

בס"ד

דברי תורה ד'צבי אליהו  
**DIVREI TORAH**

נח

Noach

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We're starting a new feature with this issue - called **The Back Page**. This is a spot for you to contribute an article, thought, story, recipe, whatever you like - as long as it conforms to a few rules. You must claim it (no anonymous submissions but it doesn't have to be written by you), it can be no longer than two pages (one is best and I can do some fiddling with font sizes to try and get it to work), and it must be appropriate (sorry, I get to decide that one). Email them to [rabhan5@comcast.net](mailto:rabhan5@comcast.net) and make sure to put "The Back Page" in the subject. Submissions may not appear in the week submitted - you never know when.

## **Step by Step**

Rabbi Yerucham Schochet

### **Introduction**

Hashem waited ten generations for mankind to improve, but instead of improving, mankind became more corrupt and decadent. The time had come for Hashem to eradicate all life that existed and start again from the one person that remained loyal, Noach. Hashem informed Noach that He had decided to destroy the world and that Noach should build a Teivah for himself, his family and the animals. After he completed the Teivah, Noach brought in the animals, and Hashem brought the Mabul (flood) upon the world to eliminate all terrestrial life. After the waters receded, Noach and the animals exited the Teivah and Noach offered Korbanos (Sacrifices) to Hashem. When Hashem saw the Korbanos, He promised Noach that He would never again bring a Mabul to destroy terrestrial life. The sign of that covenant is the rainbow. After the Mabul, Noach and his sons repopulated the world. From them came the Seventy Nations. About 450 years after the Mabul, mankind again attempted to rebel against Hashem. This time, man initiated the construction of a tower with which to ascend to the heavens and wage war against Hashem. Hashem "descended" and dispersed the people and changed their language so that no one understood the next person. This effectively eliminated any of man's attempts to unite and rebel against Him. Avraham is born in this Parsha.

### **Rishon**

Hashem decided that he would destroy all terrestrial life except for Noach, who had

remained righteous, and his family. He informed Noach of His decision and instructed him to build a Teivah, into which Noach should bring two of every type of animal and food for all of them. Noach complied with Hashem's command.

### **Sheini**

Hashem told Noach that it was time for him and the animals to enter the Teivah. Noach was instructed to take two of each non-kosher animal and seven of each kosher animal, because the time had come to destroy all terrestrial life. In the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noach's life the rains began to fall. They were light at first, but they became increasingly heavy until they flooded the world. After Noach entered the Teivah, Hashem sealed the door.

### **Shlishi**

The Mabul rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and all terrestrial life was wiped out, following which, it took about a year for the land to dry up, and finally, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, everything dried off.

### **Revi'i**

Hashem told Noach that it was time to leave the Teivah. Noach left the Teivah and immediately offered Korbanos to Hashem to express his gratitude to Hashem for saving him from the fate of the rest of mankind. When Hashem accepted Noach's offering, He decided that He would never again bring a Mabul to destroy the world. He made a covenant with Noach that man would be allowed to eat meat since all animals owed their lives to Noach.

### **Chamishi**

Hashem also promised never to bring

another Mabul. As a sign of this covenant, he placed a rainbow in the sky. When we see a rainbow it is a message from Hashem that mankind deserves to be destroyed, but He spares the world because of His covenant.

### **Shishi**

Noach planted a vineyard, and when it ripened he made wine and became intoxicated. His son Cham saw him sleeping in an embarrassing position and ridiculed him to his brothers. His brothers Shem and Yeffes went to cover their father in the most respectful manner possible. When Noach awoke from his stupor and realized what Cham had done to him, he cursed Cham and blessed Shem and Yeffes. The Torah proceeds to enumerate the offspring of Noach.

### **Shevi'i**

About 450 years after the Mabul, the people of the world united and attempted to rebel against Hashem by building a tower that would rise to the heavens and enable them to wage war against Him. Hashem judged them and dispersed them, and changed their language so that they could not understand each other, effectively halting the construction of the tower. Finally, the Torah enumerates the ten generations from Noach to Avraham.

### **Questions**

1. Who were Noach's three sons?
2. What was the final cause of the flood?
3. What were the dimensions of the Teivah?
4. How did they have light in the Teivah?
5. How long did it take Noach to build the Teivah?

6. Why did Hashem wait seven more days before He brought the Mabul?
7. Which animals were not killed in the Mabul?
8. Which birds did Noach send out to see if the land had dried up?
9. What does the rainbow represent and what do we do because of that?
10. What are the seven Noahide Laws?

