increased the world's holiness, similar to how the waters function in the primordial Torah.

By way of metaphor: The love of parents for their children as it exists in its truest and strongest form within their hearts is pure goodness. But when children misbehave, the parents express their love by punishing them, for their own benefit, to train them to refrain from self-destructive behavior.⁸⁷ Similarly, the waters of the Flood as they exist in the supernal Torah, in the "heart of the Parent," are love and goodness. As the floodwaters descend into this world, they become waters of punishment and purification. But even then, they never lose their essential nature, which is love and goodness.⁸⁸

Forty days and forty nights: As mentioned, the Flood served not only as a punishment but also as a spiritual cleansing for a world that had become spiritually contaminated. This is why the waters of the Flood are called "the waters of Noah,"⁸⁹ meaning "the waters of [Divine] pleasure and satisfaction [*nachat*]."

Inasmuch as spiritual defilement is associated with the concept of death, spiritual purification is a form of rebirth. 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*.⁹⁰ (Indeed, precisely due to the fact that immersion in a *mikveh* is an experience of rebirth, many Jews have the custom to immerse themselves in a *mikveh* before the Sabbath,⁹¹ since on the Sab-

82. See 6:22, above. 83. Rashi on v. 16, below. 84. Rashi on 9:20, below. 85. *Shabbat* 88b, et al. 86. *Asarah Ma'amarot, Ma'amar Chikur Din* 3:22. See Proverbs 8:30. 87. See Proverbs 13:24. 88. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 16-21. 89. Isaiah 54:9. 90. A *se'ah* is a biblical measure equaling approximately 2.18 gallons. A *mikveh* would thus require a minimum of 87.2 gallons.

— ONKELOS —

15 וְעָלוּ לֹות נֹחַ לְתִבְתָּא תַרְיִן
תַרְיִן מִכָּל בִּשְׂרָא דִּי בֵה רִחָא
דְּחַיִּי: 16 וְעָלָא דְּכַר וְנוֹקְבָא מִכָּל
בִּשְׂרָא עָלוּ בְמָה דְּפִקְדִּי יְתָה יִי
וְאָגֹן יִי בְמִימְרָה עֲלוּהִי: 17 וְהָיָה
טוֹפָנָא אֲרַבְעִין יוֹמִין עַל אֶרֶץ
וּסְגִיאוֹ מִיָּא וְנִטְלוּ יֵת תִּבְתָּא
וְאִתְרַמַּת מִעַל אֶרֶץ: 18 וְתִקִּיפוּ
מִיָּא וּסְגִיאוֹ לְחָדָא עַל אֶרֶץ
וּמְהִלְכָא תִּבְתָּא עַל אֶפִּי מִיָּא:
19 וּמִיָּא תִקִּיפוּ לְחָדָא לְחָדָא עַל
אֶרֶץ וְאִתְחַפִּיאוּ כָּל טוֹרִיא רַמִּיָּא
דִּי תַחֲוֹת כָּל שְׁמַיָּא: 20 חֲמִשׁ
עֶשְׂרִי אַמִּין מִלְּעֵלָא תִקִּיפוּ מִיָּא
וְאִתְחַפִּיאוּ טוֹרִיא: 21 וּמִית כָּל
בִּשְׂרָא דְרַחֲשׁ עַל אֶרֶץ בְּעוֹפָא
וּבְבִיעִירָא וּבְחַיִּוּתָא וּבְכָל רַחֲשָׁא
דְרַחֲשׁ עַל אֶרֶץ וְכָל אֲנָשָׁא:

15 וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־נֹחַ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה שְׁנַיִם שָׁנִים מִכָּל־הַבְּשָׂר
אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים: 16 וַתָּבֹאִים זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה מִכָּל־בְּשָׂר
בָּאֹו בְּאִשָּׁר צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּסְגֹּר יְהוָה בַּעֲדוֹ:
שְׁלִישִׁי 17 וַיְהִי הַמָּבּוּל אֲרַבְעִים יוֹם עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיָּרֻבוּ
הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־הַתֵּבָה וַתָּרָם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ: 18 וַיִּגְבְּרוּ
הַמַּיִם וַיָּרֻבוּ מְאֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַתִּלָּךְ הַתֵּבָה עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:
19 וְהַמַּיִם גָּבְרוּ מְאֹד מְאֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיַּכְסּוּ כָּל־הַהָרִים
הַגְּבוּהִים אֲשֶׁר־תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם: 20 חֲמִשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה אַמָּה
מִלְּמַעְלָה גָּבְרוּ הַמַּיִם וַיַּכְסּוּ הַהָרִים: 21 וַיָּנָע כָּל־בְּשָׂר |
הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ בָּעוֹף וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבַחַיָּה וּבְכָל־הַשָּׂרִץ
הַשָּׂרִץ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־הָאָדָם:

— RASHI —

עֲבָדִיק: 17 וַתָּרָם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ. מִשְׁקַעַת הָיְתָה בַּמַּיִם
אֶחָת עֶשְׂרֵה אַמָּה, בְּסַפִּינָה טַעוּנָה הַמִּשְׁקַעַת מִקְצָתָהּ
בַּמַּיִם. וּמִקְרָאוֹת שְׁלֹפְנִינוּ יוֹכִיחוּ: 18 וַיִּגְבְּרוּ. מֵאֲלִיהֶן:
20 חֲמִשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה אַמָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה. לְמַעְלָה שֶׁל גּוֹבֵה כָּל
הַהָרִים, לְאַחַר שֶׁהָשׂוּ הַמַּיִם לָרָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים:

16 וַיִּסְגֹּר ה' בַּעֲדוֹ. הִגֵּן עָלָיו שְׁלֹא שִׁכְרוּהוּ, הִקִּיף הַתֵּבָה
דְּבַיִם וְאִרְיוֹת וְהָיוּ הוֹרְגִים בָּהֶם. וּפְשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מִקְרָא: סָגַר
כְּנָגְדוֹ מִן הַמַּיִם, וְכֵן כָּל "בַּעַד" שֶׁבִּמְקָרָא לְשׁוֹן "כְּנָגְדוֹ"
הוּא: "בַּעַד כָּל רַחֲם"¹⁷, "בַּעַד וּבַעַד בְּנִיף"¹⁸, "עוֹר בַּעַד
עוֹר"¹⁹, "מִגֵּן בַּעֲדֵי"²⁰, "הַתַּפְלִל בַּעַד עֲבָדִיק"²¹ — כְּנָגְדוֹ

17. בראשית כ, יח. 18. מלכים ב, ד. 19. איוב ב, ד. 20. תהלים ג, ד. 21. שמואל א, יב, יט.

20 The mountains were covered, and the waters surged fifteen cubits above Mount Ararat, the highest of them in the region.

21 All flesh that moved upon the earth perished: including the birds, the livestock, the beasts, and every crawling creature that swarmed on the earth, as well as all humanity.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[20] **The waters surged fifteen cubits above:** As we have seen, entering the ark is a metaphor for immersing oneself in the words of prayer; hence the connection between the ark and the number fifteen, since many aspects of our prayers relate to the number fifteen. A few examples:

- There are fifteen expressions of praise in the prayer *Yishtabach* (song, praise, etc.).
- Most of the prayers in the section of the liturgy called "Verses of Praise" [*Pesukei d'Zimrah*] begin and end with the word *Hallelujah*, the last letters of which (*yud* and *hei*) equal fifteen.
- In the prayer *Emet v'Yatziv*, there are fifteen successive words that begin with the letter *vav*.

- King David recited fifteen songs of ascent (Psalms 120-134) in order to protect the world from the waters of the deep.¹⁰⁹

Additionally, fifteen is the numerical value of the first half of the Name *Havayah*, the letters *yud* and *hei*. The Torah's passive commandments (the prohibitions) are associated with these two letters. In contrast, the active commandments are associated with the second half of the Name *Havayah*, the letters *vav* and *hei*. Since the people had sinned by transgressing the prohibitions of the Torah—licentiousness, theft, etc.—which are associated with the first half of the Name *Havayah*, the waters surged to a height of fifteen cubits.¹¹⁰

109. Sukah 53a; Or HaTorah Bereishit, vol. 3, p. 1252. 110. Or HaTorah, Bereishit, vol. 3, p. 1252.

15 Of all flesh that had in it a breath of life, they came to Noah into the ark, in pairs.

16 Those who came were male and female; of all flesh they came, as God had commanded him, and God sealed the entrance behind him.

The animals that came to the ark behaved peacefully, even on their way to the ark. Even the wild beasts harmed neither the other animals nor Noah during their stay in the ark.¹⁰⁰

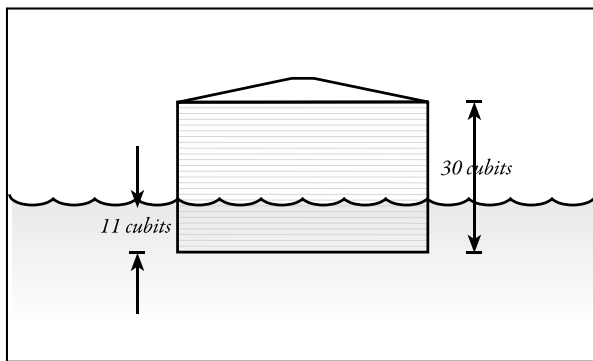


Figure 7: The Ark in the Water

◆ **Third Reading** **17** The Flood was upon the earth for forty full days, until the night of the 28th of Kislev. The waters increased and lifted the ark, and it rose above the ground.

18 The waters surged and increased greatly over the earth, and the ark drifted on the surface of the water, eleven cubits of its height remaining submerged under the surface of the water.

19 The waters surged exceedingly high over the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole sky were covered.

✧ A CLOSER LOOK ✧

[16] The animals that came to the ark behaved peacefully: There are a number of parallels between Noah's ark and the sukah that we are commanded to build and live in during the holiday of Sukot:

(a) In the ark, all the animals coexisted in peace and unity. Similarly, the sukah is an expression of Jewish unity, inasmuch as we are permitted to use another Jew's sukah to fulfill our own obligation to live in a sukah during the holiday. (In contrast, it is not permissible to fulfill our obligation to hold a set of the four plants of Sukot with a borrowed set.)¹⁰¹ In the liturgy,¹⁰² the sages even use the sukah as a metaphor for peace: "Spread over us the sukah of Your peace."

(b) The actual construction of the ark was an integral part of God's command to Noah to go into the ark. Similarly, the actual construction of a sukah is an integral part of fulfilling the commandment to live in a sukah. (Therefore, according to some opinions, a blessing must be recited upon building a sukah.)¹⁰³

(c) The materials used to construct the ark had to be Noah's property.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, a sukah must be made

out of the owner's own materials (or materials he has been given permission to use) and is not valid if made out of stolen materials.¹⁰⁵

(d) The purpose of the ark was to provide protection and shelter; similarly, the sukah serves as a reminder of how the Clouds of Glory sheltered and protected us in the desert.¹⁰⁶

Yet we also find distinctions between the ark and the sukah:

(a) Whereas Noah had to build the ark himself, we are permitted to delegate the building of a sukah to another Jew.

(b) Whereas the ark had to be Noah's own property, we may use someone else's sukah if the owner grants permission us to do so.

The reason for these differences is that, as mentioned above,¹⁰⁷ Noah was not overly concerned with the fate of his fellow human beings. His ark was therefore a private affair and he was not allowed to involve anyone else in it. The Torah, however, transformed all Jews into one entity, and therefore a borrowed sukah or one built for us by another can be considered our own.¹⁰⁸

^{100.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 29. ^{101.} *Sukah* 27b. ^{102.} Night prayer (*Arvit*), second blessing after reciting the *Shema*. ^{103.} *Y. Berachot* 9:3. Practically, we follow the opposing opinion, that a blessing is not recited, not because the construction in itself is not a *mitzvah*, but because it is not the *culmination* of the *mitzvah*. ^{104.} *Tzafnat Paneiach* on this verse. ^{105.} *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 637. ^{106.} Exodus 13:21; Leviticus 23:43; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 635. ^{107.} On 6:14. ^{108.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 39-41.

— ONKELOS —
 22 כל די נשמת רוח חיים באפיו מכל אשר
 מבול די בנשמתא מיתו: 23 ומחא
 ית כל וקומא די על אפי ארעא
 מאנשא עד בעירא עד רחשא
 ועד עופא דשמאי ואתמחאו
 מן ארעא ואשתאר ברם נח ודי
 עמה בתבותא: 24 ותקיפו מיא
 על ארעא מאה וחמשין יומין:
 8:1 ודכיר יי ית נח וית כל חיותא
 וית כל בעירא די עמה בתבותא
 ואעבר יי רוחא על ארעא ונחו
 מיא: 2 ואסתכרו מבועי תהומא
 וכיו שמאי ואתכלי מטרא מן
 שמאי: 3 ותבו מיא מעל ארעא
 אולין ותביין וחסרו מיא מסוף
 מאה וחמשין יומין:

22 כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים בְּאַפְיוֹ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר
 בַּחֲרָבָה מָתוּ: 23 וַיִּמַּח אֶת־כָּל־הַיָּקוֹם | אֲשֶׁר | עַל־פְּנֵי
 הָאֲדָמָה מֵאָדָם עַד־בְּהֵמָה עַד־רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וַיָּמָחוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁאַר אֲדֹנָתָהּ וְאֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתְּבָה:
 24 וַיִּגְבְּרוּ הַמַּיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֵת יוֹם: 8:1 וַיִּזְכֹּר
 אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֵת כָּל־הַחַיָּה וְאֶת־כָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר
 אִתּוֹ בַּתְּבָה וַיַּעֲבֵר אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁכּוּ הַמַּיִם:
 2 וַיִּסָּכְרוּ מַעֲיֵנֹת תְּהוֹם וַאֲרֶבֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּכְלֹא הַגִּשְׁמִים
 מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: 3 וַיִּשְׁכּוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הָלוֹךְ וְשׁוֹב
 וַיַּחֲסְרוּ הַמַּיִם מִקֵּצָהּ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֵת יוֹם:

— RASHI —
 זכר להם לבהמות וכות? שלא השחיתו דרכם קדם לכן,
 ושלל שמשו בתבה: ויעבר אלהים רוח. רוח תנחומין
 והנחה עברה לפניו: על הארץ. על עסקי הארץ: וישבו.
 כמו: "כשך חמת המלך", לשון הנחת חמה: 2 ויסכרו
 מעינת. בשנפתחו²⁶ כתיב: "כל מעינות", וכאן אין כתיב
 "כל", לפי שגשגותו מהם אותן שיש בהם צורך לעולם,
 כגון חמי טבריא וכיוצא בהן: ויכלא. וימנע, כמו: "לא
 תכלא רחמיה"²⁷, "לא יכלה ממך"²⁸: 3 מקצה חמשים
 ומאת יום. התחילו לחסור, והוא אחד בסיון. כיצד?
 בכ"ז בכסלו פסקו הגשמים, הרי שלשה מכסלו ועשרים
 ותשעה מטבת הרי שלשים ושתים, ושכט ואדר וניסן
 ואיר — מאה ושמונה עשר, הרי מאה וחמשים:

22 נִשְׁמַת רוח חיים. נשימה של רוח חיים: אשר
 בַּחֲרָבָה. ולא דגים שבים: 23 וַיִּמַּח. לשון "ויפגעל"
 הוא, ואינו לשון "ויפגעל", והוא מגזרת "ויפן" ו"יבן". כל
 תבה שסופה ה"א, כגון: "בנה" "מכה" "קנה", כשהוא
 נותן וי"ו יו"ד בראשה נקוד בחירק תחת הו"ד: אף נח.
 לבד נח, והו פשוטו. ומדרש אגדה²⁹: גזנח וכוהה דם,
 מטורח הבהמות והחיות. ויש אומרים, שאחר מוונות
 לארי והכישו, ועליו נאמר³⁰: "הן צדיק בארץ ישלם":
 1 וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים. זה השם מדת הדין הוא, ונהפכה
 למדת רחמים על ידי תפלת הצדיקים. ורשעתן של
 רשעים הופכת מדת רחמים למדת הדין, שנאמר³¹:
 "וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם וגו' ויאמר ה' אמתה",
 והוא שם מדת רחמים: וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת נֹחַ וְגו'.

22. תנחומא נח, ט. 23. משלי יא, לא. 24. בראשית ו, ה'ז. 25. אסתר ב, א. 26. לעיל ז, יא. 27. תהלים מ, יב. 28. בראשית כג, ו.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —
 the lion's meal, and it struck him: Metaphorically,
 Noah's feeding the animals can be likened to our
 providing spiritual nourishment to others. When, at
 times, we encounter major difficulties in this work, we
 must persevere under all circumstances, as Noah did,
 especially since the hardships and discomforts that we
 encounter are rarely so severe as to cause us to "groan
 and spit blood."
 Nevertheless, even as we learn to overlook our own
 personal discomforts, we must learn to be acutely

sensitive to our fellows' discomfort (and not analyze
 whether what others require is a necessity or a lux-
 ury¹¹⁶), and provide for their needs on time, for two
 reasons: Firstly, we have no way of estimating other
 people's worth or true stature; each one might possess
 a lofty soul, a "lion," a "king."¹¹⁷ And secondly, while
 it is proper to assume that we ourselves deserve all the
 hardships that may befall us in life, we must assume
 that others deserve only the best.¹¹⁸

116. Ketubot 67b. 117. See Pesachim 50a. 118. Likutei Sichot, vol. 5, pp. 53-56.

22 Every being that had the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils, every being that was on dry land, died. The fish, however, remained alive.

23 God obliterated every being that had been on the face of the earth—from man, to livestock, to reptiles, to the birds of the heavens. They were obliterated from the earth; Noah and those who were with him in the ark survived and were greatly pained by their isolation. The descendants of the giants Shamchazai and Azazel,¹¹¹ however, survived the floodwaters,¹¹² and eventually settled around Hebron.¹¹³

The floodwaters swept all the corpses of those who perished to the lowlands of Babylonia.¹¹⁴

24 The waters surged over the earth for an additional 150 days after the rainfall stopped, and did not subside throughout this entire period—from the 28th of Kislev until the 29th of Iyar.

The task of caring for the animals was extremely strenuous, and Noah often groaned or even spit blood from sheer exhaustion. Once, he was late in delivering the lions' meal, and one of them struck him. (This incident was the only exception to the animals' otherwise peaceful behavior in the ark. God made this happen once in order to show Noah that He holds righteous people such as Noah to a very high standard of behavior and that He punishes their slightest misdeeds in this world in order for them to have a clean slate in the afterlife.¹¹⁵) Noah and his family therefore prayed to God to relieve their suffering in the ark.

8:1 On account of Noah's prayers, God ceased treating the world, as He had done until then, with His attribute of strict justice, and instead began allowing His attribute of mercy to dominate. He thus remembered Noah. He also remembered that **all the beasts and livestock with him in the ark** had not engaged in crossbreeding, neither before entering the ark nor during their stay within it. **God caused His spirit of consolation and rest to apply to what was happening on earth, and the waters began to subside.**

2 When it stopped raining on the 28th of Kislev, most of the wellsprings of the abyss were sealed, but some of them were left open to serve as hot springs. In contrast, **all the floodgates of heaven were sealed.** Thus **the rain from the heavens was held back.**

3 At the end of 150 days from the 28th of Kislev, i.e., beginning on the 1st of Sivan, the waters slowly but steadily receded from upon the earth and the waters diminished. The water level dropped one-fourth of a cubit per day, **so that**

¹¹¹. See above, 6:2. ¹¹². *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, p. 89. ¹¹³. Numbers 13:33. ¹¹⁴. Rashi on 6:17, above. ¹¹⁵. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 52-53.

