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# פרשת נח
# Parshat Noach

# Ashreinu | אשרינו

Enhancing your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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## Parsha Summary

Noach builds a teivah and lives in it to survive the mabul Hashem brings to destroy the world. Noach's descendants are dispersed after trying to build the Tower of Bavel.

1- Everyone in the generation was corrupt except for Noach, so Hashem tells Noach to build a teivah (ark) that would save him and his immediate family from a flood Hashem will bring to destroy the world. Noach is commanded the exact dimensions that the teivah should be, and to take each type of animal aboard the teivah with him.

2- He was commanded to take one pair of all the non kosher animals, and seven pairs of kosher animals. He takes his family and the animals onto the teivah and the mabul begins.

3- The rain lasted 40 days and 40 nights, and covered everything. The only life that survived was on the teivah. The world stayed wet for another 150 days, and when Noach was able to see mountain peaks he sent out a raven, and two doves. The raven and first dove came back, however the second dove did not return, proving that the world was inhabitable again. They spent one entire year in the teivah.

4- After being commanded to exit the teivah, Noach offers a korban to Hashem, who then promises to never destroy the world again. God allows people to eat meat, but forbids murder, suicide, and eating a limb from a live animal.

5- Hashem designs a rainbow as a sign of His promise to never destroy the world again.

6- Noach plants a vineyard, then gets drunk and falls asleep naked. His son Cham assaults him, and his other two sons go to cover him. When Noach woke up he cursed Cham and blessed his other two sons. All of Noach's 70 grandchildren are named after this story.

7- The Tower of Bavel- all of Noah's descendents work together to build a tower to reach God and fight Him. Hashem caused them to all speak different languages and their plan failed. After this they all dispersed to different lands. The Torah proceeds to write the ten generations of Shem's descendants, ending with Avraham.

## Balancing Act

Rabbi Sandy Shulkes

After the flood, Hashem assigns a beautiful promise to the world – the rainbow, which is a constant reminder that even though we are sinning and deserve to be destroyed, God has made a pact with us that it will never happen again (at least in the form of a flood). Therefore, when we see a rainbow in the sky after it rains we recite the bracha:

זוֹכֵר הַבְּרִית נֶאֱמָן בִּבְרִיתוֹ וְקַיָּם בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ

"King of the Universe, Who remembers the covenant, is trustworthy in His covenant, and fulfills His word."

But Chazal offer a different perspective on the meaning of the rainbow.

The Gemara Brachot (59a) says one who gazes at a rainbow in the clouds, he/she needs to fall on his face. Even though we have the tendency to stare and

admire the rainbow, the gemara here is telling us that in fact one should avoid gazing at it.

Furthermore, in Gemara Chagiga (16a), the Gemara states, "one who stares at 3 things, his eyes are dimmed—the rainbow, *nesi'im*, and the fingertips of the kohanim during *birkat kohanim*.

Even *l'halacha* the Mishna Brurah (229:1) quotes the Chayei Adam *b'shem Sefer Echad* that one should not point out a rainbow to his/her fellow because it is *motzi dibah* – speaking negatively about God.

How do we understand this sharp contrast? On the one hand, the pesukim ascribe positive symbolism to the rainbow, while Chazal shift our perspective to the other side of the spectrum! How can we reconcile this dichotomy between the pesukim and Chazal?

I believe Chazal are telling us an unbelievable message: Even though we have made a covenant with God and have begun a new relationship, the rainbow still represents a less than ideal situation, namely, God had to completely destroy the world and all its inhabitants. Therefore, we are so fortunate and ecstatic that even when we mess up and sin, God shows His favor, mercy, and kindness by showing His rainbow, but we must be sensitive to the fact that God had to destroy the world in order to reach this step.

## Our End Of The Bargain

Orly Dimont ('23)

Hashem meticulously describes the creation of the world in Parshat Bereishit only to destroy it in this week's parsha, Parshat Noach. Why does He do this? Only ten generations after Adam, the Torah tells us that the world had become filled with *"chamas"*. At its basic translation – thievery and robbery – it does not seem worthy of causing worldwide extermination. However, the deeper meaning of the word reveals the actual picture of the Jews during the time of Noach: *chamas* is a type of sinning that cannot be controlled and breaks down society to the worst it can be because people don't even recognize their sins and are therefore unable to repent for them.

This type of evil is not something that can be fixed without interference from Hashem; therefore Hashem must rework the world again, as He does in Parshat Noach. His first plan for the world was ruined by Adam and Chava's sin and the second was now destroyed by *chamas*. Each time Mankind has ruined the world, Hashem has given us another chance. When Hashem first realized that He must destroy the world, He did so with a sorrowful heart because He must remake the world at a greater distance. Although with each new plan of the world we get farther away from Hashem, it is not punishment; rather Hashem intends to allow us to live in a way where we can make choices on our own and have leeway with our actions.

