

**TorahFax: Noach**  
Rabbi Zalmen Marazov

Monday, Mar-Cheshvan 1, 5784 / October 16, 2023

This week's Parsha is Noach. It is the second Parsha of the Torah. The Parsha begins with the story of Noach (Noah) and the Great Flood which destroyed every living being, except for those which G-d told Noach to bring with him into his ark. They were Noach, his wife, his three sons and their wives. Also, of every kosher species he brought seven into the ark and the non-kosher only two of each kind. He also had to bring enough food to last the throughout their stay in the ark. The Parsha ends with the birth of Abraham and Sarah.

Q. How old was Noach when the Great Flood started? How long did they all stay in the ark?

A. Noach was 600 years when the Great Flood began, and they stayed in the ark for a full year.

Q. What food were they permitted to eat before The flood and how did it change after the Great Flood?

A. Before The Flood they were prohibited to eat meat. All ten generations from Adam to Noach were prohibited from eating meat. Only after emerging from the ark did G-d permit eating meat.

Q. How did everyone get along in the ark for a full year?

A. The atmosphere in the ark during that time was like when Moshiach will come, a time when there will be no more wars and the wolf and sheep will live together in peace.

Also, when there is a common enemy, there is no place for strife. They were all in the same boat...We see this now in Israel. Only a few months ago there were mass demonstrations in Israel one group against the other. Now the entire country is united, as they face a common enemy from the outside. It's unfortunate that it has to take a great tragedy and common enemy to unite us...

Q. What special promise did G-d make after The Flood?

A. The Torah tells us that after The Flood G-d said, "I will never again curse the earth because of man... Neither will I again smite every living being."

Q. What was the first plant which Noach planted after coming out of the ark?

A. The Torah says, "And Noach planted a vineyard. And he drank the wine and became drunk..."

Q. How long did Noach live?

A. 950 years.

Q. There were ten generations from Adam to Noach, how many generations were there from Noach until Abraham?

A. From Noah to Abraham were also ten generations. The first ten generations, from Adam to Noah, was a span of over 1000 years. The second ten generations, from Noah to Abraham, was a span of about 900 years.

Tuesday, Mar-Cheshvan 2, 5784 / October 17, 2023

In this week's Parsha, Noach (Noah), we read the story of Noach (Noah) and the Great Flood. The Parsha begins, "...Noach was a righteous man and wholehearted in his generation; With G-d walked Noach. And Noach had three sons: Shem, Cham and Yefet. And the earth was corrupted before G-d, and the earth was filled with violence (Hamas). And G-d saw the earth and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. G-d said to Noach: 'The end of all flesh has come before me, for it is filled with violence. I will destroy them together with the earth...'"

Note: The Torah describes the reason why He will bring the Great Flood and wipe everything of the face of the earth is because, "It was filled with HAMAS!" (do I need to say more?). May they too be wiped off the face of the earth.

G-d commands Noach to build an ark for his wife, his three sons and their wives. G-d then tells Noach to bring two of each species of non-kosher animals and seven of each kind of kosher animals into The Ark to save them from the flood.

Noach spent 120 years building The Ark. On the 17th day of the Hebrew month Cheshvan, the Mabul (Great Flood) began. They spent one year in the ark and on the twenty seventh of Cheshvan, one year later, G-d told Noach to emerge from The Ark.

Although the people committed the greatest sins which included idol worshipping and adultery etc., as Rashi explains, "The divine decree was sealed only because of robbery." In other words, G-d tolerated sins committed against Him, but brought the greatest disaster against all of man-kind for sins committed against each other.

Q. Why were they punished through water?

A. Here is one explanation: In the beginning of creation, we find that the earth was completely covered with water. On the third day of creation, G-d said, "Let the waters be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear and it was so." The Midrash tells us that G-d said to the water, "I will put sand around the oceans to prevent you from flooding the earth".

The particles of sand were afraid of this tremendous responsibility, "How will we be able to accomplish this important task? Even the smallest wind can blow us away! How can we hold back the sea?"