ONKELOS

4 וְנָתַתְּ תְבוּתָא בִּירְחָא שְׂבִיעָא
בְּשַׁבְּעַת עֶשְׂרָא יוֹמָא לִירְחָא עַל
טוּרֵי קָרְדוֹ: 5 וּמִנָּה הוּא אֶלְיִן
וְחֶסְרִין עַד יִרְחָא עֲשִׂירָא
בְּעֶשְׂרִי בְּחַד לִירְחָא אֲתַחְזִיאוּ
רִישֵׁי טוּרֵי: 6 וְהָדָא מִסּוּף אֲרִבְעִין
יוֹמִין וּפְתַח נָח יָת בּוֹת תְּבוּתָא דִּי
עָבַד: 7 וְשִׁלַּח יָת עוֹרְבָא וּנְפֹק
מִפֶּק וְתָאב עַד דִּיבִישׁוּ מִיָּא מַעַל
אֲרָעָא:

4 וְנָתַתְּ הַתְּבָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּשַׁבְּעָה-עֶשְׂרֵי יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ
עַל הָרֵי אֲרָרָט: 5 וְהַמָּיִם הָיוּ הֶלֶד וְחֹסֶר עַד הַחֹדֶשׁ
הָעֲשִׂירִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ נִרְאוּ רֵאשֵׁי הַהָרִים:
6 וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וַיִּפְתָּח נֹחַ אֶת-חֲלוֹן הַתְּבָה
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: 7 וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-הָעוֹרֵב וַיֵּצֵא יֵצוּא וַיָּשׁוּב עַד-
יְבִשֶׁת הַמָּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ:

RASHI

וזה סיון. והעשירי אי אפשר למנות אלא לירידה, שאם אתה אומר להפסקה והוא אלול, אי אתה מוצא "בראשון באחד לחודש חרבו המים מעל הארץ", שהרי מקץ ארבעים יום משנראו ראשי ההרים שלח את העורב, ועשרים ואחד יום הוחיל בשליחות היונה, הרי ששים יום משנראו ראשי ההרים עד שחרבו פני האדמה. ואם תאמר: באלול נראו, נמצא שחרבו במרחשון, והוא קורא אותו ראשון, ואין זה אלא תשרי שהוא ראשון לבריאת עולם, ולרבי יהושע הוא ניסן: 6 מקץ ארבעים יום. משנראו ראשי ההרים: את חלון התבה אשר עשה. לצנור. ולא זה פתח התבה העשוי לביאה ויציאה: 7 יצוא ושוב. הולך ומקיף סביבות התבה. ולא הלך בשליחותו, שהיה חושרו על בת זוגו, וכמו ששינינו באגדת "חלק"¹²³: עד יבשת המים. פשוטו כמשמעו. אבל מדרש אגדה¹²⁴: מוכן היה העורב לשליחות אחרת, בעצירת גשמים בימי אליהו, שנאמר¹²⁵: "והערבים מבאים לו לחם ובשר":

4 בחודש השביעי. סיון, והוא שביעי לכסלו, שבו פסקו הגשמים: בשבועה עשר יום. מכאן אתה למד שהיתה התבה משקעת במים אחת עשרה אמה. שהרי כתיב¹²⁶: "בעשירי באחד לחודש נראו ראשי ההרים", זה אב שהוא עשירי למרחשון לירידת גשמים, והם היו גבוהים על ההרים חמש עשרה אמה, וחסרו מיום אחד בסיון עד אחד באב חמש עשרה אמה לששים יום, הרי אמה לארבעה ימים, נמצא שבי"ו בסיון לא חסרו המים אלא ארבע אמות, ונחה התבה ליום המחרת. למדת, שהיתה משקעת אחת עשרה אמה במים שעל ראשי ההרים: 5 בעשירי וגו' נראו ראשי ההרים. זה אב, שהוא עשירי למרחשון שהתחיל הגשם. ואם תאמר: הוא אלול, ועשירי לכסלו שפסק הגשם, כשם שאתה אומר בחודש השביעי – סיון, והוא שביעי להפסקה? אי אפשר לומר כן, על כרחך שביעי אי אתה מונה אלא להפסקה, שהרי לא כלו ארבעים יום של ירידת גשמים ומאה וחמשים של תגברת המים עד אחד בסיון, ואם אתה אומר שביעי לירידה, אין

29. פסוק ה. 30. סנהדרין קח, ב. 31. בראשית רבה לז, ה. 32. מלכיס"א יז, ו.

INNER DIMENSIONS

[4] On the seventeenth of...the seventh month the ark came to rest: According to the Zohar, the seventh month refers to the month of Tishrei, which is the seventh month from Nisan. During this seventh month, on Rosh HaShanah, God sits, so to speak, upon "the Throne of Judgment." This is alluded to in the phrase:

The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat: The "Mountains of Ararat" allude to the prosecuting angels who demand that justice be done and punishment meted out. But through our prayers and shofar-blowing on Rosh HaShanah, we transform judgment into mercy.¹²³

The parallel between the ark and Rosh HaShanah can also be seen in the following: Rosh HaShanah is the day on which our Matriarchs, Sarah and Rachel,

as well as Chanah (the mother of the prophet Samuel), who were all barren, were remembered on High and subsequently conceived.¹²⁴ Each of these three-letter names contains one unique letter that appears only in that particular name, whereas the remaining two letters also appear in the other names, as well.

Sarah: the unique letter in the name Sarah is *sin*, whose numerical value is 300, corresponding to the 300-cubit length of the ark;

Rachel: the unique letter in the name Rachel is *lamed*, whose numerical value is 30, corresponding to the 30-cubit height of the ark;

Chanah: the unique letter in the name Chanah is *nun*, whose numerical value is 50, corresponding to the 50-cubit width of the ark.¹²⁵

123. Zohar 3:149b. 124. Rosh Hashanah 10b. 125. Likutei Levi Yitzchak, Igrot, p. 382.

4 after sixteen days, that is, **on the seventeenth day of the month** of Sivan, which was **the seventh month** counting from when the rain stopped falling, in Kislev, **the ark came to rest on the Mountains of Ararat** (see figure 8). Since the water reached to a height of fifteen cubits above the mountaintop¹¹⁹ and the bottom of the ark was submerged eleven cubits below water level,¹²⁰ the water level only had to drop four cubits to allow the ark to rest on the peak of Mount Ararat.

5 **The waters continued to diminish** at this rate for another forty-four days, i.e., **until** the first day of Menachem Av, **the tenth month** counting from when the rain stopped falling, in Kislev. In the course of these forty-four days, the water level dropped an additional eleven cubits. Thus, **in the tenth month, on the first of the month**, the height of the water had receded a total of fifteen cubits, and **the highest mountain peaks became visible**.

6 Once the ark firmly settled on the mountaintop, the water began to recede much faster. **Forty days after** the highest mountaintops became visible, i.e., on the 10th of Elul, **Noah opened the window he had made in the ark**.

7 On the next day, the 11th of Elul, **he sent out the raven** to see if the water had receded completely. He assumed that the raven would not return if it would find a place to rest. But because the raven was afraid that Noah would harm its mate, when **it went out**, it circled **to and fro** around the ark **until the water dried up from the surface of the earth**. (Because the raven did not fulfill its mission, God miraculously prolonged its life and sent it to fulfill a similar mission during the lifetime of the prophet Elijah.¹²¹)



Figure 8: Mt. Ararat

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

6-7 **To see if the water had abated:** It would seem that since Noah had entered the ark by God's explicit instruction, he would also have to await a similar instruction to exit it. Indeed, it was not until after God instructed him to leave the ark that he did so.¹²² Why, then, did he bother investigating the water level to see if the time was ripe to leave the ark?

The answer is as follows: Since God had entrusted him with the formidable task of caring for the survival of the world—by building the ark, taking in the animals, and feeding them so that they could survive and then repopulate the world after the Flood—he felt that he had to take the natural steps that would facilitate the earth's rehabilitation, i.e., to create a natural "ves-

sel" for God's blessing. So, as soon as he thought that the waters had sufficiently subsided to allow him to emerge from the ark, set foot on dry land, and begin the process of repopulating the world, he didn't hesitate nor tarry; he immediately took the steps which would help him to determine the earth's condition, i.e., sending out the raven and, a few days later, sending out the dove.

Furthermore, Noah's efforts—which revealed his great yearning to leave the ark and fulfill the task that God had given him—in fact expedited God's command to leave the ark.

This lesson is particularly relevant and timely, as we approach the messianic era and the end of the exile.

119. Above, 7:20. 120. Above, 7:18. 121. See 1 Kings 17:6. 122. Below, v. 16.

ONKELOS

8 וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָה מֵאֲתוֹ לְרֹאוֹת הַקָּלֹו הַמַּיִם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: 9 וְלֹא־מָצָאָהּ הַיּוֹנָה מָנוּחַ לְכַף־רַגְלָהּ וַתֵּשֶׁב אֵלָיו אֶל־הַתֵּבָה בֵּי־מַיִם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו אֶל־הַתֵּבָה: 10 וַיַּחַל עוֹד שְׁבַעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּסָּף שְׁלַח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָה מִן־הַתֵּבָה: 11 וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו הַיּוֹנָה לֵעֵת עָרֵב וְהִנֵּה עֹלֶה־זֵית טָרֶף בְּפִיהָ וַיַּדַּע נָח בֵּי־קָלֹו הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ: 12 וַיַּיְחַל עוֹד שְׁבַעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָה וְלֹא־יָסָפָה שׁוֹב־אֵלָיו עוֹד: 13 וַיְהִי בָאֶחָת וַיִּשְׁׂמְאוֹת שָׁנָה בָּרֹאשׁוֹן בָּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ חָרְבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ וַיָּסֶר נָח אֶת־מִכְסֵּה הַתֵּבָה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה חָרְבוּ פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: 14 וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַשְּׁבַעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ יָבִשָׁה הָאָרֶץ: 8

RASHI

מזון, ודרשו: "בפיה" לשון מאמר, אמרה: יהיו מזונותי מרורין כזית בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, ולא מתוקין כדבש בידי בשר ודם: 12 וַיַּיְחַל. הוא לשון "ויחל", אלא שזה לשון "ויפעל" וזה לשון "ויתפעל", ויחל "וימתן, ויחל" — ויתמתן: 13 בָּרֹאשׁוֹן. לרבי אליעזר הוא תשרי, ולרבי יהושע הוא ניסן: חָרְבוּ. נעשה כמין טיט, שקרמו פניה של מעלה: 14 בַּשְּׁבַעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים. וירידתן בחודש השני ב"ז. אלו אחד עשר ימים שהחמה יתרה על הלכנה, שמשפט דור המבול שנה תמימה היה: יָבִשָׁה. נעשה גריד כהלכתה:

8 וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת הַיּוֹנָה. לסוף שבע ימים, שהרי כתיב: "ויחל עוד שבעת ימים אחרים", מכלל זה אתה למד שאף בראשונה הוחיל שבעה ימים: וַיִּשְׁלַח. אין זה לשון שליחות, אלא לשון שלום, שלחה ללכת לדרך, וקצו יראה אם קלו המים, שאם תמצא מנוח לא תשוב אליו: 10 וַיַּיְחַל. לשון המתנה, וכן: "לי שמעו ויחלו", והרבה יש במקרא: 11 טָרֶף בְּפִיהָ. אומר אני שזכר היה, לכן קוראו פעמים לשון זכר ופעמים לשון נקבה, לפי שכל יונה שבמקרא לשון נקבה, כמו: "כיונים על אפיקי מים רחצות"³⁵, "כיוני הגאיות כלם דמות"³⁶, "כיונה פותה"³⁷: טָרֶף. חטף. ומדרש אגדה³⁸ לשון

33. פסוק י. 34. איוב כט, כא. 35. שיר 36. יחזקאל ז, טו. 37. חושע ז, יא. 38. עירובין יח, ב.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

cries of "We want Mashiach now!" and "How much longer?" He will surely hasten the command of "Leave the ark," instructing us to leave the exile and enter a new world.¹³⁴

14 Exactly one solar year: Rashi refers to it not as a "solar" year but as a "complete" year. This idiom emphasizes that, spiritually, the year in which the Flood took place was not just a solar year, but rather the synthesis of a lunar year, which is 354 days, and a solar year—a complete year.

The explanation for this is rooted in the differences between studying the Torah and performing the commandments, on the one hand, and engaging in mun-

dane activities, on the other. The Torah and the commandments are like the sun since, like the sun, they are self-illuminating. Mundane activities, in contrast, are like the moon: lightless by nature until we illuminate them with properly-focused intentions.

Now, one would assume that since the Flood is a metaphor for engagement with the mundane, it should have lasted one *lunar* year. Why, then, did it last an extra eleven days to constitute a *complete* year?

The answer is that the *synthesis* of the two modes of action creates an additional element of completeness. For example, if we discuss the Torah while eating with others, we are considered to have "eaten at God's table."¹³⁵

134. *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, vol. 4, pp. 2407-2409.

8 Seven days later, on the 18th of Elul, Noah sent out the dove to see if the water had subsided from the surface of the earth. Here again, he knew that the dove, like the raven before it, would not return if it would find a place to land.

9 But the dove could not find any place to rest its feet, and it returned to him, to the ark, for there was still water over the entire surface of the earth. He stretched out his hand and took it, and brought it to himself into the ark.

10 He waited another seven days, until the 25th of Elul, and once again sent the dove out from the ark.

11 The dove came back to him toward evening, and behold, it had plucked an olive leaf with its beak. Olive trees are particularly hardy, so it makes sense that some had survived the flood. On the other hand, the flood had surely destroyed any foliage that might have been on these trees. The leaf that the dove had brought back looked fresh (and not like an old leaf that had been floating on the water for a year), and the appearance of the stem showed clearly that the dove had *plucked* it off the tree. These clues indicated that the water had subsided long enough ago to allow sufficient time for such a leaf to grow. Thus, even if the dove *had* plucked the leaf off a tree on a mountaintop, it would still mean that enough time had elapsed for the rest of the earth to dry up considerably.¹²⁶ Noah then knew that the water had subsided from the earth and it was time to prepare to disembark. By choosing to pluck an olive leaf, the dove intimated that it would rather receive food as bitter as olives directly from God than more palatable food from the hand of a human.

12 He waited yet another seven days, until the 2nd of Tishrei, and sent out the dove, and this time it never again returned to him.

13 In the year 1657, which was the six-hundred-and-first year of Noah's life, on the first day of Tishrei, the first month, the waters had drained off the earth. Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and saw that the earth's surface was drying, although it was still too damp to live on.

14 By the twenty-seventh day of Marcheshvan, the second month, the earth was completely dry. This was exactly one solar year (365 days) since the rain had first begun to fall, on the 17th of Marcheshvan. The Flood purified the world of its spiritual defilement and coarseness. For the first time,¹²⁷ the world became receptive to the process of self-initiated refinement. From this point on, it would be relatively easy to ascend the ladder of spiritual self-refinement and repent for misdeeds.¹²⁸

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

The exile can be compared to the Flood: just as the Flood created disorder and displacement,¹²⁹ so, too, the exile sows spiritual disorder and confusion.

The "true colors" of the world, i.e., the underlying Divine energy that sustains everything, is not openly visible in the physicality of this world. We cannot see that God's presence fills the earth¹³⁰ or that the world's true and ultimate purpose is to be a home for God. All of these truths are obscured.¹³¹ But the ultimate end of this "flood" of confusion is the removal of all impurity from the world,¹³² making it a pure and perfected

world that will never again experience the "flood" that is exile.¹³³

Yet even before that time comes, as we begin to sense that the floodwaters have subsided and that the time has arrived to emerge from the ark and behold a new world, we must do all we can to hasten the redemption.

Although, in the final analysis, it is God Himself who will bring the exile to an end, we should not await it passively. When God sees that we are actively yearning for the redemption and doing all in our power to hasten its immediate arrival, with our impassioned out-

^{126.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 30-35. ^{127.} With the exception of the Garden of Eden; see above, 2:14. ^{128.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 52-54. ^{129.} Above, 6:17. ^{130.} See Isaiah 6:3. ^{131.} See Isaiah 5:20. ^{132.} See Zachariah 13:2. ^{133.} See *Mechilta*, Exodus 15:1.

ONKELOS

15 ומליל יי עם נח למימר: 16 פוק מן תבותא את ואתמך ובניך ונשי בניך עמך: 17 כל חיותא דעמך מכל בשרא בעופא ובבעירא ובכל רחשא דרחש על ארעא אפק עמך ויתגידון בארעא ויפשו ויטגון על ארעא: 18 ונפק נח ובנוהי ואתתה ונשי בנוהי עמה: 19 כל חיותא כל רחשא וכל עופא כל דרחש על ארעא לורעיהון נפקו מן תבותא: 20 ובנא נח מדבחה קדם יי ונסיב מכל בעירא דכיתא ומכל עופא דכיתא ואסק עלון על מדבחה: 21 וקבל יי ברעוא ית קרבנה ואמר יי במימרה לא אוסף למילט עוד ית ארעא בדיל חובי אנשא ארי וצרא לכא דאנשא ביש מועירה ולא אוסיף עוד לממחי ית כל דחי כמא דעבדתי:

רביעי 15 וידבר אלהים אל־נח לאמר: 16 צא מן התבה אתה ואשתך ובניך ונשי־בניך אתך: 17 כל־החיה אשר־אתך מכל־בשר בעוף ובהמה ובכל־הרמש הרמש על־הארץ הוצא {היצא} אתך ושרצו בארץ ופרו ורבו על־הארץ: 18 ויצא־נח ובניו ואשתו ונשי־בניו אתו: 19 כל־החיה כל־הרמש וכל־העוף כל־רמש על־הארץ למשפחתיהם יצאו מן־התבה: 20 ויבן נח מזבח ליהוה ויקח מכל־הבהמה הטהרה ומכל־העוף הטהור ויעל עלת במזבח: 21 וירח יהוה את־ריח הניחח ויאמר יהוה אל־לבו לא אספֵּה לקלל עוד את־האדמה בעבור האדם כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעריו ולא־אספֵּה עוד להכות את־כל־חי באשר עשיתי:

RASHI

ברוך הוא להכניס מאלו שבועה שבועה, אלא כדי להקריב קרבן מהם: 21 מנערי. "מנערי" כתיב, משננער לצאת ממעי אמו נתן בו יצר הרע: לא אספֵּה ולא אספֵּה. כפל הדבר לשבועה, הוא שבתוב: "אשר נשבועתי מעבר מי נח", ולא מצינו כה שבועה אלא זו, שכל דבריו והיא שבועה. וכן דרשו חכמים במסכת "שבועות":⁴⁰

16 אתה ואשתך וגו'. איש ואשתו. כאן התיר להם תשמיש המטה: 17 הוצא. "הוצא" כתיב, "היצא" קרי. "היצא" — אמר להם שיצאו, "הוצא" — אם אינם רוצים לצאת הוציאם אתה: ושרצו בארץ. ולא בתבה, מגיד שאף הבהמה והעוף נאסרו בתשמיש: 19 למשפחתיהם. קבלו עליהם על מנת לדבק במינו: 20 מכל הבהמה הטהרה. אמר: לא צוה לי הקדוש

39. ישעיה נד, ט. 40. לו, א. השירים ה, יב.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

immersed in words of study and prayer, should influence our behavior outside it. But this will occur only if, during prayer and study, we remain completely oblivious to the existence of the world and only aware of Godliness. (Similarly, during the original ark's journey, the world was relatively "non-existent" since it was submerged underwater; even the planets had ceased revolving in their orbits.¹⁴⁵) Then, when we emerge from our ark and enter the world, we will behold, like Noah did, "a new world," and be ready to fulfill our mission in it.¹⁴⁶

You may now resume marital relations: This command—the first given to Noah in connection with leaving the ark—was meant not just to release Noah and the animals from the prohibition of cohabitation that had been in effect while in the ark, but also to convey the purpose of their leaving the ark. After the Flood obliterated all that was on the earth, it was Noah's job

to rebuild it through being fruitful and multiplying and ensuring that the animals did the same.

Procreation reveals God's infinite power here in this world, since it can potentially perpetuate a species from one generation to the next *ad infinitum*. Even though the ark was a lofty spiritual environment—or rather, precisely because it was so lofty and spiritual—it was not the place where God's infinite essence could dwell. It is only in the mundane world that we share in the experience of infinity by creating a home for God's infinite essence. This is why procreation, a reflection of God's infinite power, could not occur in the ark, but only outside it.¹⁴⁷

21 God smelled the appealing fragrance: The Midrash tells us that God smelled the fragrance of those who, in the future, would dedicate themselves to their Divine mission even to the point of self-sacrifice.¹⁴⁸ It then cites three examples: (a) Abraham, who, while in

144. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, pp. 32-33. 145. Y. Pesachim 1:1; Bereishit Rabbah 25:2 and 34:11. 146. Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 9-10. 147. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, pp. 31-32. 148. Bereishit Rabbah 34:9.

Leaving the Ark

◆ **Fourth Reading** 15 Neither Noah nor the animals wanted to leave the ark, for they knew that once they did, the animals would revert to their naturally aggressive behavior. Their peaceful coexistence was a taste of the heightened spiritual state of the messianic future.¹³⁶ Therefore,¹³⁷ **God spoke to Noah, saying,**

16 **“Leave the ark,** despite the spiritual descent you will undergo by doing so. Furthermore, you may now resume marital relations: **you may live together with your wife, and your sons may live together with your son’s wives.**

17 **All living creatures from all flesh—birds, livestock, and all the reptiles that crawl upon the ground—tell them to leave with you,** and if they prefer to stay in the ark, take them out forcibly. Outside the ark, **they will be allowed¹³⁸ to teem on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”**

18 **Noah went out,** but he did not resume marital relations. He continued to live together **with his sons, and his wife** continued to live **with his sons’ wives.** Noah was reluctant to have more children, for he was afraid that history might repeat itself: humanity might again sin and bring upon itself another flood. What was the purpose of repopulating the world if it might ultimately be destroyed?¹³⁹

19 **All the beasts, all the reptiles, all the birds, all the creatures that crawl upon the ground came out of the ark by families.** They reaffirmed their commitment¹⁴⁰ not to engage in crossbreeding.