### **Answers**

1. Shem, Cham and Yeffes.
2. The final sin that caused the Mabul was the sin of theft.
3. The Teivah was 300 Amos long, 50 Amos wide, three stories (and 30 Amos) tall. It had a sloping roof which reached a height of 1 Amah.
4. There was a Tzohar which provided light. There is a dispute as to what the Tzohar was. Some explain that it was a window at the top of the Teivah, while others explain that it was a precious gem that radiated with light.
5. It took him one hundred and twenty years to build the Teivah.
6. Hashem waited seven days because Mesushelach (Methuselah) died on that day. So Hashem waited until the shiva was over before He brought the Flood.
7. The fish were not killed during the Mabul.
8. First Noah sent out the raven, but he did not want to carry out his mission, so he just circled the teivah. Then Noah sent out the dove, which pen-ultimately came back with an olive branch in its beak and ultimately did not come back. Then Noah knew that the waters had receded.
9. The rainbow represents the covenant that Hashem made with Noach that He would never again bring a flood to wipe

out the whole world. So when we see a rainbow we make a special Brachah (Blessing) that Hashem remembers His Promise not to bring a flood, even if we deserve it.

10. The seven Noahide Laws are:
  - a. To believe that Hashem exists and that He runs the world.
  - b. Not to attribute power to anything else.
  - c. Do not murder.
  - d. Do not steal.
  - e. Do not commit adultery.
  - f. Do not eat the limb off of a live animal.
  - g. To set up a court system.

## **I Thought Everything G-d Does Is Good?!**

Reuven Formey

This week's parshah speaks about the Great Flood that G-d brought upon the world due to the widespread sinning of man that dominated that particular generation. Clearly G-d could have chosen any number of ways to destroy life on earth, so why did He choose to fill it with water? Rashi tells us since the sin of man was 'great' – '*rabbah*'- in hebrew, then it was fitting that his punishment come from "the great deep", as the Torah calls the domain of the waters that rose from the earth. But another interesting explanation comes from Bereishis Rabbah, which states that at the beginning of creation, the praise of G-d came from the waters alone. After the sinful generation turned away from G-d, He decided to, "Let them be cast aside, and in their place shall come those who originally dwelled there (the waters)." G-d saw fit to replace that generation with the waters that

had so properly praised Him before. The Midrash says that this previous state was a very exalted one in which the world rejoiced as the waters gave G-d all the glory. The Flood would bring back this purity and holiness.

However we can bring an argument against Hashem for this! The Torah specifically states that the purpose of the Flood was the destruction of all flesh from the earth, whereas the Midrash seems to say that G-d wanted the earth to be brought back to this wonderful state when the waters filled it and extolled Hashem constantly. But wasn't man the purpose for creation? Doesn't the highest level of praise come when man, the creature with free choice, chooses to glorify Hashem and thereby elevate all of existence? Yes, the water was giving praise, but it wasn't doing so with free choice! Okay, so the earth needed purification. This is why the Flood nullified the world for 40 days and nights similar to the way a mikvah serves to nullify a person spiritually to G-d's Will with its 40 se'ah (unit of measure) of water. But isn't the point of our service to be spiritually nullified as we "*exist*" physically in life?! Well, the Flood took that away. We're supposed to internalize that Hashem does only that which is completely good. How could this destruction of life on earth be good? And while we're asking, how could any of the tragic or painful happenings in this world hold any goodness within them?

Now this is a deep subject that has a lot of length, breadth, and depth. But we will address it as best as possible here. Our Sages tell us that the Torah preceded the world. We can understand this both in a chronological sense and a spiritual sense,

meaning even now it exists on a plane that is “before” or loftier than creation. The Torah as we study it in this physical realm is an external aspect of it. Every letter of the Torah is rooted up above on a level beyond physicality, where everything is revealed as inherently good. This includes all of the Torah’s laws, lessons, and stories. Even though we are instructed to understand them on a simpler level in this world where it’s available to be clothed in our intellect, and where things can be categorized as good or bad, it is imperative to remember that their root far exceeds the realm of our understanding. This is only fitting since G-d Himself is beyond our understanding, and He and His Torah are One.

