

# תורת אור חיים

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## פרשת נח

ב' דראש חדש חשוון

### Checks and Balances

Rabbi Moshe Goldberg

After just having begun the Torah anew following the נוראים ימים one wonders whether there is a correlation between this week's פרשה, יום כפור, and ראש השנה?

The רמב"ם in הלכות תשובה states that if a country has more עבירות than מצות then it will be destroyed. He states that the same applies to a province and even the whole world! The commentators are puzzled by this. How can the רמב"ם say that the world will be destroyed if Hashem promised after the flood, He would never again destroy the world!?

The answer can be given that the רמב"ם says that Hashem will destroy the world only if it gets to a state where there are more עבירות than מצות. Before the flood Hashem allowed the world to have more עבירות than מצות which was what allowed the world to be destroyed. After this, however, Hashem made a covenant with נח, that ensured the world would never again reach this state of being. If Hashem sees that the world has more עבירות than מצות, he brings punishments such as earthquakes and hurricanes to balance out the world's state, so it need not be destroyed. Hashem's covenant with נח was represented by the rainbow, which symbolized that despite Hashem's possible anger, He would never again destroy the world:

The ספר ההגוהר brings out this point by explaining why ראש השנה is called a "Moed"? He states that by giving mankind the ימים נוראים which balance out our עבירות each year our demerits will not accumulate. For these reasons ראש השנה keeps the world from getting destroyed and is thus considered to be a יום טוב even though it is also a יום דין.

This is the connection between our פרשה and the ימים נוראים. We should all be worthy of having a good, meaningful year filled with Torah and מצות.

### "No Looking Back"

Eli Lesser

In this week's פרשה Hashem commands נח to build an ark and construct a צהר for it. Rashi cites a disagreement in the commentators as to what a צהר is. Some say that Hashem wanted him to build a window and others say Hashem was referring to a special stone from which a particular light emanated. The סופר points out that this disagreement reflects the disagreement as to whether נח was in fact a truly righteous person or simply a righteous person relative to the people of his generation. When Lot's family was leaving Sodom, his wife looked back at the catastrophic destruction that was taking place. She was severely punished for doing so because she deserved a similar fate and was only being saved because

of the merit of Avraham. The same idea can be applied here. Those who say the צהר was a window agree with those who say that נח would have been a righteous person in any generation and, for this reason, he was permitted to look back. However, those who hold that the צהר was a stone agree that נח was not all that righteous and was therefore not permitted to look back at the destruction that was taking place.

### The Ability to Rise Above

Zak Maresky

It seems peculiar that G-d decided to destroy the world using a flood. The concept of the flood must certainly come to teach us something...

Now let's look back to the beginning of the Parsha, where Noach is defined as being righteous in his generation. Whether or not he would have been formidable in other generations as well; his ability to overcome and/or stay unaffected by the wickedness around him is most definitely the reason for his being called a Tzaddik.

Flooding the world wipes out all living organisms, EXCEPT the fish and under-water creatures. Why? The reason being that the fish are able to live in the same world as all the other animals, yet are also able to distance themselves from the many creatures on the land and remain unaffected by them. It is no coincidence that Noach and the fish were the saved ones. The reason is that they both possessed the remarkable ability to live their lives without becoming contaminated by the outside world. Therefore, by flooding the world, thereby saving the fish, it only exaggerates the importance of the trait of rising above the wickedness in the world.

Moreover, Efraim and Menashe are blessed by their grandfather Yaakov with the famous words of, "...Veyidgu Larov Bekerev Ha'aretz...", which literally means, "...They should increase into a multitude in the midst of the land...". However if you take a closer look at the work "Veyidgu", the root of it is, interestingly enough, is "Dag", meaning fish. Therefore, Bnei Yisrael are blessed to multiply, but to do so must rise above everything around us that would otherwise affect and contaminate us.

Therefore, Noah was righteous because he was able to overcome the terrible society around him, while the fish were saved for possessing a very similar trait. It is for that reason Bnei Yisrael are blessed to multiply in the way of the fish.

May we all witness the fulfillment of "Veyidgu Larov Bekerev Ha'aretz"!

### מעשה of the Week

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l was approached and was asked why his yeshiva, Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, taught the younger students the פרק of אלו מציאות in מסכת בבא מציעא and not a more fitting מסכת such as ברכות. Reb Moshe answered that an important lesson lies in בבא מציעא. He exclaimed that it is imperative to instill within the minds of young people the concept of not using something that is not theirs. This idea is reinforced by constantly delving into... להכריזו של ואלו מציאות. The old saying "finders keepers losers weepers" is not the way of the Torah!

**שבת שלום!**

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