20 **Noah** correctly intuited that God had commanded him to take an additional number of ritually pure animals to offer them as sacrifices when he left the ark. So he **built an altar to God. He took some of every species of ritually pure livestock and of every kind of ritually pure bird, and he offered them up as ascent-offerings on the altar.** An ascent-offering is one in which the meat of the animal is entirely consumed by fire on an altar.¹⁴¹

21 **God** figuratively **smelled the appeasing fragrance, and God said to Himself,** “I hereby swear that **I will never again curse the soil because of humanity, for the inclination of a person’s heart is challenged by his evil inclination from his earliest youth,** i.e., from birth. **Never again will I strike down all life as I have done.**

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

This is what is meant by a *complete* year, the synthesis of sun and moon. When we go into “lunar mode,” the descent into the “floodwaters” of our mundane, worldly activities, we must also illuminate them with the “sun,” the self-illuminating acts of studying the Torah and observing the commandments.¹⁴²

16 **Leave the ark:** As we have seen, “entering the ark” is a metaphor for enveloping oneself in the words of Torah study and prayer. It may be tempting to remain in this protective spiritual atmosphere, and its serene perfection might delude us into thinking that there really is no need to perfect the world around us. We are nevertheless instructed to leave it, for the true purpose of entering the ark is to ultimately emerge from it, en-

ter the world, and transform it into God’s home. (This is reflected in the law that one only becomes purified through immersion in a *mikveh* after having *emerged* from its waters.¹⁴³)

We should not view the departure from our personal ark as self-sacrifice for the sake of others, since leaving the ark benefits and completes us, as well. As lofty as the levels we can attain in our own arks may be, they are nonetheless finite. Such levels are incomparable to the levels we can reach through our work in the “real world,” in which God provides us with the opportunity to share in the experience of infinity by creating a home for His infinite essence.¹⁴⁴

The time that we spend inside our own personal ark,

135. See Isaiah 11:6. 136. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 28-31. 137. See above, 6:18. 138. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 34. 139. See above, 6:20. 140. Leviticus 1:9, etc. 141. *Avot* 3:3. 142. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 288-291. 143. *Mishneh Torah*, *Avot HaTumah* 6:16; see *Kesef Mishnah ad loc.*; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 1, p. 14.

22 עַד כָּל־יְמֵי הָאָרֶץ יִרְעֶה וְקִצִּיר וְקָר וְחֹם וְקֹץ וְחֶרֶף
וַיּוֹם וְלַיְלָה לֹא יִשְׁכַּתוּ: 9:1 וַיַּבְרֹךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נָח וְאֶת־
בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

זמן לקיטת תאנים וזמן שמבישים אותן בשדות. ושמו "קניץ", כמו⁴²: "והלחם והקניץ לאכל הנערים": **חום**. הוא סוף ימות החמה, חצי אב ואילול וחצי תשרי, שהעולם חם ביותר, כמו ששנינו במסכת יומא⁴³: שלחי קיטא קשי מקיטא: **יום ולילה לא ישבתו**. מכלל ששבתו כל ימות המבול, שלא שמשו המזלות ולא נבר בין יום ובין לילה: **לא ישבתו**. לא יפסקו כל אלה מלהתנהג בסדרן:

22 עַד כָּל יְמֵי הָאָרֶץ וְגו' לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ. שֵׁשׁ עֲתִים הִלָּלוּ, שְׁנֵי יָדָשִׁים לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, כְּמוֹ שֶׁשָּׁנִינוּ⁴¹: חֲצִי תִשְׁרִי וּמִרְחֹשׁוֹן וְחֲצִי כֶסֶל — זֶרַע, חֲצִי כֶסֶל וְטַבַּת וְחֲצִי שָׁבֵט — קוֹר וְכו', בְּבִכָּא מְצִיעָא: **קוֹר**. קָשָׁה מִדּוּרָה: **חֲרָף**. עַת זֶרַע שְׁעוּרִים וְקִטְנִיּוֹת הַחֲרִיפִּין לְהַתְבַּשֵּׁל מֵהָר, קוֹר הוּא חֲצִי שָׁבֵט וְאָדָר וְחֲצִי נִיסָן: **חֲצִי נִיסָן** וְאִיר וְחֲצִי סִינ: **קִיץ**. חֲצִי סִינ תִּמּוֹז וְחֲצִי אֵב, הוּא

41. בבא מציעא קו, ב. 42. שמואל'ב טז, ב. 43. כט, א.

imagine that all the procedures being performed on the animal are actually being performed on *us*, causing our ego and body to be elevated to God. This also creates a “fragrance” that reaches God, although not to His actual *essence*, from which the stability of nature descends.¹⁶¹⁾

The inclination of a person's heart is evil from his youth: This statement, employed in this verse as an argument why human beings should *not* be destroyed, appears earlier¹⁶² as an argument for precisely the opposite, i.e., why they *should* be destroyed!

The explanation of this seeming contradiction is as follows: Noah's sacrificial offerings caused the selfsame argument that called for God's use of His attribute of strict judgment to now dictate employing His aspect of kindness and mercy. In this lies the incredible spiritual power of the sacrifices.

It is the same in our own personal lives: when we “sacrifice” ourselves by supra-rationally forgoing our own desires in favor of doing God’s will, we merit to receive the same kind of treatment from on High: evidence that would normally be used against us will be used in our favor.¹⁶³

22 Seedtime and harvest...day and night will not cease: The purpose of creation is to achieve a synthesis of the spiritual and the physical, which Abraham began and was consummated with the Giving of the Torah. But in order to create this synthesis, both the spiritual and the physical had to be present in the world.

As mentioned, before the Flood, the justification for the world's existence had to come from a level of God's consciousness that transcends the world, since on its own merit, the world did not deserve to exist. After the Flood, justification for the world's existence could come from the now-purified world itself. These two eras served as a prelude to reality after the Giving of

the Torah, in which humanity's task is to unite these two realms: the physical world with the Godliness that transcends the world. In order for this synthesis to take place, both modes of existence had to have had their time in the world.

Furthermore, in order for us to effect the synthesis of creation and transcendence, God created the world with an inherent element of transcendence, namely the Sabbath. (The creation of the world is therefore considered to have been complete *not* after the six days of creation, but after the Sabbath,¹⁶⁴ when the concept of transcendence over creation was introduced.¹⁶⁵)

Although the world remains in motion on the Sabbath, operating within time and space, we, through keeping the laws of the Sabbath, experience transcendence over creation. (One who keeps the Sabbath thus experiences emotional changes—for example, the Talmud takes it for granted that a usually-dishonest person will not lie on the Sabbath.¹⁶⁶ We even experience physiological changes, such as in our complexion¹⁶⁷ and pulse rate,¹⁶⁸ as well as even changes in our perception of the taste of food.¹⁶⁹)

We thus effect the synthesis of creation and transcendence by experiencing transcendence within creation. This is why a non-Jew is allowed to perform commandments besides those included in Noahide law, but after the Flood is prohibited from keeping the Sabbath in all its detail.¹⁷⁰ The Divine mission of the non-Jew is to keep the world in existence, to perpetuate God's promise that the world will exist unchangingly as a reflection of God's immutability. In contrast, it is the Jew's task to introduce the transcendence of Sabbath into a world in motion, synthesizing the two.¹⁷¹

Be fruitful and multiply: The very first commandment with which humanity was entrusted after having experienced mass destruction was to “be fruitful and multiply,” to populate the world anew. The same holds

161. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5739-5740, pp. 302-303. **162.** Above, 6:5. **163.** *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5700, pp. 5, 12-13. **164.** See Rashi on 2:2, above. **165.** See *Tiferet Yisrael*, chapter 40. **166.** *Y. Demai* 4:1. **167.** *Bereishit Rabbah* 11:2; see commentators on *Shulchan Aruch*, *Even HaEzer* 62:8. **168.** *Torat Chaim*, *VaYakhel* 632a. **169.** *Shabbat* 119a. **170.** See *Sa hedrin* 58b. **171.** *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 51-55.

22 As long as the earth lasts, none of the seasons—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter (see figure 9)—nor day and night, will ever cease.”¹⁴⁹

9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. I promise you that you will be fertile.¹⁵⁰ As for your fear about having more children, I tell you now that I have promised not to destroy the world again.

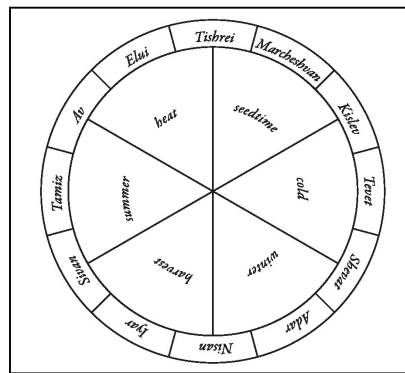


Figure 9: The Seasons

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

the court of Nimrod, chose to be forced into a fiery furnace rather than accept idolatry (and was subsequently miraculously saved);¹⁵¹ (b) Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who, while in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, acted in the same manner as Abraham;¹⁵² and (c) those of our pre-messianic generation who, despite living under conditions of intolerable persecution, would nonetheless remain passionately committed to their Divine mission.

Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah exhibited greater self-sacrifice than Abraham, since God’s presence was more hidden in their time than it was in Abraham’s. Idolaters had invaded and desecrated God’s Temple and the Jewish people were in exile.¹⁵³ Yet despite this challenge to their faith, they remained committed to God.

But our generation has shown even greater self-sacrifice, since it follows a lengthy exile, rife with horrific persecutions. This generation can surely ask: “How is it possible that all we’ve already suffered through is not enough? Why are we still languishing in an exile that is so permeated with intense spiritual darkness? We have witnessed so many horrific occurrences that cannot possibly be explained in any way. We see that even those who fulfilled God’s commandments—which should certainly have afforded them His pro-

tection¹⁵⁴—have unfortunately met with unspeakable fates.” And yet, despite God’s nearly-total concealment, many of this generation have remained unfalteringly committed to their Divine mission. Indeed, when Moses foresaw this generation, he was humbled.¹⁵⁵

And it was indeed the sweet fragrance of these very individuals from our generation that “inspired” God to promise that day and night would never again cease:

It is not within the capacity of nature to be eternal and unchanging. Therefore, God’s promise that the laws of nature would *not* cease means that it would be imbued with the Godly attribute of infinity and immutability, as expressed in the verse: “I am God; I have not changed.”¹⁵⁶

(Once nature became constant, it became a reflection of God’s eternal and immutable essence. In this aspect, interestingly, nature serves as a more precise reflection of God’s greatness than do miracles.)

When God saw those who would continue to engage in their spiritual work with self-sacrifice and unabated enthusiasm despite His concealment, and that their commitment would be stable and unchanging, He correspondingly endowed nature with the same stability.¹⁵⁷

(Parenthetically, Noah’s offerings resembled self-sacrifice. When we offer a sacrifice, we are intended to

A CLOSER LOOK

[22] Seedtime and harvest...day and night will not cease: As mentioned above,¹⁵⁸ God’s promise after the Flood to never again destroy humanity gave the world a strength and stability it did not previously possess. Still, even after this promise, miraculous phenomena continued to occur, as exceptions to the rule.

The dichotomy between the stability of nature and individual miraculous events is reflected in the dichotomy between the six days of the workweek

and the Sabbath.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the sun, whose light is constant, alludes to that which contravenes nature’s constancy, namely, miracles. Therefore, since our holidays commemorate miraculous events and revelations of Godliness that transcended nature, they fall on a particular day of the month, whose beginning and end is determined by the orbit of the moon, and not on a particular day of the week, whose beginning and end is determined by seven consecutive orbits of the sun.¹⁶⁰

149. See above, 7:10. 150. Rashi on 9:7, below; see *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, p. 28, note 44. 151. Below, 11:28. 152. Daniel 3:1-30; 1:7. 153. Yoma 69b. 154. *Pesachim* 8b. 155. *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5679, p. 464. 156. Malachi 3:6. 157. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 35; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5740, p. 38-39. 158. On v. 21. 159. See *Inner Dimensions* on this verse. 160. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 45.

ONKELOS

2 וְדַחַלְתְּכוֹן וְאִימְתְּכוֹן תְּהִי עַל כָּל חַיּוֹת אֶרֶץ וְעַל כָּל עוֹפֵי דְשָׁמַיָא בְּכָל דִּי תִרְחִישׁ אֶרֶץ וּבְכָל נוּנִי יִמָּא בִּידְכוֹן יְהוֹן מְסִירִין: 3 כָּל רִחְשָׁא דְהוּא חַי לְכוֹן יְהֵא לְמִיכַל בִּירוּק עֲשָׂבָא וְהַבִּית לְכוֹן יְת כָּלֵא: 4 בְּרֵם בְּשָׂרָא בְּנִפְשָׁה דְּמֵה לֵא תִיכְלוּן: 5 וּבְרֵם יְת דְּמִכּוֹן לְנִפְשָׁתְכוֹן אֲתַבַּע מִיד כָּל חַיִּיתָא אֲתַבַּעֵנָה וּמִיד אֲנָשָׁא מִיד גְּבֵר דְּיִשׁוּד יְת דְּמָא דְּאֲחוּהִי אֲתַבַּע יְת נִפְשָׁא דְּאֲנָשָׁא: 6 דְּיִשׁוּד דְּמָא דְּאֲנָשָׁא בְּסִדְדִין עַל מִימֵר דְּיִנְיָא דְּמֵה יְתִשָּׁד אֲרִי בְּצִלְם אֱלֹהִים עֲבַד יְת אֲנָשָׁא:

2 וּמוֹרָאֲכֶם וְהִתְכֶם יִהְיֶה עַל כָּל־חַיֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְעַל כָּל־
עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּרְמֹשׁ הָאָדָמָה וּבְכָל־דְּגֵי
הַיָּם בְּיַדְכֶם נִתְּנוּ: 3 כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה
לְאֹכְלָה בִּירֶק עֵשֶׂב נִתְּתִי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל: 4 אֶדְ-בְּשָׂר
בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ: 5 וְאֵף אֶת־דְּמִכֶם לְנִפְשָׁתֵיכֶם
אֲדַרְשׁ מִיד כָּל־חַיָּה אֲדַרְשְׁנָהּ וּמִיד הָאָדָם מִיד אִישׁ
אֲחִיו אֲדַרְשׁ אֶת־נִפְשׁ הָאָדָם: 6 שִׁפְךָ דָּם הָאָדָם בָּאָדָם
דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ בִּי בְּצִלְם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם:

RASHI

יִצָּא מִמֶּנּוּ דָם: מִיד כָּל חַיָּה. לְפִי שְׁחָטָאוֹ דוֹר הַמְּבּוּל
וְהִפְקִירוֹ לְמֹאכֵל חַיּוֹת רְעוּת לְשֹׁלֵט בָּהֶן, שְׁנֵאֲמַר:
”נִמְשָׁל בְּהֵמוֹת נְדָמוֹ”, לְפִיכָף הִצְרָךְ לְהוֹדִיר עֲלֵיהֶן
אֶת הַחַיּוֹת: וּמִיד הָאָדָם. מִיד הַהוֹרֵג בְּמוֹיֵד וְאִין עֲדִים,
אֲנִי אֲדַרְשׁ: מִיד אִישׁ אֲחִיו. מִיד שֶׁהוּא אוֹהֵב לוֹ בָּאֵח
וְהָרֹגוֹ שׁוֹגֵג, אֲנִי אֲדַרְשׁ אִם לֹא יִגְלֶה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ עַל עֲוֹנוֹ
לְמַחֵל, שֶׁאֵף הַשׁוֹגֵג צָרִיךְ כְּפָרָה. וְאִם אִין עֲדִים לְחִיבוֹ
גְלוּת, וְהוּא אִינוֹ נִכְנָע, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ.
כְּמוֹ שֶׁדָּרְשׁוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְכוּנֵם לְכַרְכָּה: ”וְהָאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה
לִידוֹ”⁴⁷, בְּמִסְכַּת ”מִכּוֹת”⁴⁸: הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְזַמֵּן
לְפָנֶיךָ אֶחָד וְכוּ': 6 בָּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ. אִם יֵשׁ עֲדִים —
הַמִּיתוּהוּ אֲתָם, לְמָה? ”כִּי בְּצִלְם אֱלֹהִים” וְגו': עָשָׂה אֶת
הָאָדָם. זֶה מִקְרָא חֹסֵר, וְצָרִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת: ”עָשָׂה הָעוֹשֶׂה אֶת
הָאָדָם”, וְכֵן הִרְבֵּה בְּמִקְרָא:

2 וְהִתְכֶם. וְאִימְתְּכֶם, כְּמוֹ⁴⁴: ”תִּרְאוּ חַתָּת”. וְאֲגִידָה:
לְשׁוֹן ”חַיּוֹת”, שֶׁכָּל זֶמֶן שֶׁהִתְיַנּוּק בֶּן יוֹמוֹ חַי, אִין אֲתָה
צָרִיךְ לְשַׁמְרוֹ מִן הָעֶבְרִים. עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבֶּשֶׁן מֵת, צָרִיךְ
לְשׁוּמְרוֹ מִן הָעֶבְרִים, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: ”וּמוֹרָאֲכֶם וְהִתְכֶם
יִהְיֶה” — אִימְתִּי יִהְיֶה מוֹרָאֲכֶם עַל הַחַיּוֹת, כָּל זֶמֶן
שֶׁאֲתָם חַיִּים: 3 לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָה. שֶׁלֹּא הִרְשִׁיתִי
לְאָדָם הָרָאוּשׁוֹן לְאָכֵל בְּשָׂר אֶלָּא יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב, וְלָכֶם —
”בִּירֶק עֵשֶׂב” שֶׁהִפְקִרְתִּי לְאָדָם הָרָאוּשׁוֹן, ”נִתְּתִי לָכֶם
אֶת כָּל־: 4 בְּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ. אֲסִר לָהֶם אֶכֶר מִן הַחַי,
כְּלוּמֹר כָּל זֶמֶן שֶׁנִּפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ הַבְּשָׂר: בְּנִפְשׁוֹ
דָּמוֹ. בְּעוֹד נִפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ: בְּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ. הֲרִי
אֶכֶר מִן הַחַי. וְאֵף ”בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ” — הֲרִי דָם
מִן הַחַי: 5 וְאֵף אֶת דְּמִכֶם. אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהִתְרִיתִי לָכֶם
נְטִילַת נִפְשָׁה בְּהִמָּה, אֶת דְּמִכֶם אֲדַרְשׁ מִהַשׁוּפָּךְ דָּם
עֲצָמוֹ: לְנִפְשָׁתֵיכֶם. אֵף הַחוּזֵק עֲצָמוֹ, אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹּא

44. איוב ו, כא. 45. בראשית רבה לד, יב. 46. תהלים מט, יג. 47. שמות כא, יג. 48. י, ב.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

true in our post-Holocaust generation: after witnessing the obliteration of a massive segment of our people, the first-and-foremost obligation incumbent upon the survivors and their descendants, and their holy privilege as well, is to rebuild the Jewish people physically.¹⁷⁸

We should not be satisfied with the minimum number required by Torah law, namely one son and one daughter: Maimonides rules that, as long as one is still physically able to bear more children, one should continue to do so.¹⁷⁹ This ruling is alluded to in the difference between God's command to Adam and His command

to Noah: Whereas Adam was commanded to procreate even *before* he had any children, Noah is here commanded to procreate *after* he already had fathered three children.

The same holds true for spiritual procreation, i.e., educating our pupils: We should not be satisfied with having taught pupils in our younger years; we must continue to educate new pupils as we grow older.¹⁸⁰

178. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, p. 33. 179. Mishneh Torah, Ishut 15:16. 180. Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, pp. 28-29.

2 Furthermore, neither do you need to be concerned that your offspring's lives will be endangered. As it was before the degeneration of humanity prior to the flood,¹⁷² **there shall be a fear and dread of you upon all the beasts of the earth and upon all the birds of the sky, in all that will crawl on the land and in all the fish of the sea.** They will no longer try to devour you when you are alive. Rather, **they have been placed in your hand:**

3 **Every moving creature that lives shall be yours to eat; like plant vegetation, I have now given you everything.** Until now, I forbade humanity from killing animals for food, because I was afraid that, given this power over life and death, people would delude themselves into thinking that they had godlike dominion over the world.¹⁷³ But because humanity has become weaker and needs to eat meat to subsist, I am allowing these health considerations to override this former prohibition.¹⁷⁴ Also, because the spiritual makeup of the world is now more conducive to self-refinement, there is less danger of you becoming coarsened by eating meat.¹⁷⁵

4 **But nevertheless, you may not eat the flesh** of a still-living creature, **nor its blood.**

5 Although I have allowed you to kill animals, **nevertheless,** do not think that I have given you absolute power over life and death, not even your own. In fact, you may not even cause yourselves to bleed unnecessarily;¹⁷⁶ if you do, **I will settle the account of the blood** you shed by punishing you. If you take **your own lives** by committing suicide—even without shedding blood, as, for example, by strangulation—I will punish you in the afterlife.