Parshat Noach is not only about the destruction of the world, it is about Hashem's reimagining of the world where we, as a nation, can turn a new page and restart. Hashem does not give up on us. Instead, He allows us to make our choices, but we must keep our end of the bargain by remembering Him as the God who gave us this incredible world. This time around, Hashem makes a *brit* to never destroy the world again, but we must not forget the other half of the deal, **our** part. We must obey His laws and recognize that Hashem is the reason we continue to be here. Good Shabbos!

## Walk The Walk

Binny Perl ('24)

Early on in Parshat Noach, Hashem tells Noach that he is bringing a flood to destroy the entire world as a result of society's lawlessness. In this pasuk, Rashi explains that although there were some good people in the world, the actions of the majority of the population were so evil that Hashem destroyed everyone. However, we know

that Hashem spared Noach, his family, and every species of animal from the destruction.

The famous question asked here is, why was Noach spared from the *mabul*? The common answer is that the Torah describes Noach as an:

אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו
"A righteous man in his generation" (Bereishit 6:9).

However, this answer doesn't make sense according to Rashi's prior explanation; how could only

Noach be spared because of his goodness if there were also other people that were good? Perhaps
the answer lies in the less famous ending to the pasuk:

אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֶּךְ נֹחַ
"Noach walked with God" (6:9).

This pasuk is saying that while it's true that there were other good people in the world, none of them walked with God and were true ambassadors of Judaism.

Noach teaches us that in order to be considered righteous and worth saving in Hashem's eyes, being a moral person isn't enough. We all have a responsibility to be like Noach, taking the extra step to be ambassadors of Judaism to make a *kiddush Hashem* whenever we can.

# Limitless

Avi Harris ('26)

In Parshat Noach, the people upset Hashem so badly that He needed to cause a flood and destroy everything. It states,

כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר אֶת דַּרְכּוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ
"all flesh has corrupted its way on the earth" (Bereishit 6:12).

A simple question is: Doesn't "אֶת דַּרְכּוֹ" seem to be superfluous? Why couldn't the Torah just say "all flesh had corrupted [on] the earth"?

In the days of Noach, no one was lawful. The whole world was filled with evil. People were doing *avoda zara* and not treating each other nicely. There's a story of a boy who was in desperate need, and his solution for his situation was to steal. Someone asked him, "If the door was locked to the path on your way to stealing something, would you steal it?" The boy answered, "Yes, nothing would get in my way. I would kick the door down."

This boy was Jewish, and the person asked him, "If you found non-kosher food, would you steal it?" He responded by saying, "Don't you know, I am a yid?!"

This shows that even people like this thieving boy had certain limitations on his wrongdoing. In the times of Noach, however, no one had any limitations. This was a team "effort", and even if one person did not make as many mistakes as the others, they were all facing the same consequences. The Torah stresses that the people destroyed everything, "his own way", אֶת דַּרְכּוֹ, and destroyed every line between right and wrong. No one knew what was right or what was wrong, they destroyed everything and every line between right and wrong.

# Born Again

Elisha Weisstuch ('26)

The opening pasuk of Parshat Noach states:

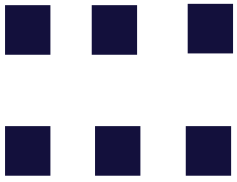
אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו
"These were the generations of Noach; Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation" (Bereishit 6:9).

The phrase "אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ" in the pasuk above sounds like it is introducing us to Noach's descendants, however the Torah doesn't actually give us the names of Noach's children, Shem, Cham, and Yafet, until the next pasuk. In between the introduction to Noach's descendants and the actual names of his children, the pasuk interrupts to tell us that Noach was a big Tzadik. Why the sudden interruption?

The Sefer Noam Megadim asks and answers our very simple yet profound question. He explains that really the Torah wasn't interrupting anything at all. Before telling us Noach's actual children's names, the Torah wanted to tell us that Noach was really his own first child.

When Noach listened to Hashem and followed His ways, he became a new person. He was changed into a different Noach than who he was before.
The first child that Noach had, was Noach himself!

Now as we start the great month of Marcheshvan, let us realize that we become better and different people through every action, every *tefillah*, and every good deed that we do. We have countless opportunities to improve ourselves and reinvent our character. Let us take this message and realize that through every positive experience that we have and every mitzvah that we do, we become better, greater, and renewed every single day!



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