Therefore, if G-d is complete Kindness and Good, and “Is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds,” (Psalms 145:17), then even things such as a flood that comes and destroys all flesh from the world is included somehow in that Ultimate Good. We said that Torah only as it is manifested in this world can contain “good and bad”, but not so as its core is revealed up above. And we’ve heard many times from the Midrash that “G-d looked into the Torah and created the world.” Therefore, every single event, whether it be the Flood thousands of years ago, or a painful incident only a few weeks ago, since it is contained somewhere in the Torah, G-d’s blueprint for all happenings in the world, it is good. Just like we only see the external manifestation of the Torah down here on earth, so too our eyes only see the lowly and negative-looking manifestation of what’s happening spiritually up above where the complete goodness is revealed. In reality, there is no such thing as

punishment per se, only rectification. G-d has no need to senselessly cause suffering to his creatures. He is not a human being, from whom we’ve seen ruthlessness come throughout history. Anything He sets into motion is only good because it serves to rectify this world into a place where we will all rejoice in His Holy Light, a reward so unthinkable that it will cause us to thank Him for our perceived suffering!

A true story will help bring more light to these concepts. The Alter Rebbe (author of Tanya and Shulchan Aruch HaRav) would serve as the Torah reader for the congregation. Once he was out of town during the Shabbat of Parshat Ki Tavo on which we read all of the terrible curses that G-d said would befall the Jewish people in the event that His Torah was not followed (G-d forbid). His son, the Mitteler Rebbe, had to hear the Torah read by someone else. During the reading of the curses, the Mitteler Rebbe became very sick. When they asked him why his health was affected so severely, especially since this is read every year, he said, “When father reads, one does not hear any curses.” When the Alter Rebbe, a tremendous tzaddik, would read the curses, the lofty goodness hidden within those curses up above was revealed and perceived. The substitute Torah reader however could not accomplish this. To one like the Mitteler Rebbe who was attuned to such things, the *external* revelation and negativity of the curses caused him real pain.

Some make a big mistake. They think that the reality that all G-d’s actions are good is dependent upon our perceiving or understanding them as so. But, how can the creation think that it can fully

understand the Creator outside of the insight (Torah) that the Creator has provided it with? Yes we cry out and ask G-d for some understanding when things hurt or baffle us, and we pray that we get a revelation on our level. But in the end, our longing to understand should not compromise our faith that He knows what He's doing. Ask yourself a question. When you want pizza one day and the next you crave baked chicken, what's the reason for that? Why do you like the color blue more than green or vice versa? You really can't give a solid answer for this. Today, for some reason you just feel like chicken! Yesterday was a different story! You like one color more than another because it just looks better to you for some strange reason. You like blue because its bluer than green is! (Doesn't make full sense does it?) The answer is that a person's desire stems from a place that's above intellect. That's why any explanation you give just doesn't hit the nail on the head. Well, we were made in the likeness of G-d. Kabbalah teaches that in this sense He too, (so to say, without going into too much detail), has a level of desire. So if we can't ask questions on human desire, how much more so in reference to G-d and what He does. All we know is that His greatest desire is for our benefit and everything else

is commentary.

So we see that the Flood as a punishment is only the way we may view it in this world. But the truth exists above at the source level, where evil and negativity don't even have a *perceived* existence. In actuality, as things happen down here, they are also all good. But G-d put it in our hands to cling to Him with a level of emunah (pure, unbreakable faith) that is brought out with mesirus nefesh (self-sacrifice). It is the only tool that can insure that our hearts and minds cling to G-d despite all of the obstacles of this world. Once we tap into it, nothing stands a chance of breaking us. G-d will reveal to us how the "imaginary evil" was for our best, and completely good. *Based upon the teachings of Rebbe Menachem M. Shneerson*

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*Every lady hopes that her daughter will marry a better man than she did and is convinced that her son will never find a wife as good as his father did!!!*

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## Perceptions of Jews by Renowned Gentiles

Contributed by Michael Snaid

1. "Some people like the Jews, and some do not. But no thoughtful man can deny the fact that they are, beyond any question, the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has appeared in the world." -- Winston Churchill

2. "The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire, and has illumined with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions." -- Leo Tolstoy

3. "It was in vain that we locked them up for several hundred years behind the walls of the Ghetto. No sooner were their prison gates unbarred than they easily caught up with us, even on those paths which we opened up without their aid." -- A. A. Leroy Beaulieu, French publicist, 1842

4. "The Jew gave us the Outside and the Inside - our outlook and our inner life. We can hardly get up in the morning or cross the street without being Jewish. We dream Jewish dreams and hope Jewish hopes. Most of our best words, in fact - new, adventure, surprise, unique, individual, person, vocation, time, history, future, freedom, progress, spirit, faith, hope, justice - are the gifts of the Jews." -- Thomas Cahill, Irish Author

5. "One of the gifts of the Jewish culture to Christianity is that it has taught Christians to think like Jews, and any modern man who has not learned to think as though he were a Jew can hardly be said to have learned to think at all." -- William Rees-Mogg, former Editor-in-Chief for The Times of London and a member of the House of Lords

6. "It is certain that in certain parts of the world we can see a peculiar people, separated from the other peoples of the world and this is called the Jewish people....