Human life is so precious that, now that I have again forbidden the animals to kill you, **I will settle the account from the hand of every wild beast** that kills one of you, by killing it in turn.¹⁷⁷

Neither may you kill other people. I will empower the courts to punish anyone who commits a witnessed act of murder: intentional murder is to be punishable by death and unintentional manslaughter is to be punishable by exile. **I will settle the account for human life** Myself whenever the courts cannot, both **from someone** who commits an intentional but unwitnessed murder and **from someone** who commits unintentional manslaughter—i.e., who is on as good terms with his victim as he is with his **own brother** but kills him accidentally. I will arrange for the accidental manslayer to accidentally kill the murderer in the presence of witnesses; thus the murderer will receive his death penalty and the court will sentence the manslayer to exile to atone for his carelessness. If, however, the unwitnessed manslayer goes into exile voluntarily, I will arrange for the murderer to be killed in another fashion.

6 In contrast, **whoever** intentionally **sheds human blood,** was warned not to do so, and was witnessed doing so, **his blood shall be shed by the human court, for God made man in the image of God.** The murderer is guilty of diminishing the image of God on earth and has thus forfeited his right to live.

¹⁷². Above, 6:2. Rashi on 4:15. ¹⁷³. See above, 1:29. ¹⁷⁴. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 11. ¹⁷⁵. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 53, note 37. ¹⁷⁶. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 146. ¹⁷⁷. Abarbanel.

ONKELOS

7 וְאַתָּה פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ שְׂרָצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְבוּ בָהּ: 8 חֲמִישִׁי 8 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ וְאֶל־בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר: 9 וְאַנִּי הִנְנִי מַקִּים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זֶרְעֵכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם: 10 וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם בְּעוֹף בְּבִהֵמָה וּבְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ אִתְּכֶם מִכָּל יֹצְאֵי הַתֵּבָה לְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ: 11 וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת כָּל־בָּשָׂר עוֹד מִמִּי הַמִּבּוּל וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד מִבּוּל לְשִׁחַת הָאָרֶץ:

7 וְאַתָּה פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ שְׂרָצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְבוּ בָהּ: 8 חֲמִישִׁי 8 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ וְאֶל־בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר:

9 וְאַנִּי הִנְנִי מַקִּים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זֶרְעֵכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם: 10 וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם בְּעוֹף בְּבִהֵמָה וּבְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ אִתְּכֶם מִכָּל יֹצְאֵי הַתֵּבָה לְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ: 11 וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת כָּל־בָּשָׂר עוֹד מִמִּי הַמִּבּוּל וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד מִבּוּל לְשִׁחַת הָאָרֶץ:

RASHI

ברית להבטחת, ואתן לה אות: 10 חית הארץ אתכם. הם המיתולוגיים עם הבריות: מכל יצאי התבה. להביא שקצים ורמשים: לכל חית הארץ. להביא המזיקין, שאינן בכלל "החיה אשר אתכם", שאין הלוכל עם הבריות: 11 והקמתי. אעשה קיום לבריתי. ומהו קיומו? "את הקשת", כמו שמסים והולך:

7 וְאַתָּה פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ. לפי פשוטו: הראשונה לברכה, וכן לאצווי. ולפי מדרשו: להקיש מי שאינו עוסק בפריה ורביה לשופך דמים: 9 וְאַנִּי הִנְנִי. מסכים אני עמך, שהיה נח דואג לעסוק בפריה ורביה, עד שהבטיחו הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא לשחת העולם עוד, וכן עשה. ובאחרונה אמר לו: הנני מסכים לעשות קיום וחזק

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

proach the messianic age: According to the Talmud, the Messiah will not come until all the souls have descended from their heavenly "storehouse" and experienced life in this physical world.¹⁸⁵ Thus, every child that is born brings us one step closer to the messianic era.

There are, of course, exceptions to the rule. In some instances, the Torah actually forbids parents to have another child, usually because of severe health concerns or danger to life. Such cases must be brought before a competent rabbinic authority, and never be determined by our own subjective pessimistic apprehensions.¹⁸⁶

9 I am setting up My covenant with you: The objective of this covenant was not solely the physical maintenance of the world. Its deeper intention was that the world operate in accordance with the ultimate purpose for which it was created,¹⁸⁷ that it assist the Jewish people in fulfilling its Divine mission. True, we have not yet seen the fulfillment of this promise; on the contrary, we have sadly suffered far too much and undergone far too horrific religious and physical persecution. Nevertheless, by clinging tenaciously to our heartfelt hopes and fervently praying that we should never again undergo or witness such horrors, while at the same time dedicating ourselves to our Divine mission with joy and alacrity, we can bring about the fulfillment of God's intention that the world assist us in our Divine mission. When that occurs, even those nations who

formerly persecuted us will be transformed into our allies.¹⁸⁸ **11 Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth:** As we have seen,¹⁸⁹ in the supernal narrative, the Flood was a reversion to the initial state of creation, in which the earth was physically submerged under water and spiritually submerged in Divine awareness. From this perspective, God's promise to never again bring a flood seems puzzling: why shouldn't He?

The explanation is as follows: At the very beginning of creation, all was water because dry land did not yet exist.¹⁹⁰ On the spiritual level, this means that the world was filled with Divine awareness because dry land, which represents the façade of a self-sustained world independent of God, did not yet exist.

God's ultimate desire, however, is that Divine awareness permeate even a world with "dry land," i.e., self-awareness. Indeed, this will be the state of the world in the messianic age, when "the world will be filled with the knowledge of God like water covers the seabed."¹⁹¹ At that time, even though the world will not be covered by water and we will still be in a state of self-awareness, we will nevertheless enjoy the Divine awareness normally associated with submersion under water, i.e., self-nullification.

However, for the earth to reach this stage, it first had to have been immersed in the waters of the Flood, which "destroyed the earth," i.e., which nullified the earth's

185. *Yevamot* 62a. 186. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 34-37. 187. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 34. 188. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5740, p. 41. 189. On 7:12, above. 190. See *Korban HaEidah* on *Y. Chagigah* 2:1. 191. *Isaiah* 11:9.

7 And as for you, I now command you: be fruitful and multiply, proliferate upon the earth, and make it populous. If you or your descendants refrain from procreating, I will consider it tantamount to committing murder.”

In addition to what God explicitly commanded them, Noah’s children undertook to show honor to their parents and forswore licentiousness, understanding that these principles are the foundation of the just society that had been undermined by the generations preceding the Flood.¹⁸¹

◆ **Fifth Reading 8** Nonetheless, Noah was still hesitant to procreate, so **God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him again, saying,**

9 “I hereby fortify My promise. I am establishing My covenant to seal My promise with you and with your offspring after you,

10 with every living creature that is with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the harmless beasts of the earth who live with you—with all crawling creatures who left the ark, and with every living being on earth that is harmful to human beings.

11 Furthermore, I will confirm My covenant with you by giving you a sign that I am bound by it, and thus you can rest assured that never again will any flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy the earth or any part of it.”

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

8 Noah was still hesitant to procreate: Noah’s initial doubts were not completely allayed by God’s assurance. Even if his yet-to-be-born, hypothetically sinful descendants would not be *physically* destroyed, they would still be *spiritually* lost. (And surely Noah’s primary concern was for his children’s *spiritual* state.) Why, then, did God’s assurance succeed in changing Noah’s mind?

Like Noah, some people harbor doubts about the prudence of having children. They argue that raising children is an awesome responsibility. Some wonder whether they have the capacity to raise children who will grow into healthy adults, both physically and spiritually. Such people therefore focus on first achieving financial security and/or spiritual preparedness, and only then start thinking about having children.

But from Noah we learn the fallacy of this approach. Once God commanded him to have children, he no longer hesitated to procreate, despite his apprehensions about his descendants’ spiritual future. Because ultimately, it is not our job to predict the future but to fulfill God’s will. If God tells us to have children, we should not let our doubts prevent us from doing so.

Even if we somehow foresee a less-than-perfect spiritual future for our children, we would still not be justified in refraining from having them. King Hezekiah saw prophetically that he would have immoral chil-

dren and therefore refrained from procreating. The prophet Isaiah rebuked him for this, saying, “God’s mysteries are no business of yours. You must do what you are commanded.”¹⁸²

Certainly, then, when we only entertain *uncertainties* about our children’s spiritual future, we should not refrain from fulfilling God’s command. (Furthermore, in Hezekiah’s case, we see that a number of very righteous kings eventually descended from him.)

We should also not be concerned about the financial responsibilities that raising children entails. Since God is the one who commands us to have children, it is axiomatic that, for each additional child born, He will open up an additional channel of blessing and sustenance.

Likewise, we should not worry that we might lack the physical or emotional strength to raise many children,¹⁸³ for God does not ask of us anything that is beyond our capabilities.¹⁸⁴ In fact, having many children actually promotes physical and spiritual wellbeing. In contrast to the popular notion that having many children is not conducive to living a calm and stable life, the truth is that having too *few* children is unnatural and can lead to anxiety, marital disharmony, and the disruption of family life.

All of the above has always held true, but its truth is especially relevant in our present generation, as we ap-

¹⁸¹ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 147; *ibid.*, p. 153, note 30, based on Rashi on 9:23, 11:32, 34:7, and 37:34, below. See also below, 38:26.
¹⁸² *Berachot* 10a. ¹⁸³ See *Mishneh Torah*, *Ishut* 15:16. ¹⁸⁴ *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:3.

ONKELOS

12 וַאֲמַר יי דא אַת קים די אַנא יִהְיֶה בֵּין מִימְרֵי וּבִינִיכּוֹן וּבִין כָּל נִפְשָׁא חַיָּתָא דִּי עִמּוֹכּוֹן לְדָרִי עֲלֵמָא: 13 יְת קִשְׁתִּי יִהְיֶית בַּעֲנָנָא וְתִהִי לֵאֵת קִים בֵּין מִימְרֵי וּבִין אֲרָעָא: 14 וְיִהִי בַּעֲנֻנִיתִי עֲנָנָא עַל אֲרָעָא וְתִתְחַזִּי קִשְׁתָּא בַּעֲנָנָא: 15 וְאֲדַכֵּר יְת קִימִי דִּי בֵּין מִימְרֵי וּבִינִיכּוֹן וּבִין כָּל נִפְשָׁא חַיָּתָא בְּכָל בִּשְׂרָא וְלֹא יִהִי עוֹד מִיָּא לְטוֹפְנָא לְחִבְלָא כָּל בִּשְׂרָא: 16 וְתִהִי קִשְׁתָּא בַּעֲנָנָא וְאֲחֻזָּה לְדַכְרֹן קִים עֲלֵם בֵּין מִימְרָא דִּי וּבִין כָּל נִפְשָׁא חַיָּתָא בְּכָל בִּשְׂרָא דִּי עַל אֲרָעָא: 17 וַאֲמַר יי לֵנַח דָּא אַת קִים דִּי אֲקִימִית בֵּין מִימְרֵי וּבִין כָּל בִּשְׂרָא דִּי עַל אֲרָעָא: 18 וְהוּוּ בְּנִי נַח דִּי נִפְקוּ מִן תְּבוּרָתָא שֵׁם וָחַם וְיִפֹּת וָחַם הוּא אֲבוּדִי דְכָנָעַן:

12 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים זֹאת אוֹת־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם לְדֹרֹת עוֹלָם: 13 אֶת־קִשְׁתִּי נִתְּתִי בַּעֲנָן וְהִיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ: 14 וְהָיָה בַּעֲנָנִי עָנָן עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִרְאָתָה הַקִּשְׁתַּת בַּעֲנָן: 15 וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל־בִּשְׂרָא וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד הַמָּיִם לְמַבּוּל לְשַׁחַת כָּל־בִּשְׂרָא: 16 וְהִיְתָה הַקִּשְׁתַּת בַּעֲנָן וְרָאִיתִיהָ לְזָכֹר בְּרִית עוֹלָם בֵּין אֱלֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל־בִּשְׂרָא אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 17 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ זֹאת אוֹת־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר הִקְמַתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵין כָּל־בִּשְׂרָא אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: פ

ששי 18 וַיְהִי בְּנִי־נֹחַ הַיִּצְחָאִים מִן־הַתֵּבָה שֵׁם וָחַם וְיִפֹּת וָחַם הוּא אֲבִי כְנַעַן:

RASHI

לְקַטְרֵג עֲלֵיכֶם לְחַיֵּב אֶתְכֶם, אֲנִי רוֹאֶה אֶת הָאוֹת וְנֹכַח: 17 זֹאת אוֹת הַבְּרִית. הָרָאוּהוּ הַקִּשְׁתַּת, וַאֲמַר לוֹ: הָרִי הָאוֹת שְׂאֵמֶרְתִּי: 18 וָחַם הוּא אֲבִי כְנַעַן. לָמָּה הִצְרִיף לוֹמַר כֹּאן? לְפִי שֶׁהִפְרָשָׁה עֲסוּקָה וְכָאֵה בְּשִׁכְרוֹתוֹ שֶׁל נֹחַ שֶׁקִּלְקַל בָּהּ חָם, וְעַל יָדוֹ נִתְקַלַּל כְּנַעַן, וְעַדִּין לֹא כָּתַב תּוֹלְדוֹת חָם וְלֹא יִדְעֵנוּ שֶׁכְּנַעַן כְּנֹ, לְפִיכָּהּ הִצְרִיף לוֹמַר כֹּאן: "וָחַם הוּא אֲבִי כְנַעַן":

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

sense of self. This one-time experience conditioned the earth to be able to later attain Divine awareness—even after the waters receded and the earth reverted to dry land. The Midrash¹⁹⁷ therefore compares the messianic age to the days of Noah, since the Flood initiated the process of conditioning the world for its ultimate state—Divine awareness despite the presence of self—which it will attain in the messianic age.

Once this conditioning occurred, God promised never to Flood the earth again, in keeping with His original intention for the world to exist in its “natural” state and still be a vessel for Divine awareness.

In fulfilling our own Divine mission on earth, we also experience a period of immersion in the waters of Divine awareness: the High Holy Days of the month of Tishrei. Our challenge is to successfully experience Divine awareness even after Tishrei, when the “waters

12 לְדֹרֹת עוֹלָם. נִכְתַּב חֹסֶר, שֵׁיִשׁ דּוֹרוֹת שֶׁלֹּא הִצְרִיכוּ לְאוֹת, לְפִי שֶׁצְדִּיקִים גְּמוּרִים הָיוּ, כְּמוֹ דּוֹרוֹ שֶׁל חֻזְקִיהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה, וְדוֹרוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאי: 14 בַּעֲנָנִי עָנָן. כְּשֶׁתַּעֲלֶה בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה לִפְנֵי לְהִבִּיא חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֲבִדוֹן לְעוֹלָם: 16 בֵּין אֱלֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה. בֵּין מֵדֶת הַדִּין שֶׁל מַעֲלָה וּבִינֵיכֶם, שֶׁהִיָּה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב: “בֵּינִי וּבֵין כָּל נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה”, אֲלֵא וְהוּוּ מִדְּרָשׁוֹ: כְּשֶׁתִּבְאֵר מֵדֶת הַדִּין

have receded” and our “dry” self has emerged.¹⁹⁸

18 Ham was the father of Canaan: *Ham* means “hot.” Metaphorically, Ham alludes to the soul’s ardent desire and yearning to draw near and cleave to God.

Canaan, which is sometimes translated as “merchant,”¹⁹⁹ alludes to the soul’s pursuit of the profit it earns by studying the Torah and observing the commandments: its increased connection to God.

Ham was the father of Canaan: When the soul descends into this world and clothes itself in the body and the animating soul, it experiences an intense longing for Godliness and an ardent yearning for God’s presence—it becomes *Ham*. This longing inspires it to earn the reward of increased connection to God by studying the Torah and performing the commandments—to become *Canaan*.²⁰⁰

197. Vayikra Rabbah 7:4. 198. Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, pp. 21-23. 199. See Isaiah 23. 200. Torah Or 27a.

12 God said, “This is the sign that I am providing for the covenant between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all generations that require it (i.e., the sign, in case they themselves not be sufficiently righteous):

13 I have placed My rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the world. As part of the overall refinement of reality effected by the Flood, the atmosphere will now be sufficiently purified to refract and reflect sunlight and thereby produce rainbows. The rainbow therefore testifies to the fact that the world is now sufficiently refined to afford the possibility of repentance. Since it is always possible for humanity to repent, it will never again be necessary to wipe out the world.¹⁹²

14 Thus, **when** the behavior of any society in any locale degenerates to the point that I regret having created its inhabitants, and **I bring clouds over the earth** to indicate that they deserve that I bring a flood upon them, just as I did with *your* generation, **the rainbow will appear among the clouds,**

15 and I will recall My covenant that exists between Me and you and every living creature among all flesh, so that never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy any flesh. However, when *no* part of society is behaving that immorally, it will not be necessary for me to cause a rainbow to appear.¹⁹³

16 In accordance with the transformation of My attribute of judgment into My attribute of mercy that began when you prayed to Me in the ark,¹⁹⁴ I will now extend the covenant I just established between us and apply it to My attribute of judgment, as well: Even when your conduct is wanting, and logically My attribute of judgment should raise an accusation against you, **the rainbow will be in the clouds, and I will see it to recall the eternal covenant** I am now making **between God’s attribute of judgment and every living creature among all flesh that is upon the earth,** and I will not even allow My attribute of judgment to prosecute you.”¹⁹⁵

17 God said to Noah, showing him a rainbow, “Behold the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”

Noah’s Prophecy

- ◆ *Sixth Reading* **18** Having been promised by God that his progeny would not be wiped out, Noah resumed marital relations with his wife, as did his sons with their wives. **The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth;** they each had a number of children. **Ham was the father of** four sons, the youngest of which was **Canaan**. Ham was incensed that his father, Noah, was trying to have more children. He assumed that Cain had killed his brother, Abel, because he wanted the whole world for himself. Since Noah was the new beginning of the human race, Ham considered himself already deprived enough by having to share the world with *two* other brothers, and should not be required to share it with any additional brothers.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹². *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 53-54. ¹⁹³. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 31-38. ¹⁹⁴. Above, 8:1. ¹⁹⁵. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 31-35.

¹⁹⁶. Rashi on v. 25, below.

— ONKELOS —

19 תלחא אלן בני נח ומאלין אתבדרו כל ארעא: 20 ושרי נח גבר פלח בארעא ונציב כרמא: 21 ושתי מן חמרא ורוי ואתגלי בגו משכנה: 22 וחוץ חם אבדוי דכנען ית עריתא דאבדוי וחוץ לתרין אחוהי בשוקא: 23 ונסיב שם ויפת ית כסותא ושויוא על כתף תרניהון ואילו מחזירין וכסיוא ית עריתא דאבדוהון ואפיהון מחזירין ועריתא דאבדוהון לא חו:

19 שלשה אלה בני-נח ומאלה נפצה כל-הארץ:
20 ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם: 21 וישת מן-הין וישכר ויתגל בתוך אהלה: 22 וירא חם אבי כנען את ערות אביו ויגד לשני-אחיו בחוץ: 23 ויקח שם ויפת את-השמלה וישימו על-שכם שניהם וילכו אחרנית ויכסו את ערות אביהם ופניהם אחרנית וערות אביהם לא ראו:

— RASHI —

ויפת. אין כתיב כאן "ויקחו" אלא "ויקח", למד על שם שנתאמץ במצוה יותר מפת, לכך וכו בניו לטלית של ציצית. ויפת וכה לקבורה לבניו, שנאמר: "אתן לגוג מקום שם קבר". וחס שבזה את אביו, נאמר בורעו: "כן ינהג מלך אשור את שבי מצרים ואת גלות כוש נערים וזקנים ערום ויחף ויחשוף שם" וגו'. ופניהם אחרנית. למה נאמר פעם שניה? מלמד, ששקדו אצלו והצרכו להפוך עצמם לכסותו הפכו פניהם אחרנית:

20 ויחל. עשה עצמו חלין, שהיה לו לעסק תחלה בנטיעה אחרת: איש האדמה. אדוני האדמה, כמו: "איש נעמי": ויטע כרם. כשנכנס לתבה הכניס עמו ומורות ויחורי תאנים: 21 אהלה. "אהלה" כתיב, רמז לעשרת השבטים שנקראו על שם שומרון שנקראת "אהלה", שגלו על עסקי הין, שנאמר: "השתיים במורקי יין: ויתגל. לשון "ויתפעל": 22 וירא חם אבי כנען. יש מרבותינו⁵¹ אומרים: כנען ראה והגיד לאביו, לכך הזכיר על הדבר ונתקלל: וירא את ערות אביו. יש אומרים: סרסו, ויש אומרים: רבעו⁵²: 23 ויקח שם

49. רות א, ג. 50. עמוס ו, ו. 51. תנחומא נח, טו. 52. סנהדרין ע, א. 53. יחזקאל לט, יא. 54. ישעיה כ, ד.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

23 They did not see their father's nakedness: If, indeed, they walked in backwards, as the verse explicitly tells us, isn't it obvious that they did not see their father's nakedness?