"Don't worry!" G-d assured the sand. "It is true that you are tiny and light and each one of you on his own has no might. But, if you stick together and stay united, your power will be enormous that even the mighty sea you will hold back!"

In contrast to the unity of the sand which hold back the sea, the divisiveness of the people in the time of Noach, brought about that the waters again flooded the world and brought great destruction with it. For there is no greater force to prevent disaster and bring good to the world than peace and unity.

Wednesday, Mar-Cheshvan 3, 5784 / October 18, 2023

In this week's Parsha, Noach, the Torah tells us that after the waters of the Great Flood receded, "Noach sent forth a dove to see if the waters abated from the face of the earth. When the dove didn't find a resting place, it returned to The Ark." Noach waited seven days, "Again, he sent forth the dove out of The Ark. And the dove came back in the evening with an olive leaf in her mouth; Noach knew that the waters were abated from the earth."

Our Rabbis explain that with the, "leaf in her mouth," the dove was saying to Noach, "I prefer my food, even when bitter as the olive leaf, by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He, and not sweet as honey through the hands of people."

In the Grace-after-Meal, we thank G-d for the food we eat and pray, "Our G-d, our father; tend us, nourish us, sustain us, feed us and provide us with plenty, and speedily, L-rd our G-d, grant us relief from all our afflictions. L-rd our G-d, please do not make us dependent upon the gifts of mortal men nor upon their loans, but only upon Your full, open, holy and generous hand that we may never be shamed or disgraced."

A Jew who didn't have the funds to marry off his daughter, went to the Rabbi of Kotsk to ask for the Rebbe's advice and blessings. The Rebbe sent him to a wealthy Chassid who lived in another town, along with a letter recommending that he help the poor man.

The man was sure that as soon as the wealthy Chassid would read the Rebbe's letter, he would give him all the necessary funds for the wedding. To his great dismay, after reading the letter and hearing his dire situation, the Chassid offered him only a few rubles. It didn't even cover the cost of the trip! He left very disappointed and heartbroken. He realized that all he can do now is pray to G-d to help him.

A while later, as he was walking on the road, a carriage stopped next to him. Out came the wealthy Chassid who handed the poor man an envelope full of money. "Here, you have everything you need for the wedding. In addition, my driver will drive you home to your village!"

The poor man was stunned. "If you were going to give me the money, why didn't you give it to me when I was at your home? Why did you cause me all this sorrow?"

The Chassid replied, "You see, when you came to my home, you were certain that you would get what you need because you relied on me and on the letter of the Rebbe. Somehow, you forgot to rely on G-d Almighty. To tell you the truth, as a result, I wasn't moved to help you. However, after you realized that you had no one to rely on except G-d and you prayed sincerely from the depth of your soul that G-d should help you, my heart was stirred, and I felt that I had to help. This is why I'm here now!"

All our needs are provided by G-d, but most of the time we don't see it. Our sages say, "Whoever gives life gives sustenance." G-d has many messengers. Realizing that everything is from G-d, whether health, children, or sustenance, would make our lives much easier and happier.

Thursday, Mar-Cheshvan 4, 5784 / October 19, 2023

This month is called Mar-Cheshvan. There are two reasons why "Mar" is added to the name Cheshvan. "Mar" means a "drop." Because Cheshvan, is the month when the rains begin to fall in Israel. Thus, "Mar" (rain drops) is added to the name Cheshvan.

Another reason: "Mar" also means "bitter." Coming from the month of Tishrei which has many holidays (Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hoshana Raba, Shmini Atzeret & Simchat Torah) the month of Cheshvan, which has no holidays, feels spiritually bitter. Although there are other months which have no holidays, the contrast from Tishrei to Cheshvan is felt much more, thus, the name "Mar-Cheshvan."