This people is not only of remarkable antiquity but has also lasted for a singular long time... For whereas the people of Greece and Italy, of Sparta, Athens and Rome and others who came so much later have perished so long ago, these still exist, despite the efforts of so many powerful kings who have tried a hundred times to wipe them out, as their historians testify, and as can easily be judged by the natural order of things over such a long spell of years. They have always been preserved, however, and their preservation was foretold... My encounter with this people amazes me..." -- Blaise Pascal, French Mathematician

7. "The Jewish vision became the prototype for many similar grand designs for humanity, both divine and man made. The Jews, therefore, stand at the center of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose." -- Paul Johnson, American Historian

8. "As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration as to the people who had the sense for righteousness most glowing and strongest." -- Matthew Arnold, British poet and critic

9. "Indeed it is difficult for all other nations of the world to live in the presence of the Jews. It is irritating and most uncomfortable. The Jews embarrass the world as they have done things which are beyond the imaginable. They have become moral strangers since the day their forefather, Abraham, introduced the world to high ethical standards and to the fear of Heaven. They brought the world the Ten Commandments, which many nations prefer to defy. They violated the rules of history by staying alive, totally at odds with common

sense and historical evidence. They outlived all their former enemies, including vast empires such as the Romans and the Greeks. They angered the world with their return to their homeland after 2000 years of exile and after the murder of six million of their brothers and sisters.

They aggravated mankind by building, in the wink of an eye, a democratic State which others were not able to create in even hundreds of years. They built living monuments such as the duty to be holy and the privilege to serve one's fellow men. They had their hands in every human progressive endeavor, whether in science, medicine, psychology or any other discipline, while totally out of proportion to their actual numbers. They gave the world the Bible and even their "savior."

Jews taught the world not to accept the world as it is, but to transform it, yet only a few nations wanted to listen. Moreover, the Jews introduced the world to one G-d, yet only a minority wanted to draw the moral consequences. So the nations of the world realize that they would have been lost without the Jews.. And while their subconscious tries to remind them of how much of Western civilization is framed in terms of concepts first articulated by the Jews, they do anything to suppress it.

They deny that Jews remind them of a higher purpose of life and the need to be honorable, and do anything to escape its consequences. It is simply too much to handle for them, too embarrassing to admit, and above all, too difficult to live by.

So the nations of the world decided once again to go out of 'their' way in order to find a stick to hit the Jews. The goal: to prove that Jews are as immoral and guilty of massacre and genocide as some of they themselves are.

All this in order to hide and justify their own failure to even protest when six million Jews were brought to the slaughterhouses of Auschwitz and Dachau; so as to wipe out the moral conscience of which the Jews remind them, and they found a stick.

Nothing could be more gratifying for them than to find the Jews in a struggle with another people (who are completely terrorized by their own leaders) against whom the Jews, against their best wishes, have to defend themselves in order to survive. With great satisfaction, the world allows and initiates the rewriting of history so as to fuel the rage of yet another people against the Jews. This in spite of the fact that the nations understand very well that peace between the parties could have come a long time ago, if only the Jews would have had a fair chance. Instead, they happily jumped on the wagon of hate so as to justify their jealousy of the Jews and their incompetence to deal with their own moral issues.

When Jews look at the bizarre play taking place in The Hague, they can only smile as this artificial game once more proves how the world paradoxically admits the Jews uniqueness. It is in their need to undermine the Jews that they actually raise them.

The study of history of Europe during the past centuries teaches us one uniform lesson: That the nations which received and in any way dealt fairly and mercifully with the Jew have prospered; and that the nations that have tortured and oppressed them have written out their own curse." --Olive Schreiner, South African novelist and social activist

10. "If there is any honor in all the world that I should like, it would be to be an honorary Jewish citizen." --A.L Rowse, authority on Shakespeare