The import of these words is twofold: in addition to not seeing their father's physical nakedness, Shem and Japheth did not focus on their father's shameful behavior, but focused instead only on what they had to do to correct the situation. Ham, in contrast, "saw his father's nakedness." Not only did he did not remedy the situation; he focused on his father's shortcoming and even told his brothers about it.

Why the dissimilar reactions among the brothers?

The face of another person, says the Ba'al Shem Tov, is like a mirror. If we see evil in another, we are really seeing a reflection of our own evil.²⁰⁶ Shem and Japheth did not share Noah's weakness for drunkenness; therefore, they did not focus on this shortcoming of their father's. Ham, on the other hand, whose name

connotes hot-bloodedness, *did* share Noah's weakness; therefore he saw and focused on his father's shame.

This teaches us that when we notice shortcomings in someone else, we must also take note of how we react to them. If we take immediate steps to remedy his shortcomings, we can be assured that this is why God arranged for us to notice them in the first place. But if we find ourselves focusing in depth on the other's shortcomings, beyond what is required to correct the situation, then it is clear we are doing so only because we share exactly the same flaw. Since we are generally blind to our own faults, God arranges for us to notice them in someone else, expecting us to take the cue and recognize that we possess these same faults, as well.

Thus, whenever we see or hear about something negative in our fellow, we should try to correct the situation while simultaneously "walking backwards," doing all we can to refrain from seeing and focusing on our fellow's shame.²⁰⁷

206. Meor Einain, beginning of parashat Chukat. 207. Likutei Sichot, vol. 10, pp. 24-29.

19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole world branched out.

20 Noah was the master of the soil,²⁰¹ and understood the importance of grain as the mainstay of civilized life. Nonetheless, when he came out of the ark, instead of first planting a grain crop, **he degraded himself by planting a vineyard,** to produce wine for purposes of enjoyment. He had brought vine branches along with him into the ark.²⁰²

21 He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

22 Ham's youngest son, Canaan, saw his grandfather exposed. He ran to tell his father. **Ham, the father of Canaan,** came and entered Noah's tent and **saw his father's nakedness.** He realized that this was his chance to prevent his father from having more children. He first had relations with him and then castrated him, **and then told it to his two brothers outside.**

23 Shem, enlisting Japheth's help, took a garment and placed it on the shoulders of them both. They then walked into the tent backwards and covered their father's nakedness. Even when they approached him and had to turn their bodies around, they did so **while facing away from him, so that they did not ever see their father's nakedness.**

✧ INNER DIMENSIONS ✧

[21] He drank some of the wine and became drunk: The *Zohar* notes that while "Eve entered the world and became attached to the snake... and Noah entered the world...drank from the wine, and became drunk... Sarah descended [to Egypt] and went up unscathed."

A fundamental concept in Judaism is the importance of serving God with joy. The renowned kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the *Arizal*), when asked by his students why he had merited Divine inspiration and encounters with the prophet Elijah, replied that it was only by virtue of performing the commandments with intense joy. Performing the commandments joylessly is lacking and incomplete, and therefore cannot bring the world to perfection.

According to the Midrash, the forbidden fruit Eve offered Adam was wine; Eve was aware of the importance of joy and sought to attain it through wine. But she failed to experience *holy* joy, since she succumbed to the feelings of self-awareness and ego that are the by-products of less-than-holy celebrating. Prior to the sin, Adam and Eve were merely a vehicle for Divine expression; once they took the fateful sip of wine, they gained self-awareness and began to operate in a realm of seeming separateness from God.

Noah attempted to rectify Eve's error, to experience joy without self-awareness. He therefore sought to

negate his selfhood through drunkenness. But this endeavor was misguided, since the goal is not to numb the mind and emotions through drinking, but rather to lose the self through humility and surrender to God.

Selfless joy was finally achieved by Sarah, who is associated with *malchut* (the name *Sarah* is derived from the word *serarah*, "rulership"). *Malchut*, the lowest *sefirah*, has no intrinsic "content" of its own, and receives whatever it has from the higher *sefirot*. This is the epitome of selflessness. True joy is born of humility, since one who is humble does not feel deserving of anything and is therefore never disappointed. Joy born of selflessness has no negative consequences; on the contrary, it brings us to the highest levels of spiritual experience, a taste of the World to Come. This is why Sarah's son was named *Yitzchak* ("laughter"), a foretaste of the messianic era, when "our mouths will be filled with laughter."²⁰³ This is why King David, who also embodies *malchut* and selflessness, also epitomized serving God with joy.²⁰⁴ Similarly, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria was a spark of the soul of Moses, the humblest of all men, and therefore experienced true joy.

We, too, when we emulate the humility of Sarah, Moses, King David, and Rabbi Luria, can fulfill our Divine mission with true joy and without fear of negative repercussions.²⁰⁵

201. See 5:21, above. 202. See 7:13, above. 203. Psalms 126:2. 204. See *Mishneh Torah*, *Lulav* 8:15; 2 Samuel 6:16. 205. *Sefer HaMa'amirim Melukat*, vol. 2, pp. 148-153; *Ma'amarei Admur HaZaken* 5562, vol. 1, p. 51.

ONKELOS

24 וַיִּקְרָא נֹחַ מִחֲמֶרָה וַיֵּדַע יוֹתָדִי עֶבֶד לֵה בְּרָהּ זַעֲרָא: 25 וְאָמַר לִיט כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד פֶּלַח עֲבָדִין וְהִי לְאַחֶיהָ: 26 וְאָמַר בְּרִיךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיהָ דָּשֵׁם וְהִי כְּנָעַן עֲבָדָא לְהוֹן: 27 וַפְתִּי יְיָ לִפְתָּ וַיִּשְׁרִי שְׂכִינְתָּהּ בְּמִשְׁכְּנִי שֵׁם וְהִי כְּנָעַן עֲבָדָא לְהוֹן: 28 וַחֲזִיא נֹחַ בְּתֵר טוֹפְנָא תֵּלֶת מָאָה וַחֲמִשִּׁין שָׁנִין: 29 וְהוּוּ כֹל יוֹמֵי נֹחַ תִּשְׁעָה מָאָה וַחֲמִשִּׁין שָׁנִין וּמִיתָ: 30 וְאֵלִין תּוֹלְדֵת בְּנֵי נֹחַ שֵׁם חָם וַיִּפֹּת וַאֲתִלִּידוּ לְהוֹן בְּנִין בְּתֵר טוֹפְנָא: 2 בְּנֵי יֶפֶת גָּמַר וּמִגּוֹג וּמְדֵי וַיִּוֹן וְתוֹבֵל וּמִשְׁכָּךְ וַחֲמִשִּׁין: 2

24 וַיִּקְרָא נֹחַ מִיֵּינוּ וַיֵּדַע אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן:
25 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲרוּר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאַחִיו:
26 וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם וְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ:
27 יֶפֶת אֱלֹהִים לִיפֹת וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאַחֵי-שָׁם וְהִי כְנָעַן
עֶבֶד לָמוֹ: 28 וַיְחִי-נֹחַ אַחֲרֵי הַמָּבּוּל שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה
וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה: 29 וַיְהִי כָל-יְמֵי-נֹחַ תִּשְׁעָה מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה
וַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת: פ
10:1 וַאֲלֵה תּוֹלְדֵת בְּנֵי-נֹחַ שֵׁם חָם וַיִּפֹּת וַיִּוֹלְדוּ לָהֶם
בָּנִים אַחֲרֵי הַמָּבּוּל: 2 בְּנֵי יֶפֶת גָּמַר וּמִגּוֹג וּמְדֵי וַיִּוֹן וְתוֹבֵל
וּמִשְׁכָּךְ וַחֲמִשִּׁין:

RASHI

שְׁעֵתִיד לְשִׁמּוֹר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְזָרְעוֹ, לָתֵת לָהֶם אֶת אֶרֶץ
כְּנָעַן: וַיְהִי. לָהֶם כְּנָעַן לְמֹס עוֹבֵד: 27 יֶפֶת אֱלֹהִים
לִיפֹת. מִתְרָגֵם "יֶפֶתִי", יִרְחִיב: וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאַחֵי שָׁם. יִשְׁרָה
שְׂכִינָתוֹ בִּישְׁרָאֵל. וּמִדְרָשׁ חֲכָמִים⁵⁶: אִף עַל פִּי שִׁפְתֵּי
אֱלֹהִים לִיפֹת, שֶׁבְּנָה כְרֶשׁ שְׁהִיָּה מִבְּנֵי יֶפֶת בֵּית שְׁנִי, לֹא
שְׁרָתָה בּוֹ שְׂכִינָה, וְהִיכֵן שְׁרָתָה? בְּמִקְדָּשׁ רִאשׁוֹן שֶׁבְּנָה
שְׁלֹמֹה, שְׁהִיָּה מִבְּנֵי שָׁם: וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד. אִף מִשְׁיָגְלוֹ בְּנֵי
שָׁם, וּמִכְרוּ לָהֶם עֲבָדִים מִבְּנֵי כְנָעַן: 2 וַחֲמִשִּׁין. זוֹ פֶּרֶס:

24 בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן. הַפְּסוּל וְהַבּוּזִי, כְּמוֹ⁵⁵: "הִנֵּה קָטָן נִתְתִּירָךְ
בְּגוֹיִם בּוּזִי בְּאֶדְם": 25 אֲרוּר כְּנָעַן. אֶתָּה גֵרֻמָּת לִי
שְׁלֹא אוֹלִיד בֶּן רְבִיעִי אַחֲרֵי שְׁמִשְׁנִי, אֲרוּר בֶּנְךָ רְבִיעִי
לְהִיּוֹת מִשְׁמֵשׁ אֶת זֶרַעַם שֶׁל אֱלֹו הַגְּדוֹלִים, שֶׁהוּטֵל
עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹרַח עֲבוּדָתִי מֵעַתָּה. וּמָה רָאָה חָם שֶׁסָּרְסוּ?
אָמַר לָהֶם לְאַחִיו: אֲדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן שְׁנֵי בָנִים הָיוּ לוֹ, וְהָרִג
זֶה אֶת זֶה בְּשִׁבְלִי יִרְשֶׁת הָעוֹלָם, וְאַבְיָנוּ יֵשׁ לוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה
בָּנִים, וְעוֹדֵנוּ מְבַקֵּשׁ בֶּן רְבִיעִי: 26 בְּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם.

55. ירמיה מט, טו. 56. יומא י, א. 57. יונה ג, ג. 58. לקמן יא, י. 59. פרק א. 60. לחלו פסוק כו. 61. לחלו

2 The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Yavan, Tuval, Meshech, and Tiras, who later became known as Persia.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

26 The Court of Death: The Midrash explains that the people of "the Court of Death" were ascetics who ate very simple foods, dressed in simple clothing, and awaited death every day.²¹⁵ Although this was before the Dispersion and physical pleasures abounded, these people preferred not to be steeped in the physicality of this world. On the contrary, they were anxious to move on to a more spiritual existence and be free of the limitations and desires the accompany materiality. This was therefore a place free of jealousy and of the pursuit of pleasure.

How, indeed, were they able to resist the abundance of worldly pleasures? The answer is that Chatzarmavet was the child of Yoktan (the "Small One"), so named because of his humility. A humble person is capable of remaining above the hedonism that others fall into.

We, too, should learn from this father-and-son pair. Our society places great emphasis on ostentation and prodigality: this emphasis is so pervasive that we are willing to go into debt to capitulate. Then we claim that we have no money to give to charity, which is unfortunately actually true since we are living off borrowed money! Our ostentation traps us in a vicious circle: as soon as others see our conspicuous consumption, they feel compelled to outdo us.

We should rather strive, like Chatzarmavet, to rise above the material distractions of this world and neither bury ourselves in the luxury of gourmet food and fancy clothing nor succumb to envy. But in order to raise such children, we must, like Yoktan, strive to be humble and selfless ourselves.²¹⁶

215. Bereishit Rabbah 37:8. 216. Likutei Sichot, vol. 5, pp. 286-288.

24 Noah awoke from his wine and realized what his youngest, immature, and degenerate son had done to him.

25 He said, “Cursed be Canaan! Because of you, Ham, I will never have a fourth son to tend to me, and I no longer want *you* to tend to me. Therefore, since my eldest sons will now have this responsibility, I decree that *your* fourth son **shall be a slave’s slave**—a slave to his father’s brothers, Shem and Japheth, who must now serve me alone!”

26 He then said, “Blessed be God, the God who will favor **Shem** by giving his descendants the Promised Land! **Canaan’s** descendants **shall be their slaves** and pay them tribute!

27 May God expand Japheth materially, **but may He dwell in the tents of** the descendants of **Shem**. (One fulfillment of this prophecy occurred with regard to the two Temples in Jerusalem: The first Temple, built by Solomon, a descendant of Shem, was endowed with a far greater measure²⁰⁸ of Divine revelation than was the second Temple, which was built by Cyrus the Persian, a descendant of Japheth.²⁰⁹) **And let Canaan’s** descendants **be slaves** to the descendants of Shem even when the latter will dwell in countries other than their own!”

In addition to Noah’s explicit prophecies, there were additional repercussions to each son’s behavior in this incident. Shem, for having cloaked his father, earned the privilege that his descendants (the Jewish people) would wear the ritual prayer blanket (*talit*).²¹⁰ Japheth, for having assisted his brother Shem in covering their father, earned the privilege that his eschatological descendant (Gog) would be buried in the Land of Israel.²¹¹ Ham, for having capitalized on his father’s exposure, earned the degrading embarrassment that his descendants would be carried off naked into captivity.²¹²

The Seventy Nations

28 Having concluded the narrative of Noah, the Torah now details the genealogy of his descendants.

Noah lived 350 years after the Flood, which occurred in the 600th year of his life.

29 All the days of Noah thus came to 950 years, and he died.

10:1 The following are the descendants of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, who fathered children after the Flood. The generations after the Flood learned the main lesson of the Flood—that wanton abuse of the limits God imposes on human procreative activity brings wanton destruction, as does robbery—and they therefore undertook to refrain from committing these sins. However, they *did* continue to worship idols; the vast majority of the nations listed here were idolaters.

In accordance with God’s instructions that his descendants fill the world,²¹³ Noah divided up the known world, assigning a specific geographical region to each of his seventy descendants. In accordance, again, with God’s original intention, he assigned the Land of Israel to the descendants of Shem.²¹⁴

²⁰⁸. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, p. 176, note 8. ²⁰⁹. Below, 10:2. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 284. ²¹⁰. See on Exodus 33:20, Numbers 15:37-41. ²¹¹. Ezekiel 39:11. ²¹². Isaiah 20:4. ²¹³. 9:1, above. ²¹⁴. Rashi on 12:6, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 11.

— ONKELOS —
 3 ובני גמר אשכנז ורפת ותוגרמה:
 4 ובני יון אלישה ותרשיש כתיים
 5 מאלין אתפרשו נגות
 עממיא בארעהון גבר ללשנה
 לורעהיהון בעממיהון: 6 ובני חם
 כוש ומצרים ופוט וכנען: 7 ובני
 כוש סבא וחוילה וסבתה ורעמה
 וסבתא ובני רעמה שבא ודדן:
 8 וכוש אוליד ית נמרוד הוא שרי
 למחוי גבר תקיף בארעא: 9 הוא
 הוה גבר תקיף קדם יי על כן
 יתאמר כנמרוד גבר תקיף קדם
 יי:

3 ובני גמר אשכנז ורפת ותוגרמה: 4 ובני יון אלישה
 ותרשיש כתיים ודדנים: 5 מאלין אתפרשו נגות
 בארצתם איש ללשנו למשפחתם בגויהם: 6 ובני חם
 כוש ומצרים ופוט וכנען: 7 ובני כוש סבא וחוילה וסבתה
 ורעמה וסבתא ובני רעמה שבא ודדן: 8 וכוש ילד את
 נמרוד הוא החל להיות גבר בארץ: 9 הוא היה גבר ציד
 לפני יהוה על כן יאמר כנמרוד גבר ציד לפני יהוה:

— RASHI —

להקניטו על פניו: על כן יאמר. על כל אדם מרשיע
 בעזות פנים, יודע רבונו ומתכונן למרוד בו, יאמר: זה
 "כנמרד גבור ציד":

8 להיות גבר. להמריד כל העולם על הקדוש ברוך
 הוא, בעצת דור הפלגה: 9 גבור ציד. צד דעתן של
 בריות בפיו, ומטען למרוד במקום: לפני ה'. מתכונן

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

If we make our devotion to the Torah and religious life
 our highest priority, and express this by aggrandizing
 our religious institutions, not only will our "city" — our

civilization — prosper, our enemies will be transformed
 into allies. In addition, we will perpetuate our names
 eternally in the annals of Judaism and justice.²²³

— INNER DIMENSIONS —

[4] Let us make ourselves a name: The Generation
 of the Dispersion wished to receive sustenance
 from on High without curbing their egos and
 desires. Their plan was to elicit sustenance from the
 Name *Havayah*, although they deserved no better
 than to receive sustenance from the lowest levels
 of the Name *Elokim*. They desired to reach beyond
 the law-and-order world of *Tikun* to the world of
Akudim, where the structure of *Tikun* does not exist.
 This verse can thus be interpreted as follows:

Let us make ourselves a name: "Let us draw from the
 Name *Havayah*."

so that we will not be scattered: "lest we receive from
 the lowest levels of the Name *Elokim*."

To achieve this unity, they planned to build a tower.

As the medieval commentator, Rabbi Avraham
 Ibn Ezra explains, they were shepherds who often
 roamed far from one another. This tall tower would
 be visible to them all from afar, so they would
 be able to return to it to regroup and reunite.

God therefore could not allow their plan to succeed,
 since through unity they indeed would have been
 able to elicit Divine beneficence from the Name
Havayah and channel it into impurity. (Similarly,
 once Adam had internalized evil by eating from the
 Tree of Knowledge, God did not want him to eat
 from the Tree of Life and gain immortality, thereby
 eternalizing evil).²²⁴

The sin of this generation caused the Divine Presence
 to retreat from the fourth firmament to the fifth.²²⁵

— A CLOSER LOOK —

**[9] God dispersed them and revoked their
 privilege of entry into the after life:** Although
 their punishment in *this* world was less severe than
 that received by the Generation of the Flood, their
 punishment in the *next* world was more severe.²²⁶
 This is because the Generation of the Dispersion
 sinned against God, not against their fellow,
 whom they treated with love and friendship. Their

punishment is therefore accordingly spiri tual, to be
 meted out in the next world.

In contrast, the Generation of the Flood sinned
 against their fellow: they stole from each other²²⁷
 and fought constantly, thus disrupting the peaceful
 order that God intended for this world. They were
 therefore punished in this world. Nevertheless, at
 least according to one opinion, they *do* have a share

223. Likutei Sichot, vol. 3, pp. 751-753. 224. Torah Or 11b. 225. Torah Or 11b. 226. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:1; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5710,
 pp. 111 ff. 227. See Sanhedrin 108a.

3 The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Rifat, and Togarmah.

4 The sons of Yavan were Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites, and the Dodanites.

5 From these, the island-nations, their clans, and their nations branched out, each with its language, into their lands.

6 The sons of Ham were Kush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan.

7 The sons of Kush were Seva, Chavilah, Savtah, Ra'amah, and Savtecha. The sons of Ra'amah were Sheva and Dedan.

8 Kush was the father of Nimrod ["Let us rebel"], the first man in the world powerful enough to rally the masses to rebel against God, as will be described below.²¹⁷

9 He was a mighty hunter, "trapping" people by convincing them to join his rebellion against God, and he flaunted his rebellious intentions before God Himself. Hence, the saying, "He is like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before God" is applied to anyone who intentionally seeks to provoke God's anger.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

4 Let us make ourselves a name: The incident of the Tower of Babel occurred in the aftermath of the Flood. The survivors sought to ensure their self-preservation and protect themselves from destruction, but overlooked the Flood's lesson that we must look to God to ensure our well-being.