The first Beth Hamikdash (Holy Temple) was completed this month by King Solomon. By G-dly decree the dedication was postponed for almost a year and was celebrated in Tishrei. But, when Moshiach will come, Cheshvan will be compensated with great celebrations. May it be speedily in our days.

In the beginning of this week's Parsha, Noach, G-d commands Noach (Noah) to build an ark. Noach builds the ark for 120 years. The ark had three floors: a top floor for people; a middle floor for animals; and bottom floor for garbage. G-d then commands Noach to enter the ark. On the 17th of Cheshvan, the Great Flood began.

The Torah calls Noach a Tzaddik B'dorotav, "Righteous in his generation." Based on this expression, the Rabbis debate whether Noach was only righteous compared to the wicked people in his generation or whether he would have been called righteous in the generation of Abraham, as well.

The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 54) refers to the Great Flood as Mei Noach, "The waters of Noach", thus placing partial responsibility for the flood on Noach! How could a righteous person (Tzaddik) like Noach, who was saved from the Flood, be blamed for the Flood?

Our sages explain the apparent contradiction with the following parable: Many people were sitting in a cold room. Two of the people decided they couldn't stand it anymore. One person went and put on his fur coat. Although he was now comfortable, everyone else was still freezing. The other person decided to get wood and make a fire. He not only warmed himself, but everyone else in the room too.

Abraham was like the second person. When G-d wanted to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorra, Abraham prayed to G-d to save the people of those cities. But Noach was similar to the first person. Noach was indeed righteous, but he didn't go out of his way to save the rest of his generation. He neither called people to repent nor prayed that G-d spare the people. Noach's lack of concern is the reason the Great Flood is called, "The waters of Noach."

The lesson is obvious: It is not enough to be concerned only about our own needs. We also have to do our best to help others, for we are responsible for each other.

Friday, Mar-Cheshvan 5, 5784 / October 20, 2023

Questions & Answers on this week's Parsha, Noach, the story of Noach (Noah) and The Great Flood.

Q. Why was he named "Noach"?

A. Noach comes from the word comfort. The Torah tells us that his father, Lemech, named his son Noach (Noah) saying, "This one shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands from the ground which G-d had cursed." He was called "Noach" for he brought "comfort" to the world.

Q. The Torah tells us (Genesis 5:32) that Noach was 500 years old when the first of his three sons was born. What is the reason that, unlike anyone else in that generation, Noach didn't have children until such a late age?

A. G-d knew that as a result of the sins of that generation, He would bring The Great Flood. G-d said, "If Noach will have children at a younger age and they will be sinners, as the rest of that generation, I will have to destroy them along with everyone else and I don't want to cause this pain to Noach, who is a righteous man. If, on the other hand, they will all be righteous, then Noach will be forced to build a much larger ark, or many more arks to accommodate all his descendants." Thus, G-d prevented Noach from having children until the age of five hundred. As a result, at the time of The Flood he didn't have any grandchildren yet.

It took Noach 120 years to build The Ark, in order to give the people a chance to repent. Even when this didn't help and the people didn't repent, G-d still didn't bring the waters with destructive force. He still gave mankind a chance to repent. Only when this too didn't help, did G-d send the waters with tremendous destructive force.

Our sages ask: Why does the Torah describe Noach as being, "A righteous man in his generation."

Rashi, in his commentary, brings two opinions; 1) It emphasizes the great virtue of Noach--that even in his generation, where everyone was wicked, Noach was righteous. Had he lived in the generation of Abraham, he would have been even more virtuous.

2) According to other opinions, the term in his generation has a negative implication: Noach, they say, was righteous in comparison to his generation, who were all wicked. But had he lived in the generation of Abraham he would not have had such great merit compared to Abraham.

Said Rabbi Yechezkel of Kuzmir: This is the price of leadership. There will always be those who will find fault with a leader no matter how good his intentions are. This is the quality of true and just leadership. Great leaders are not ones who try to do things in order to please everyone, but who do what is right, regardless of the criticism. For one who always tries to please everyone in the end pleases no one.