Today, the Jewish people are also living in the aftermath of a "flood" that killed millions of Jews. We, the survivors, must be careful not to make the same mistake as the survivors of Noah's flood.

Although building the infrastructure of civilization, and certainly that of Jewish civilization, is a praiseworthy cause, it cannot be an end in itself. Nothing is shallower than simple self-preservation, historical self-perpetuation, and the endless drive to enhance

our standard of living.²¹⁸ Moreover, if these are our sole aspirations in life, it is a small step from there to believing that the end justifies the means, and we can eventually find ourselves justifying all sorts of unethical behavior to achieve our ends.

In order for our "city and tower" to endure, it must possess a deeper, Godly purpose. We should therefore respond to the "flood" by constructing a holy and Godly "city and tower," which means that our religious institutions—our houses of prayer and Torah study—should be the most cherished and well-maintained institutions of our society, and should be housed in the most prominent buildings in our cities.²¹⁹ They are the true "tower" of the city, which will protect us both from external and internal adversity.

❧ INNER DIMENSIONS ❧

[3] Let us mold bricks: The souls of the Generation of the Dispersion were rooted in an extremely lofty spiritual level. However, when they descended into the physical world, they fell into depravity. Because they sinned with brick and mortar, they had to be purified of this sin through labor that involved brick and mortar. They were therefore reincarnated as the Jews who were enslaved in Egypt. This is the deeper meaning of Pharaoh's statement: "You must impose upon them the same quota of bricks as they made until now,"²²⁰ i.e., they must produce the identical quantity of bricks now as they made during their attempt to build the tower in their previous incarnation. This is also the deeper answer to Moses' question: "What sin have the Jews committed for

which they have been singled out from among all nations to suffer such backbreaking labor?"²²¹ Moses did not know that it was not their sin, but rather the sin of their previous incarnation, from which they needed to be purified in order to receive the Torah. Once their souls had been purified, they reverted to their original lofty stature. They were then fit to receive the Torah, through which their arduous labor of creating physical mortar (*chomer*) and bricks (*levainah*) was replaced with the intellectual labor of deriving new laws through *a fortiori* reasoning (*kal vachomer*) and refining their understanding of Torah law until they reached authoritative legal decisions (*libun hilchata*).²²²

²¹⁷ 11:1-9. ²¹⁸ See *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:13. ²¹⁹ See *Shabbat* 11a; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 150:2. ²²⁰ Exodus 5:8. ²²¹ Rashi on Exodus 2:14. ²²² See on Exodus 1:14; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5226, pp. 117, 316; *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Chag HaMatzot*.

ONKELOS

10 וְהָיָה רִישׁ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּכָל
וְאָרְצָהּ וְכָלִינָהּ בְּאֶרֶץ
דְּבָבָל: 11 מִן אֶרֶץ הַהִיא נֶפֶק
אֶתְרוּרָהּ וּבָנָא יֵת נִינְוָה וְיֵת
רְחוּבוֹת קֶרְתָּא וְיֵת כָּלָח: 12 וְיֵת
רֶסֶן בֵּין נִינְוָה וּבֵין כָּלָח הִיא
קֶרְתָּא רַבְתָּא: 13 וּמִצְרִים אוֹלִיד
יֵת לוֹדָאִי וְיֵת עֲנַמְאִי וְיֵת לֶהְבָּאִי
וְיֵת נַפְתוּחָאִי: 14 וְיֵת פֶּתְרוּסָאִי
וְיֵת כְּסִלוּחָאִי דִּי נֶפֶקוּ מִתְמָן
פִּלְשֶׁתִּי וְיֵת קְפוּטָקָאִי: 15 וּכְנַעַן
אוֹלִיד יֵת צִידוֹן בְּכָרָה וְיֵת חַת:
16 וְיֵת יְבוּסָאִי וְיֵת אַמּוּרָאִי וְיֵת
גְּרָגָשָׁאִי: 17 וְיֵת חוּאִי וְיֵת עֶרְקָאִי
וְיֵת אַנְתוּסָאִי: 18 וְיֵת אֶרְדּוּאִי
וְיֵת צֶמְרָאִי וְיֵת חֲמַתָּאִי וּבִתְרָן
אֶתְבָּדְרוּ וְרַעֲיָת כְּנַעֲנָאִי: 19 וְהָיָה
תַּחֲסוּם כְּנַעֲנָאָה מִצִּידוֹן מְטִי לַגֶּר
עַד עֶזָה מְטִי לְסֻדּוּם וְעַמּוֹנָה
וְאַדְמָה וְצַבּוּסִים עַד לְשֹׁעַ: 20 אֵלֶּין
בְּנֵי חָם לְרַעֲיָתָהוֹן לְלִשְׁנֵיהוֹן
בְּאַרְעֵתָהוֹן בְּעַמּוּמֵיהוֹן: 21 וְלִשָּׁם
אֶתְיִלִּיד אָף הוּא אַבוּהוֹן דְּכָל בְּנֵי
עֶבֶר אַחוּהִי דִּפְתָּ רַבָּא: 22 בְּנֵי
שָׁם עִילָם וְאַשּׁוּר וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד
וְלוֹד וְאַרְם: 23 וּבְנֵי אָרַם עוּץ
וְחוּל וְגֵתֵר וּמֶשֶׁ: 24 וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד יֵלֵד
אוֹלִיד יֵת שֶׁלַח וְשֶׁלַח אוֹלִיד יֵת
עֶבֶר: 25 וְלַעֲבָר אֶתְיִלִּידוּ תְרִין
בְּנֵין שׁוּם חַד פֶּלֶג אֶרִי בְיוֹמוֹהִי
אֶתְפִּלִּגַת אֶרֶץ וְשׁוּם אַחוּהִי
יִקְטָן:

10 וְהָיָה רִאשִׁית מַמְלַכְתּוֹ בְּכָל וְאָרֶץ וְאֶבְרָהָה
בְּאֶרֶץ שֹׁנֵעַר: 11 מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא יֵצֵא אֲשׁוּר וַיִּבֶן אֶת־
נִינְוָה וְאֶת־רְחוֹבֹת עִיר וְאֶת־כָּלָח: 12 וְאֶת־רֶסֶן בֵּין נִינְוָה
וּבֵין כָּלָח הוּא הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה: 13 וּמִצְרַיִם יֵלֵד אֶת־לוֹדִים
וְאֶת־עֲנַמִּים וְאֶת־לֶהְבִּים וְאֶת־נַפְתָּחִים: 14 וְאֶת־
פֶּתְרוּסִים וְאֶת־כְּסִלּוּחִים אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ מִשָּׁם פְּלִשְׁתִּים
וְאֶת־כְּפוּטָרִים: 15

15 וּכְנַעַן יֵלֵד אֶת־צִידוֹן בְּכָרוֹ וְאֶת־חַת: 16 וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי
וְאֶת־הָאֲמֹרִי וְאֶת־הַגְּרָגָשִׁי: 17 וְאֶת־הַחוּאִי וְאֶת־הָעֶרְקִי
וְאֶת־הַסִּינִי: 18 וְאֶת־הָאֶרְדּוּי וְאֶת־הַצֶּמְרִי וְאֶת־הַחֲמַתִּי
וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן נִפְצוּ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי: 19 וַיְהִי גִבּוֹל הַכְּנַעֲנִי
מִצִּידוֹן בְּאַכָּה גִרְרָה עַד־עֶזָה בְּאַכָּה סְדוֹמָה וְעַמּוֹנָה
וְאַדְמָה וְצַבּוּסִים עַד־לְשֹׁעַ: 20 אֵלֶּה בְנֵי־חָם לְמִשְׁפָּחוֹתָם
לְלִשְׁנָתָם בְּאַרְצֵתָם בְּנוֹיָהֶם: 21

21 וְלִשָּׁם יֵלֵד גַּם־הוּא אֲבִי כָל־בְּנֵי־עֶבֶר אָחִי יִפְתָּ
הַגְּדוֹל: 22 בְּנֵי שָׁם עִילָם וְאַשּׁוּר וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד וְלוֹד וְאַרְם:
23 וּבְנֵי אָרַם עוּץ וְחוּל וְגֵתֵר וּמֶשֶׁ: 24 וְאַרְפַּכְשָׁד יֵלֵד
אֶת־שֶׁלַח וְשֶׁלַח יֵלֵד אֶת־עֶבֶר: 25 וְלַעֲבָר יֵלֵד שְׁנֵי בָנִים
שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פֶּלֶג כִּי בְיָמָיו נִפְלְגָה הָאָרֶץ וְשֵׁם הָאֲחִי יִקְטָן:

RASHI

אחר המבול, והיו אומר יפת הגדול, שהרי בן חמש מאות שנה היה נח כשהתחיל להוליד, והמבול היה בשנת שש מאות שנה, נמצא שהגדול בבני היה בן מאה שנה, ושם לא הגיע למאה שנה עד שנתים אחר המבול: אחי יפת, ולא אחי חם, שאלו שניהם כברו את אביהם, וזה בזה: 25 נפלגה, נתפלגו הלשונות, ונפוצו מן הבקעה, ונתפלגו בכל העולם, למדנו שהיה עבר נביא, שקרא שם בנו על שם העתיד, ושנינו ב"סדר עולם" שכתב ימיו נתפלגו, שאם תאמר בתחלת ימיו, הרי יקטן אחיו צעיר ממנו והוליד כמה משפחות קדם לכן, שנאמר: "ויקטן ילד" וגו', ואחר כך: "ויהי כל הארץ" וגו'. ואם תאמר באמצע ימיו, לא בא הכתוב לסתום אלא לפרש. הא למדת, שבשנת מות פלג נתפלגו: ויקטן, שהיה ענו ומקטין עצמו, לכך זכה להעמיד כל המשפחות הללו:

11 מִן הָאָרֶץ. כִּיּוֹן שָׂרָאָה אֲשׁוּר אֶת בְּנֵי שׁוּמַעִין לְנִמְרוֹד וּמוֹרְדִין בְּמָקוֹם לְבָנוֹת הַמֶּגֶדֶל, יֵצֵא מִתּוֹכָם: 12 הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה. הִיא נִינְוָה, שְׁנֶאֱמַר: "וַיִּנְוָה הָיִתָּה עִיר גְּדוֹלָה לְאֱלֹהִים": 13 לְהַבִּים. שְׁפָנִיָּהֶם דּוּמִים לְלֶהֱב: 14 וְאֶת פֶּתְרוּסִים וְאֶת כְּסִלּוּחִים אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ מִשָּׁם פְּלִשְׁתִּים. מִשְׁנֵיהֶם יֵצְאוּ, שְׁהִיּוּ פֶתְרוּסִים וְכְסִלּוּחִים מִחִלְפִּין מִשְׁכָּב נְשׁוּתֵיהֶם אֵלּוּ לְאֵלּוּ, וַיֵּצְאוּ מֵהֶם פְּלִשְׁתִּים: 18 וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן נִפְצוּ מִשְׁפָּחוֹת הָרַבָּה: 19 גִּבּוֹל הַכְּנַעֲנִי. סוּף אֶרֶץ. כָּל "גִּבּוֹל" שֶׁבִּמְקָרָא לְשׁוֹן סוּף וְקָצָה: בְּאַכָּה. שֵׁם דָּבָר. וְלִי נִרְאָה, כֹּאֲדָם הָאוֹמֵר לְחִבְרוֹ: גִּבּוֹל זֶה מְגִיעַ עַד אֲשֶׁר תָּבֵא לְגִבּוֹל פְּלוּנִי: 20 לְלִשְׁנָתָם בְּאַרְצָתָם. אָף עַל פִּי שְׁנִיחָלְקוּ לְלִשְׁנָנוֹת וְאַרְצוֹת, כֹּלָם בְּנֵי חָם הֵם: 21 אֲבִי כָל בְּנֵי עֶבֶר. הַגֶּהֱרָה הָיָה שֵׁם: אָחִי יִפְתָּ הַגְּדוֹל. אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם יִפְתָּ הַגְּדוֹל אִם שֵׁם, כִּשְׁהוּא אוֹמֵר: "שֵׁם בֶּן מֵאֵת שָׁנָה וְגו'" שְׁנֵתִים

10 His kingdom began with Babylon, and with Erech, Akad, and Kalneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 But when its inhabitants began to follow Nimrod, Assyria²²⁸ and his family left that land and built Nineveh, Rechovot-Ir and Kalach,

12 as well as Resen, between Nineveh and Kalach; Nineveh is the great city, the capital of Assyria.

13 Egypt fathered the Ludites, the Anamites, the Lehavites ("Flames," so known because of their fiery faces), the Naftuchites,

14 the Patrusites and the Kasluchites—who engaged in wife-swapping and produced the Philistines, who thus descended from them both—and the Kaftorites.

15 Canaan was the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Het,

16 as well as the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites,

17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

18 the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. From these, the families of the Canaanites later spread out further.

19 The Canaanite borders extended from Sidon toward Gerar until Gaza, and toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Tzevoyim, until Lasha.

20 These are the descendants of Ham, according to their clans and languages, by their lands and nations.

21 Children were also born to Shem. He was the ancestor of all those who lived on the other, eastern side of the Euphrates, and the brother of Japheth, the eldest son of Noah and the only other son who honored him.

22 The sons of Shem were Elam, Assyria, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

23 The sons of Aram were Utz, Chul, Geter, and Mash.

24 Arpachshad was the father of Shelach, and Shelach was the father of Ever.

25 Two sons were born to Ever. The name of the first was Peleg, because his father prophesied that in the final days of his life, the world would be divided [niflegah], as will be described below.²²⁹ The name of his brother was Yoktan ("the Small One," so named because of his humility).

❧ A CLOSER LOOK ❧

[continued...] in the afterlife, since they did not sin against God.

The truth is that sins against God are also sins against our fellow, since our failure to fulfill the Torah's precepts prevents God's beneficence from coming into the world and others from benefiting

from it. Similarly, sins against man are also sins against God, who commanded us to be good to each other. Nevertheless, the clearly "social" sins are more closely related to this world and the clearly "religious" sins are more closely related to the next world.²³⁰

²²⁸. Below, v. 22. ²²⁹. 11:1-9. ²³⁰. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, pp. 754-755. See Maimonides' *Commentary on the Mishnah*, beginning of *Peah*.

ONKELOS

26 וַיִּקְטֹן אֱלֹהֵי יִתְּ אֱלֹהֵי יִתְּ אֱלֹהֵי יִתְּ
שְׁלֹף וַיִּתְּ חֲצִמּוֹת וַיִּתְּ יִתְּ: 27 וַיִּתְּ
הַדּוֹרִים וַיִּתְּ אֱוֹלָל וַיִּתְּ דִּקְלָה:
28 וַיִּתְּ עֹבֵל וַיִּתְּ אֲבִימָאֵל וַיִּתְּ
שָׁבָא: 29 וַיִּתְּ אֹפִיר וַיִּתְּ חֲוִילָה וַיִּתְּ
יֹדֵב כָּל אֱלֵין בְּנֵי יִקְטֹן: 30 וַיִּתְּ
מוֹתְבְּנָהוֹן מִמֶּשָׂא מִטִּי לִסְפָּר
טוֹר מִדִּינָא: 31 אֱלֵין בְּנֵי שָׁם
לְיִרְעִיתָהוֹן לְלִשְׁנִיהוֹן בְּאַרְעֵתָהוֹן
בְּעַמְמִיהוֹן: 32 אֱלֵין וַיִּרְעִית בְּנֵי נָח
לְתוֹלְדֵתָהוֹן בְּעַמְמִיהוֹן וּמֵאֱלֵין
אַתְּפָּרְשׁוּ עַמְמֵיָא בְּאַרְעָא בְּתֵר
טוֹפְנָא:

26 וַיִּקְטֹן יִלְד אֶת־אֱלֹמוֹדֵד וְאֶת־שֶׁלֶף וְאֶת־חֲצִמּוֹת
וְאֶת־יִרְחָ: 27 וְאֶת־הַדּוֹרִים וְאֶת־אֱוֹלָל וְאֶת־דִּקְלָה:
28 וְאֶת־עֹבֵל וְאֶת־אֲבִימָאֵל וְאֶת־שָׁבָא: 29 וְאֶת־
אֹפִיר וְאֶת־חֲוִילָה וְאֶת־יֹדֵב כָּל־אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי יִקְטָן: 30 וְהִי
מוֹשְׁבָם מִמֶּשָׂא בְּאֶבֶה סִפְרָה הָר הַקָּדָם: 31 אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי־
שָׁם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְלִשְׁנָתָם בְּאַרְצֵתָם לְגוֹיָהֶם: 32 אֵלֶּה
מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־נֹחַ לְתוֹלְדָתָם בְּגוֹיָהֶם וּמֵאֵלֶּה נִפְרְדּוּ
הַגּוֹיִם בְּאַרְצָן אַחֵר הַמִּבּוֹל: פ

RASHI

26 חֲצִמּוֹת. על שם מקומו. דְּבָרֵי אֲנָדָה⁶²:

62. בראשית רבה לו, ח.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

ative energies of the world and give them extra vitality until we repent and thereby retrieve those energies.²³³) Abraham, the personification of kindness, tried to draw every person closer to God. He even prayed for the inhabitants of Sodom! Through this work, he retroactively refined the previous generations and therefore received their reward, retrieving the Divine blessings that had been temporarily diverted to the forces of evil.²³⁴ To phrase this in simpler terms: There are two types of evil, each requiring a different response: (a) evil that is *entirely* evil and contains no good, and must therefore

be eradicated; and (b) evil that, although *we* can't see any good in it, does contain a spark of goodness. This type of evil is not meant to be destroyed, but rather transformed into good.

The evil of the first set of ten generations was utter, of the sort that destroys the world. God therefore completely wiped out these generations through the Flood. In contrast, the evil of the second ten generations was of the sort that *can* be transformed to good. Abraham was therefore able to rectify and complete the good that was concealed in their deeds and therefore "re-

INNER DIMENSIONS

[30] **She had no child:** This phrase reads literally, "there is not to her a child." The word for "there is not" (אין) can also be read as "nothingness" (אין), which alludes to the *sefirah* of *keter*, since it is above normative consciousness and is therefore "nothing" from our perspective. The verse can thus be read to mean that her future child, Isaac, stemmed from the lofty *sefirah* of *keter*. Because of his lofty origin, this child took a long time to descend into this world, and therefore Sarah underwent a long period of infertility.²³⁵

[31] **God's anger...had been increasingly intensifying:** Despite this anger, the early generations enjoyed great longevity. The simple explanation for this is that they were the first descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God Himself created and designed to live forever. They therefore inherited this genetic longevity. When God did not continue replenishing

it, it gradually waned over a period of twenty generations, ending with Abraham.

The mystical explanation is as follows: As we have seen, the first twenty generations of humanity were sustained by God's attribute of indiscriminate kindness²³⁶ that transcends reason and the orderly descent of Divine energy through creation (*sefer hishtalshelut*). Human virtue and vice are irrelevant to indiscriminate kindness;²³⁷ sin is not punished as severely as appropriate and sinners can therefore benefit from God's beneficence even though they do not rightly deserve to. Hence this era is referred to as the "two millennia of chaos."²³⁸

The reason these generations were sustained by God's indiscriminate kindness was because there was no one to elicit God's beneficence by virtue of good behavior. This being the case, God chose

233. See Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 4:3; *Tanya*, chapter 39. 234. *Likutei Sichot* vol. 3, pp. 756-757. 235. *Or HaTorah, Bereishit*, vol. 4, 749a. 236. According to the Talmud (*Pesachim* 118a), the first twenty-six generations until the Giving of the Torah received sustenance from God's indiscriminate kindness. After the twentieth generation, when the era of Torah began with Abraham, the world continued to receive sustenance from the level of kindness, but not as much as it did during the first twenty generations. 237. See Job 35:6-7. 238. See *Sanhedrin* 97a.

26 Yoktan was the father of Almodad, Shelef, Chatzarmavet (“the Court of Death,” which besides being his given name was also the name of his city²³¹), Yerach,

27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

28 Oval, Avimael, Sheva,

29 Ophir, Chavilah, and Yovav; all these were the sons of Yoktan, who merited fathering all these numerous extended families because of his humility.

30 Their dwelling place extended from Mesha towards Sephar, the eastern mountain.

31 These are the descendants of Shem, according to their clans and languages, by their lands and their nations.

32 These mentioned above were the families of Noah’s sons, in their order of birth, by their nations, and from them the nations eventually dispersed over the earth after the Flood.

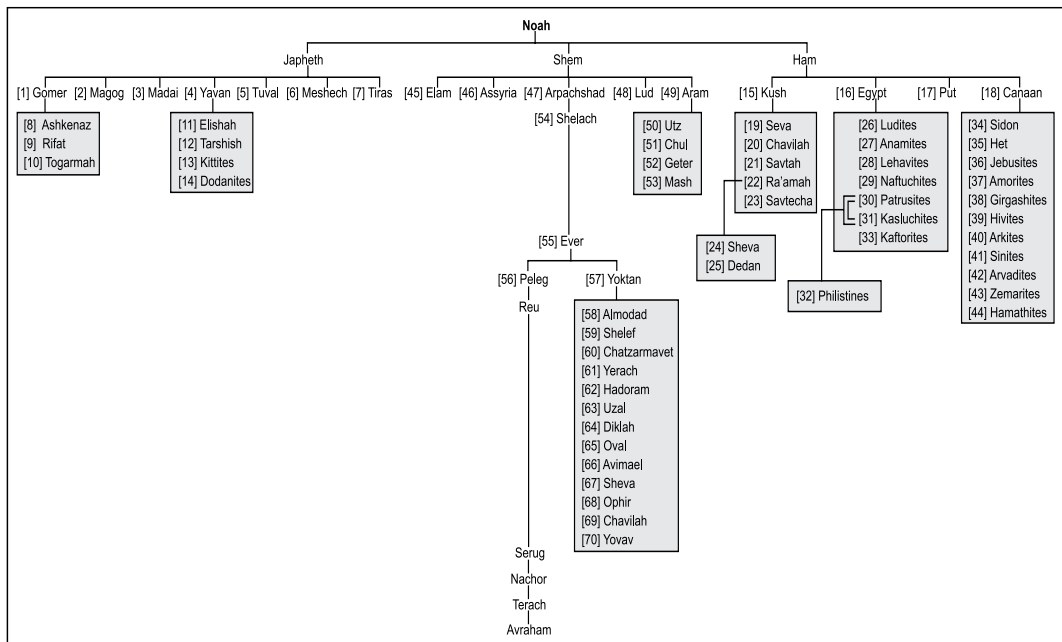


Figure 10: The Seventy Nations

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

31 God’s anger...had been increasingly intensifying: The ten generations between Adam and Noah behaved immorally, so God brought the Flood to wipe them out. There were also ten immoral generations between Noah and Abraham, but God did not wipe them out; He simply gave the reward that was due them to Abraham.²³² Why was Abraham deemed worthy of receiving the reward for the generations that preceded him, whereas Noah was not?

The answer lies in the fact that the generations that preceded Noah did not *deserve* any reward. And even if they would have deserved some reward, Noah was

not worthy of receiving it, since he neither edified his contemporaries nor prayed for them.

In contrast, the generations that preceded Abraham *did* deserve reward for co-existing harmoniously and treating each other kindly. But their simultaneous rebellion against God neutralized their merits for this reward. The Divine blessings elicited through their good deeds were absorbed by the forces of evil.

(Similarly, when we study the Torah and perform the commandments without having repented for our sins, we do elicit Divine blessings. But our sins block them from reaching us; instead, they are diverted to the neg-

²³¹ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 287. ²³² *Avot* 5:1.

ONKELOS

11 וְהָיָה כָּל אֲרָעָא לְשׁוֹן קֹדֶשׁ וּמִמְלַל קֹדֶשׁ: 2 וְהָיָה בְּמִשְׁלַחוֹן בְּקִמְיָתָא וְאַשְׁכְּחוּ בְּקִעְתָּא בְּאֲרָעָא דְּבָבֵל וּיְתִיבוּ תַּמָּן: 3 וְאַמְרוּ גְּבֵר לְחֻבְרָה הִבּוּ נִרְמִי לְבָנִין וְנִשְׂרָפְנוּ בְּנוֹרָא וְהָיוּ לְהוֹן לְבָנְתָא לְאַבְנָא וְחִימְרָא הָיָה לְהוֹן לְשִׁיעַ:

שביעי 11:1 וַיְהִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים: 2 וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעָם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמָּצְאוּ בְּקָעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁנַעַר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: 3 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הֵבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשָׂרָפָה וְהָיוּ לָהֶם הַלְבְּנָה לְאַבֵּן וְהַחֲמֹר הָיָה לָהֶם לְחִמְרָ:

RASHI

הקדם, ונסעו משם לתור להם מקום להחזיק את כלם, ולא מצאו אלא שנער: 3 איש אל רעהו. אמה לאמה, מצרים לכוש, וכוש לפוט, ופוט לכנען: הבה. הזמינו עצמכם. כל "הבה" לשון הזמנה הוא, שמכינים עצמן ומתחברים למלאכה או לעצה או למשא. "הבה" הזמינו, אפריילי"ר בלעז²⁴⁵: לַבְנִים. שאין אבנים בבבל, שהיא בקעה: וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשָׂרָפָה. כך עושין הלבנים שקורים טיולי"ש²⁴⁶, שורפים אותם בכבשן: לְחִמְרָ. לטוח הקיר:

1 שפה אחת. לשון הקדש: ודברים אחדים. באו בעצה אחת, ואמרו: לא כל הימנו שייבד לו את העליונים, נעלה לרקיע ונעשה עמו מלחמה. דבר אחר: על יחידו של עולם. דבר אחר: "ודברים אחדים", דברים חדים, אמרו: אחת לאלף ושש מאות חמשים ושש שנים הרקיע מתמוטט, כשם שעשה בימי המבול, באו ונעשה לו סמוכות: 2 ויהי בנסעם מקדם. שהיו יושבים שם, כדכתיב למעלה²⁴⁷: "ויהי מושבם וגו' הר

67. י, ל. 68. להכון. 69. רעפים.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

tive things could have (and therefore *should* have) been accomplished. After all, we are allotted only a certain amount of time on earth in which to accomplish our Divine mission. We must therefore, like Abraham, not only destroy the negative, but also salvage the past through rectifying it and completing what was lacking, thereby transforming darkness into light.²⁴⁵

Another lesson that we learn from noting the differences between Noah and Abraham: The generations that preceded us prepared the world for the messianic era,

when the purpose of all of creation will be realized.²⁴⁶ The task of our generation is to bring all their work to fruition. We must therefore emulate Abraham, lovingly befriending all Jews and awakening their innate connection to Judaism. This will reveal the holy sparks that lie hidden within them. And then, like Abraham, we will "receive the reward for them all," by channeling these sparks toward their ultimate purpose: the true and complete redemption.²⁴⁷

INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] to overlook these generations' lack of merits. With the advent of Abraham, however, God's beneficence could once again be earned. The transcendent aspect of God's energy began to be absorbed by holiness, thereby preventing the forces of evil from siphoning off the transcendent energy as it did during the first twenty generations. Abraham thus began the "two millennia of Torah,"²⁴⁸ in which the world no longer had to receive its sustenance from God's indiscriminate kindness (at least not to the same extent as it did during the first twenty generations).

This internalization and absorption of God's transcendent energy is alluded to in the final *nun* that

concludes this *parashah* and that separates between what occurred before it and what was to occur after it. On the one hand, the numerical value of the *nun* is fifty, alluding to the transcendent energy of the "fiftieth gate of understanding." On the other hand, the final *nun*'s elongated shape, which extends below the line of the other letters, connotes drawing down this lofty energy and internalizing it in reality.

The "two millennia of Torah" thus serve as a preparation for the "two millennia of the Messiah," when all transcendent energies will be internalized, leading to the fulfillment of the promise:²⁴⁹ "I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth."²⁵⁰

245. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 70-74. 246. *Tanya*, chapter 36. 247. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, p. 757. 248. See *Sanhedrin*, *ibid.* and *Avodah Zarah* 9a. 249. *Zachariah* 13:2. 250. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 63-69.

The Tower of Babel

- ◆ **Seventh Reading 11:1** Deliberately ignoring God's instructions to Noah that they disperse and populate world, Noah's descendants chose to live together in the mountainous region around Mount Ararat. Acutely aware that God had brought on the Flood because of the world's antisocial behavior, they reasoned that the best way to garner God's favor and beneficence was to show Him they could live together in unity.²³⁹ **The whole population of the world was united, speaking one language, but they were also united in a common, ill-advised cause, led by Nimrod. Nimrod²⁴⁰ convinced them that God was being presumptuous by relegating humanity to the earth while reserving heaven for Himself alone; and it was therefore necessary to show God that they were challenging this arrogance by building a tower that would reach upward into heaven, His domain. Furthermore, he convinced them that the Flood was a simply a natural, periodic occurrence that would repeat itself every 1656 years, and for this reason, too, they should build a tower that would reach into the clouds, so they could take measures to control the rainfall, if necessary.²⁴¹ They therefore had to look for a place where they could all congregate and build such a tower.**

2 When they migrated from the mountains in the east in search of such a place, they found a valley in the land of Shinar large enough for these purposes and they settled there (see Figure 11).

3 But there were no stones in this valley with which to build, so they said to one another, "Come, let us mold bricks and fire them." The bricks they made were as hard as stone,²⁴² and the clay served them for mortar with which to plaster the walls.



Figure 11: The Migration of the Generation of the Dispersion

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

ceived the reward for them all."

These two eras in world history are mirrored in the individual history of every person, since every person is a microcosm of creation.²⁴³ There are occasions when, sadly, we may squander a period of precious time on ungodly activities, yet still enjoy material success. This deludes us into believing that such a situation can con-

tinue indefinitely. The truth is, though, that this material success is only thanks to God's patience, which will eventually come to an end.²⁴⁴ We must therefore "bring a flood" upon these ungodly activities and destroy them completely, just as God destroyed the first ten generations who were completely evil.

But this is not enough. During that wasted time, posi-

²³⁹. *Torah Or* 11b. ²⁴⁰. Above, 10:8-10. ²⁴¹. *Hitva'aduyot* 5746, vol. 1, p. 463-464. ²⁴². *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, p. 106, note 37. ²⁴³. *Tanchuma*, *Pekudei* 3, et al. ²⁴⁴. See *Kuntres U'Mayan* 11:2 ff.

— ONKELOS —

4 ואמרו הבו בנני לנא קרתא ומגדלא ורישה מטי עד צית שמאי ונעבדי לנא שום דלמא נתבדר על אפי כל ארעא: 5 ואתגלי יי לאתפרעא על עובדי קרתא ומגדלא די בנו בני אנשא: 6 ואמר יי הא עמא חד ולשן חד לכלהון ודין דשריו למעבד וכען לא יתמנע מנהון כל די חשיבו למעבד: 7 הבו נתגלי ונבלל תמן לשנהון דלא ישמעון אנש לשן חברה: 8 ובדר יי יתהון מתמן על אפי כל ארעא ואתמנעו מלמבני קרתא: 9 על כן קרא שמה בכל ארי תמן בבל יי לשן כל ארעא ומתמן בדריון יי על אפי כל ארעא: 10 אליו תולדת שם שם בר מאה שנין ואוליד ית ארפכשד תרתין שנין בתר טופא:

4 ויאמרו הבה | נבנה לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בשמים ונעשה לנו שם פן נפון על פני כל הארץ: 5 וירד יהוה לראות את העיר ואת המגדל אשר בנו בני האדם: 6 ויאמר יהוה הן עם אחד ושפה אחת לבלם וזה החלם לעשות ועתה לא יבצר מהם כל אשר יזכו לעשות: 7 הבה נרדה ונבלה שם שפתם אשר לא ישמעו איש שפת רעהו: 8 ויפץ יהוה אותם משם על פני כל הארץ ויחדלו לבנת העיר: 9 עליבן קרא שמה בכל בני-שם בלל יהוה שפת כל הארץ ומשם הפיצם יהוה על פני כל הארץ: פ

10 אלה תולדת שם שם בן-מאת שנה ויולד את-ארפכשד שנתים אחר המבול:

— RASHI —

נרדה: ונבלל. ונבבלל. גו"ן משמש בלשון רבים, וזה"א אחרונה יתרה כה"א של "נרדה": לא ישמעו. זה שואל לבנה וזה מכיא טיט, וזה עומד עליו ופוצע את מוחו: 8 ויפץ ה' אותם משם. בעולם הזה. מה שאמרו "פן נפון" נתקנים עליהם, הוא שאמר שלמה: "מגורת רשע היא תבואנו": 9 ומשם הפיצם. למד, שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. וכי אי זו קשה, של דור המבול או של דור הפלגה, אלו לא פשטו יד בעקר ואילו פשטו יד בעקר בבניכול להלחם בו, ואילו נשטפו ואילו לא נאבדו מן העולם? אלא, שדור המבול היו גזלנים וזוהיה מריבה ביניהם, לכך נאבדו. ואלו היו נוהגים אהבה ורעות ביניהם, שנאמר: "שפה אחת ודברים אחדים". למדת, ששנאוי המחלקת וגדול השלום: 10 שם בן מאת שנה. בשהוליד את ארפכשד שנתים אחר המבול:

4 פן נפון. שלא יביא עלינו שום מכה להפיצנו מכאן: 5 וירד ה' לראות. לא הצרך לכך, אלא בא ללמד לדינים שלא ירשיעו הנדון עד שיראו ויבינו. מדרש רבי תנחומא⁶⁶: בני האדם. אלא בני מי, שמא בני חמורים וגמלים? אלא, בני אדם הראשון שכפה את הטובה, ואמר⁶⁷: "האשה אשר נתתה עמדי". אף אלו כפו בטובה, למרוד במי שהשפיעם טובה ומלטם מן המבול: 6 הן עם אחד. כל טובה זו יש עמהן, שעם אחד הם ושפה אחת לבלו, ודבר זה החלו לעשות: החלם. כמו: "אמרם" "עשותם", התחילו הם לעשות: לא יבצר מהם וגו' לעשות. בתמיה. "יבצר" לשון מניעה, בתרגומו. ודומה לו⁶⁸: "יבצר רוח נגידים": 7 הבה נרדה. בבית דינו נמלך, מענותנותו היתרה: הבה. מדה כנגד מדה, הם אמרו: "הבה נבנה", והוא כנגדם מדר ואמר: "הבה

63. נח יח. 64. בראשית ג, יב. 65. תהלים עו, יג. 66. משלי י, כד.

The Line of Shem

10 Having concluded recounting how the seventy descendants of Noah became separate nations, the Torah continues its chronicle of the lineage of Shem.²⁵⁴ It will be noticed in this chronicle that the human lifespan became increasingly shorter after the Flood.²⁵⁵ This is because after the Flood, God no longer sustained the world without regard to human merit, as He had done *before* the Flood. Rather, God henceforward made humanity's success in self-refinement the central factor in eliciting Divine beneficence. Although this ensured that God would never again wipe out the world,²⁵⁶ it attenuated the intensity of the flow of Divine life force, resulting in shorter life-expectancy (see figure 12).²⁵⁷

4 They said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top shall reach into the sky. Let us make ourselves a name, so that we will not be scattered by God all over the face of the earth and thereby lose the merit that earns us His beneficence.” It was at this point that the Assyrians separated themselves from Nimrod and migrated to the north.²⁵¹

5 In the year 1996, God descended to see the city and the tower that the sons of man had built. Although He knew what they were doing, He wished to demonstrate that a judge should never pass sentence before thoroughly examining the case.

6 God said, “They possess all the advantages and conveniences of being a single people, all having one language—and this is what they have begun to do?! So now, should they not be prevented from doing that which they planned to do?”

7 In order to demonstrate how a person should always humbly seek the counsel of others before deciding upon a course of action—even if they are of lesser status ²⁵²—He consulted with His heavenly court, saying, “Come, let us descend and confuse their speech there, so that one person will not understand another’s speech. This will make them quarrel with one another and break up into separate groups, the very thing they feared would happen to them. Although they have declared war on Me, and thus, theologically, their sin is greater than the sins of the generation of the Flood, I will not destroy them, because at least they were united and acted peacefully towards one another. In contrast, the people of the Flood were contentious and robbed from one another. I value peace among My creatures even more than I value the respect they owe Me.”

8 The heavenly court agreed. Except for Shem and his family, Noah’s descendants suddenly forgot how to speak their original language, Hebrew, and each clan began speaking its own language. Not being able to communicate with each other, they dispersed. In this way, God scattered them from that place all over the face of the earth, and they stopped building the city. The descendants of Japheth and Ham migrated westward, leaving the descendants of Shem in the regions east of the Euphrates River.²⁵³

9 It was therefore named Babel, because this was the place where God confused (*balal*) the whole world’s language. From there God dispersed them over all the face of the earth and revoked their privilege of entering the afterlife, as well.

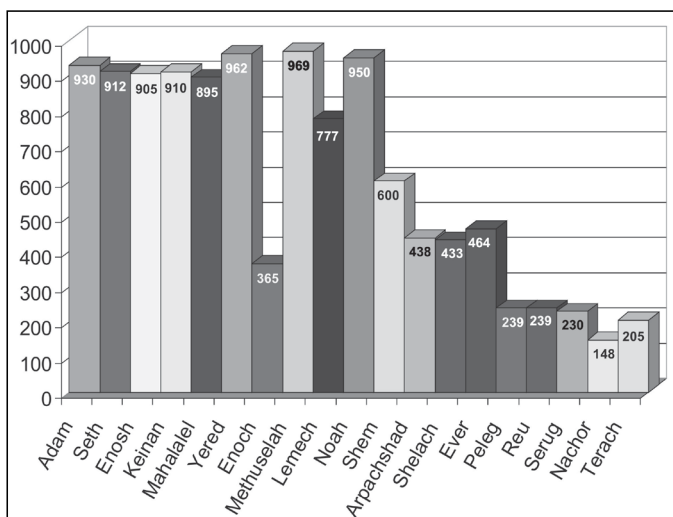


Figure 12: The Shortening of Life Expectancy

251. Above, 10:11. 252. *Bereishit Rabbah* 8:8. 253. Above, 10:21. 254. Above, 10:21-31. 255. Compare above, chapter 5. 256. Above, 9:13. 257. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 54.

— ONKELOS —

11 וַחֲזָא שֵׁם בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת
אֶרְפַּכְשָׁד חֲמִשׁ מָאָה שְׁנִין
וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין וּבָנָן: 12 וְאֶרְפַּכְשָׁד
חֲזָא תַלְתִּין וְחִמֵּשׁ שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד
יֵת שְׁלַח: 13 וַחֲזָא אֶרְפַּכְשָׁד
בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת שְׁלַח אֶרְבַּע
מָאָה וּתְלַת שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין
וּבָנָן: 14 וְשְׁלַח חֲזָא תַלְתִּין שְׁנִין
וְאוֹלִיד יֵת עֶבֶר: 15 וַחֲזָא שְׁלַח
בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת עֶבֶר אֶרְבַּע
מָאָה וּתְלַת שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין
וּבָנָן: 16 וַחֲזָא עֶבֶר תַּלְתִּין וְאַרְבַּע
שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד יֵת פִּלְג: 17 וַחֲזָא
עֶבֶר בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת פִּלְג אֶרְבַּע
מָאָה וּתְלַתִּין שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין
וּבָנָן: 18 וַחֲזָא פִּלְג תַּלְתִּין שְׁנִין
וְאוֹלִיד יֵת רַעַ: 19 וַחֲזָא פִּלְג
בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת רַעַ מֵאָתָן וְתִשַׁע
שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין וּבָנָן: 20 וַחֲזָא
רַעַ תַּלְתִּין וְתַרְסִין שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד
יֵת שְׂרוּג: 21 וַחֲזָא רַעַ בְּתֵר
דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת שְׂרוּג מֵאָתָן וְשִׁבַּע
שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין וּבָנָן: 22 וַחֲזָא
שְׂרוּג תַּלְתִּין שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד יֵת
נְחוֹר: 23 וַחֲזָא שְׂרוּג בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד
יֵת נְחוֹר מֵאָתָן שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין
וּבָנָן: 24 וַחֲזָא נְחוֹר עֶשְׂרִין וְתִשַׁע
שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד יֵת תְּרַח: 25 וַחֲזָא
נְחוֹר בְּתֵר דְּאוֹלִיד יֵת תְּרַח מָאָה
וְתִשַׁע עֶשְׂרִין שְׁנִין וְאוֹלִיד בְּנִין
וּבָנָן: 26 וַחֲזָא תְּרַח שְׁבַעִין שְׁנִין
וְאוֹלִיד יֵת אֲבָרָם יֵת נְחוֹר וְיֵת
הָרָן: 27 וְאַלְפִין תְּחִלָּתָא תְּרַח הָרָן
אוֹלִיד יֵת אֲבָרָם יֵת נְחוֹר וְיֵת הָרָן
וְהָרָן אוֹלִיד יֵת לוֹט:

11 וַיְחִי־שֵׁם אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־אֶרְפַּכְשָׁד חֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת
שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

12 וְאֶרְפַּכְשָׁד חֵי חֲמִשׁ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־שְׁלַח:

13 וַיְחִי אֶרְפַּכְשָׁד אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־שְׁלַח שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים
וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

14 וְשְׁלַח חֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־עֶבֶר: 15 וַיְחִי־שְׁלַח
אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־עֶבֶר שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה

וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

16 וַיְחִי־עֶבֶר אֶרְבַּע וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־פִּלְג:

17 וַיְחִי־עֶבֶר אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־פִּלְג שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה
וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

18 וַיְחִי־פִלְג שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־רַעַ: 19 וַיְחִי־פִלְג
אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־רַעַ תִּשַׁע שָׁנִים וּמֵאֵתִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד

בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

20 וַיְחִי רַעַ שְׁתֵּים וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־שְׂרוּג:

21 וַיְחִי רַעַ אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־שְׂרוּג שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים וּמֵאֵתִים
שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

22 וַיְחִי שְׂרוּג שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־נְחוֹר: 23 וַיְחִי
שְׂרוּג אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־נְחוֹר מֵאֵתִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים

וּבָנוֹת: ׀

24 וַיְחִי נְחוֹר תִּשַׁע וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־תְּרַח:

25 וַיְחִי נְחוֹר אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־תְּרַח תִּשַׁע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה
וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: ׀

26 וַיְחִי־תְּרַח שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־אֲבָרָם וְאֶת־הָרָן: 27 וְאַלְהָה תּוֹלְדָתָא
תְּרַח הָרָן הוֹלִיד אֶת־אֲבָרָם וְאֶת־הָרָן וְהָרָן הוֹלִיד אֶת־לוֹט:

his father, **and** his next eldest son was **Haran**. Abram was born from one wife and Nachor and Haran from another.

27 The narrative now focuses on the history of Terach's family. **The following are the descendants of Terach: Terach was the father of Abram, Nachor, and Haran, and Haran was the father of Lot and of two daughters, Sarai and Milkah.**

The following are the descendants of Shem: Shem was 100 years old when he fathered his third son, Arpachshad, in the year 1658, two years after the Flood began.

11 Shem lived 500 years after he fathered Arpachshad, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 2158, at the age of 600.

12 Arpachshad was 35 years old when he fathered a son, Shelach, in the year 1693.

13 Arpachshad lived 403 years after Shelach was born, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 2096, at the age of 438.

14 Shelach was 30 years old when he fathered a son, Ever, in the year 1723.

15 Shelach lived 403 years after he fathered Ever, and he fathered other sons and daughters before died in the year 2126, at the of 433.

16 Ever was 34 years old when he fathered a son, Peleg, in the year 1757.

17 Ever lived 430 years after he fathered Peleg, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 2187, at the age of 464. After the dispersion, Shem saw that humanity was again drifting away from God's original instructions to humanity. He therefore founded, together with his great-grandson Ever, an academy whose purpose it was to preserve the corpus these teachings—which God would later give formally as the Torah—and teach them to whomever was interested enough to seek them out. Together with the God's teachings, this academy also preserved the knowledge of the world's original language, Hebrew. This language was kept secret, since Shem and Ever understood from the incident of the Tower of Babel that God felt that the general population was no longer worthy of using it. Shem settled in the city of Salem (which would later be renamed Jerusalem).²⁵⁸

18 Peleg was 30 years old when he fathered a son, Reu, in the year 1787.

19 Peleg lived 209 years after he fathered Reu, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 1996—the year of the dispersion²⁵⁹—at the age of 239.

20 Reu was 32 years old when he had a son, Serug, in the year 1819.

21 Reu lived 207 years after he fathered Serug, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 2026, at the age of 239.

22 Serug was 30 years old when he fathered a son, Nachor, in the year 1849.

23 Serug lived 200 years after he fathered Nachor, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 2049, at the age of 230.

24 Nachor was 29 years old when he fathered a son, Terach, in the year 1878.

25 Nachor lived 119 years after he fathered Terach, and he fathered other sons and daughters before he died in the year 1997, at the age of 148.

26 Terach was 70 years old when, in the year 1948, he fathered a son, whom he named Abram ("the Prince of Aram"). His eldest son was Nachor, named after

²⁵⁸. Below, 14:18. ²⁵⁹. Above, 10:25.

— ONKELOS —
 28 ומית הָרֶן על אִפִּי תֵרַח אֲבוּהִי
 בְּאַרְעֵי יְלֻדוֹתָהּ בְּאוּרָא דְכַשְׁדָּאִי:
 29 וְנָסִיב אֲבָרָם וְנָחֹר לְהוֹן נָשִׁין
 שׁוּם אֶתְתָּא אֲבָרָם שְׂרִי וְשׁוּם אֶתְתָּא
 נָחֹר מִלְכָּה בֵּת הָרֶן אֲבוּהִיא
 דְּמִלְכָּה וְאַבוּהִיא דְּיִסְכָּה: 30 וְהָוֵת
 שְׂרִי עֲקָרָה לֵית לָהּ וָלֶד: 31 וְדָבַר
 תֵּרַח יֵת אֲבָרָם בְּרָה וְיֵת לוֹט בֵּר
 הָרֶן בֵּר בְּרָה וְיֵת שְׂרִי כְּלָתָהּ אֶתְתָּא
 אֲבָרָם בְּרָה וְנִפְקוּ עֲמֵהוֹן מֵאוּרָא
 דְּכַשְׁדָּאִי לְמִיּוּל לְאַרְעָא דְכַנְעַן
 וְאָתוּ עַד הָרֶן וְיִתְּבוּ תַמְנָן:

28 וַיָּמָת הָרֶן עַל־פְּנֵי תֵרַח אָבִיו בְּאַרְצֵי מוֹלֻדְתּוֹ בְּאוּר
 כַּשְׁדִּים:
 מפטיר 29 וַיִּקַּח אֲבָרָם וְנָחֹר לָהֶם נָשִׁים שֵׁם אִשְׁת־
 אֲבָרָם שְׂרִי וְשֵׁם אִשְׁת־נָחֹר מִלְכָּה בֵּת־הָרֶן אֲבִי־מִלְכָּה
 וְאָבִי יִסְכָּה: 30 וַתְּהִי שְׂרִי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ וָלֶד: 31 וַיִּקַּח
 תֵּרַח אֶת־אֲבָרָם בָּנוּ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־הָרֶן בָּנוּ וְאֶת שְׂרִי
 כְּלָתוֹ אִשְׁת־אֲבָרָם בָּנוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאוּר כַּשְׁדִּים לָלֶכֶת
 אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־הָרֶן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:

— RASHI —
 כַּשְׁדִּים". ומנחם בן סרוק פֿרשׁ: "אור" — בקעה, וכן:
 "בְּאַרְצֵי כְּבֻדּוֹ ה'", וכן: "מְאוּרַת צַפְעוֹנִי", כִּל חוֹר וְנִקְע
 עֲמוֹק קְרוֹי "אור": 29 יִסְכָּה. זו שָׂרָה, עַל שֵׁם שְׁסוּכָה
 בְּרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, וְשִׁהְבֵל סוֹכִין בִּיפְיָהּ. עוֹד, "יִסְכָּה" לְשׁוֹן
 "יִסְכּוּת", כִּמוֹ "שָׂרָה" לְשׁוֹן "שְׂרָרָה": 31 וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם.
 וַיֵּצְאוּ תֵרַח וְאֲבָרָם עִם לוֹט וְשְׂרִי:

28 על פני תרח אביו. בחצי אביו. ומדרש אגדה: יש
 אומרים, שעל ידי אביו מת, שקבל תרח על אברם בנו
 לפני נמרוד על שבתת את צלמיו, והשליכו לכבשן
 האש, והרן יושב ואומר בלבד: אם אברם נוצח אני
 משל, ואם נמרוד נוצח אני משל. וכשנצל אברם,
 אמרו לו להרן: משל מי אתה? אמר להם הרן: משל
 אברם אני. השליכוהו לכבשן האש ונשרף. וזה "אור

72. בראשית רבה לח, יג. 73. ישעיה כד, טו. 74. שם יא, ח.

and Sarai began to spread monotheism and gradually gathered around them a following of new believers.²⁶⁶ Their activities quelled God's anger, which had been increasingly intensifying with the spread of idolatry after the Flood.²⁶⁷

In the year 2018, when Abram was 70 years old, he visited Canaan briefly.²⁶⁸ As will be described below,²⁶⁹ God appeared to him while he was there and promised to give

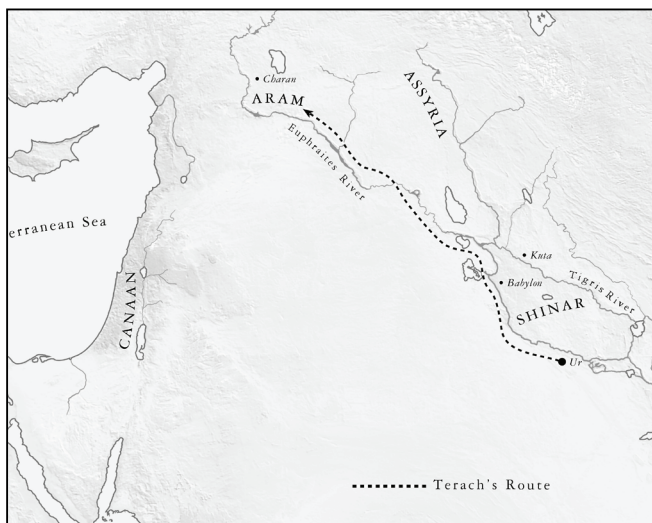


Figure 14: Terach Moves to Charan

him Canaan and to make him the progenitor of the chosen people. Abram then returned to Charan. Since his father, Terach, had not wanted to accompany him to Canaan, Abram had to return to Charan to continue to care for him, for until God

266. Below, 12:5. 267. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 63-69. 268. Rashi on Exodus 12:40; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 202, notes 17 and 23, vol. 30, p. 233, note 37. 269. 15:7-21.

28 Abram grew up during the period after Nimrod and his followers had already migrated to the Plain of Shinar. Although raised as an idolater, Abram already perceived the folly of idol worship in his early childhood. When Abram purposely broke his father's idols, the latter brought him to Nimrod, who threw him into a fiery furnace. God miraculously saved Abram, and he emerged from the furnace unscathed. Abram's older brother, Haran, decided that he would side with whoever would win this confrontation. Upon seeing that Abram emerged unharmed, Haran declared himself to be on his side, whereupon Nimrod then cast him, too, into the furnace, and he died there. Thus, **Haran died during the lifetime of his father, Terach, in the land of his birth**, and, in fact, he died *because* his father, Terach, took Abram to Nimrod. The news of this incident became so widespread that Nimrod became known as Amrafel ("He who said, 'Fall [into the furnace!]'")²⁶⁰ and the city where it occurred became known as **Ur ("the fire") of the Kasdites**.²⁶¹ Another meaning of the word *Ur* is "valley," since it was the capital of Nimrod's kingdom in the Valley of Shinar.

- ◆ **Maftir 29 Abram and Nachor married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nachor's wife was Milkah, the daughter of Haran, who was the father of Milkah and her sister Sarai, who was also known as Yiskah**, meaning "[far]-looking," since she was gifted with Divine inspiration and could foretell the future; "[good]-looking," since everyone enjoyed gazing at her beauty; and "royal dignity," parallel to her other name, Sarai, which means "my princess." Abram and Nachor, the two brothers, thus both married their nieces, two sisters—the daughters of their brother, Haran (see Figure 13).

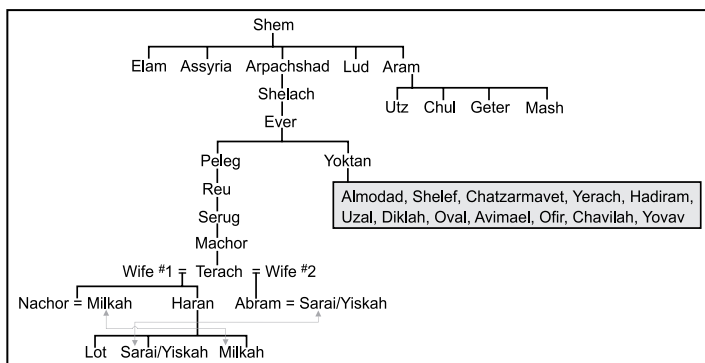


Figure 13: The Line of Shem

30 **Sarai was barren; she had no child.** And according to Abraham's astrological calculations, he would never have any children through her.²⁶²

31 The incident of the fiery furnace²⁶³ convinced Terach to himself espouse monotheism.²⁶⁴ But because he did not want to acknowledge his repentance publicly,²⁶⁵ he instead decided to move to a place where he would not be a public figure, thus avoiding the need to participate in public idol worship. **Terach took his son Abram; his grandson Lot, the son of Haran; and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram.** Terach and Abram left Ur of the Kasdites with Lot and Sarai, heading toward Canaan. They left Nachor and Milkah behind in Ur. On the other hand, Terach knew that moving all the way to Canaan would entail espousing monotheism publicly, and he was not ready to do this. So **they came as far as the city of Charan in Aram, and settled there** (see Figure 14). While in Charan, Abram

260. Rashi on 14:1, below. 261. One of Abraham's nephews was Nachor's son Kesed. See below, 22:22. 262. Rashi on 15:5, below. 263. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 63, note 5. 264. Rashi on 15:15. 265. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 63, note 6.

— ONKELOS —
 32 וַיְהִי יוֹמִי תֵּרַח מָאֲתָן וְחִמְשׁ
 שָׁנִין וּמֵית תֵּרַח בְּחָרָן:

32 וַיְהִי יוֹמִי תֵּרַח חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים וּמָאֲתָיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֵּרַח

בְּחָרָן: פ פ פ

קנ"ג פסוקים. בצלא"ל סימן.

— RASHI —
 לַכֹּל, וַיֹּאמְרוּ: לֹא קִיָּם אַבְרָם אֶת כְּבוֹד אָבִיו, שֶׁהִנִּיחוֹ
 זָקֵן וְהֵלֵךְ לוֹ. לְפִיכָךְ קָרָאוּ הַכְּתוּב מֵת, שֶׁהִרְשָׁעִים אִף
 בְּחַיֵּיהֶם קְרוִיָּם מֵתִים, וְהַצְדִּיקִים אִף בְּמֵיתָתָן קְרוִיָּם
 חַיִּים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וּבִנְיָהוּ בֶן יִהוֹנָדָע בֶּן אִישׁ חַי": **בְּחָרָן**.
 הַנּוֹ"ן הַפּוֹכְדָה, לוֹמֵר לָךְ: עַד אַבְרָם חָרוֹן אִף שֶׁל מָקוֹם
 בְּעוֹלָם:
 חסלת פרשת נח

32 **וַיָּמָת תֵּרַח בְּחָרָן**. לְאַחַר שֶׁיָּצָא אַבְרָם מִחָרָן וּבָא
 לְאַרְצָא בְּנֶעֱזָן, וְהָיָה שָׁם יוֹתֵר מִשְׁשָׁיִם שָׁנָה, שֶׁהָרִי כְּתִיב:
 "וְאַבְרָם בֶּן חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בָּצָאתוֹ מִחָרָן",
 וְתֵרַח בֶּן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה הָיָה כְּשֶׁנּוֹלַד אַבְרָם, הָרִי מֵאָה
 אַרְבָּעִים וְחֲמִשׁ לְתֵרַח בְּשִׁינְיָא אַבְרָם מִחָרָן, עָדִין
 נִשְׁאַרְוּ מִשְׁנוֹתָיו הָרִבָּה. וְלָמָּה הַקֹּדִים הַכְּתוּב מֵיתָתוֹ
 שֶׁל תֵּרַח לִיִּצְיָאתוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָם? שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה הַדֶּבֶר מִפְּרָסָם

70. בראשית יב, ד. 71. שמואל"ב כג, כ.

instructed him explicitly to leave, he was still legally bound to observe the commandment of parental respect.²⁷⁰

By this time, Abram had learned of God's original instructions to humanity that were preserved by Shem and Ever.²⁷¹ He had begun to observe these teachings, which God would later give to his descendants as the Torah. Nonetheless, he did not circumcise himself, because this would have violated God's explicit commandment not to shed human blood;²⁷² his voluntary assumption of the Torah's commandments did not have the legal power to override an explicit directive.²⁷³

32 All of Terach's days came to 205 years, and Terach died in Charan in the year 2083. But because he was outwardly an idolater, he was considered figuratively "dead" even while he was alive, for the wicked are considered dead even in their lifetimes, whereas the righteous are considered alive even after their death.²⁷⁴

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Noach* may be found on p. 337.



²⁷⁰. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 202, note 23. ²⁷¹. Above, 11:17. ²⁷². Above, 9:5. ²⁷³. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 145-147. ²⁷⁴. See 2 Samuel 23:20.

Haftarah for Noach

Isaiah 54:1-10

Just as the Flood, chronicled in *parashat Noach*, cleansed the world from the cumulative negative effects of humanity's wrongdoing and prepared the world for a new order, the exile of the Jewish people is meant to cleanse them from the effects of their misdeeds and prepare them for the new order of the messianic Redemption. The comparison is made literally in v. 9.

54:1 In this prophecy, God speaks to the Jewish people after they have been exiled. **Sing, O barren Jerusalem, you who feel as though you have never given birth; break into a song of praise and be jubilant, you who feel as though you have never been in labor; for I assure you that the children of the abandoned one, the Jewish people, shall be more numerous than the children of the married wife, i.e., Edom, says God.** **2** Broaden the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; be not sparing; lengthen your tent's anchor ropes, and secure your tent pegs. **3** For you will expand to the right and to the left, until your descendants dispossess nations and populate desolate cities. **4** Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; do not be confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and you will remember the reproach of your widowhood no more.

5 For your Maker is your husband, God of Hosts is His name. The Holy One of Israel is your redeemer; He will be called the God of the whole earth. **6** For God called you back like a wife abandoned by her angered husband, and grieved in spirit.

Can the wife of one's youth be rejected?

says your God. **7** For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion will I gather you in. **8** With a little wrath, for a moment, I hid My face from you, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, said God, your redeemer.

9 For this promise to Me is like the promise I made concerning the waters of Noah's flood: just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again submerge the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wrathful with you and will not rebuke you. **10** For even if the mountains move and the hills falter, i.e., even if the merit of the patriarchs and matriarchs is exhausted, My kindness will not depart from you, nor will My covenant of peace ever falter, says God, who has compassion on you.

54:1 רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יִלְדָּה פִּצְחִי רְנֵה וְצִחְלִי
לֹא־חָלָה כִּי־רָבִים בְּנֵי־שׁוֹמֵמָה מִבְּנֵי בְעוּלָה
אָמַר יְהוָה: **2** הִרְחִיבִי מְקוֹם אֹהֶלְךָ וִירִיעוֹת
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ וְיָסוּ אֶל־תַּחֲשֻׁכַי הָאֲרֻכִּי מִיתְרֶיךָ
וַיִּתְדֶיךָ תִּזְקֵן: **3** כִּי־יִזְמֶן וּשְׂמֹאוֹל תִּפְרָצִי
וְזִרְעֶךָ גּוֹיִם יִירָשׁ וְעָרִים נִשְׁמֹות יוֹשִׁיבוּ: **4** אֶל־
תִּירְאִי כִּי־לֹא תִבּוֹשִׁי וְאֶל־תִּפְלֹמִי כִּי לֹא
תִּחְפְּרִי כִּי בָשֶׁת עָלוּמֶיךָ תִּשְׁפָּחִי וְחִרְפַּת
אֲלֻמְנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא תִזְכְּרֶינָּה: **5** כִּי בְעָלֶיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ
יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת שָׁמוּ וְגֹאֲלֶךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי
כָל־הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא: **6** כִּי־כִאֲשֶׁה עֲזוּבָה וְעֵצוּבַת
רוּחַ קָרָאךָ יְהוָה וְאִשָּׁת נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמָּאֵם
אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ: **7** בְּרִנָּה קָמָן עֲזוּבֶיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים
גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבָּצֶךָ: **8** בְּשֹׁעַף קָצָף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנֶי
רִנָּה מִמֶּךָ וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחֲמֶיךָ אָמַר גֹּאֲלֶךָ
יְהוָה: **9** כִּי־יָמִי נָחָ וְאֵת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי
מִעֵבֶר מִי־נָח עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ כֵּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי
מִקָּצָף עָלֶיךָ וּמִגֶּעֶר־כָּד: **10** כִּי הִהָרִים יִמּוּשׁוּ
וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תִּמּוּטֶינָה וְחִסְדִּי מֵאֲתָךְ לֹא־יִמּוּשׁ
וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמּוּט אָמַר מְרַחֵם יְהוָה:



Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

