



## WHEN NOAH DIDN'T ARGUE

When G-d tells Noah that he plans to destroy humanity, Noah does not pound on the table and demand mercy. Why? Why didn't he act like Moses, who pounded on the table and prevented the Children of Israel from being punished?

TEACHER'S MANUAL



# JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



NOAH

**Book of Genesis / Bereshit**

*Dedicated by  
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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

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The Torah tells of three generations in which G-d wanted to destroy those who had sinned, and relayed this plan to the righteous who lived in that same generation. Each of the respective righteous individuals reacted differently: Noah accepted it as a fait accompli and did not say a word to the contrary. Abraham tried to argue that there may be some righteous people through whom the whole city can be saved, but when he realized that there were no righteous he gave up, while Moses prayed for the sinners and even gave his life for them. (Sources 1, 2, and 3.)

The Zohar says that due to this behavior of Noah, the Flood is named after him – “The Waters of Noah” – for we consider it his fault because he did not pray for them (Source 4). The Zohar also emphasizes that the perfect conduct was that of Moses, who asked for mercy for the sinners and was ready to give his life for them (Source 5).

In his talk, the Rebbe cites the above sources, emphasizes the virtue of Moses above the others, and concludes that since the Giving of the Torah, the way of Moses’ conduct is “the portion of all”: this is how each and every one of us should behave; not to just hole up in an Ark and take care of oneself and one’s family, but take care of the general populace as well.

## **B. Why Noah Couldn’t Pray.....13**

The Rebbe explains that the purpose of the Flood for forty days was to purify the earth, following the example of the 40 se’ah measurement of the ritual “Mikvah” bath. And indeed, the Flood did effect a purification in the world.

As the Alter Rebbe explains in Torah Ohr, that if the purpose of the Flood was only to destroy the world, \*why\* G-d could have done it in a single moment?! Why was all the tumult needed? The explanation is that since the world was very deeply defiled, the Flood came so as to purify the earth (Source 6).

In what was the purging and purification element expressed? It was in the fact that it was now attainable for people to return to good with repentance.

Until the Flood there were only two possible options: Either to be the righteous who studied Torah and kept the commandments, or to be from the wicked ones.

But there was no reality of a repentant sinner. And this was made possible by the purification of the Flood.

This fact explains why Noah could not see merit for the people of his generation. Finding merit comes from understanding an individual's circumstances, as well as his difficulties. (As can be seen in the story of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciple). Noah, who had never experienced such difficulties and trials, and did not know the reality of repentants; he could not possibly understand what they are going through, and how it is altogether possible not to obey the commandment of G-d. He only knew they were sinning against G-d, so he could not arouse mercy on them.

Only after the Flood, when the world was purified and elevated and people could repent, (and especially after the Giving of the Torah), could the righteous individual indeed recognize the life-circumstances of sinners, to believe that they can repent and to see to arouse mercy on their behalf.

Also regarding Moshiach, of whom it is said, "he will be imbued with a spirit of fear for G-d; he will not need to judge by what his eyes see, etc", This is how he will preside in judgment of the Children of Israel. He will understand the circumstances and will find how to seek merit for the sinners as well (Source 7).

# Introduction:

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We are all familiar with the Rebbe's well-known talk about the difference between Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Unlike Noah and Abraham, Moses gave his very life to save the sinners from punishment. But the question arises: Could it be that Noah did not even try to save his contemporaries? Was he so self-centered, and apathetic to the fate of his neighbors?

In a talk delivered on Shabbat Parashat Noach 5721, the Rebbe refers to the history of human beings both from before and after the Flood, and explains that Noah had no ability to do more in his generation – which was before the Flood – what Moses was able to do centuries later.

A fascinating talk that teaches us about the correct way and manner in which we are to judge others.

# A. The Righteous Response

## Source 1 Genesis, 6:13, 14, 17, 18, 22

G-d tells Noah that he despises the corrupt behavior of humanity, and has decided to do a "reset." To destroy all of humanity, and begin it afresh again with Noah's family – the only family left with moral values. How did Noah respond to the offer? He did not utter a word of opposition or offer a prayer to sweeten the judgment of the rest of the people, but obeyed G-d's instructions unquestioningly.

G-d said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make it an ark with compartments and cover it inside and out with pitch ... And behold, I am about to bring the Flood—waters upon the earth—to destroy all flesh under the sky in which there is breath of life; everything on earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives ... Noah did so; just as G-d commanded him, so he did.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ קַח-לָךְ  
בָּשָׂר בָּא לְפָנַי כִּי-מְלֹאָה  
הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי  
מְשַׁחֲתֵם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ.  
עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי-גֹפֶר  
קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַתֵּבָה  
וְכִפַּרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ  
בַּכֹּפֶר ... וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֹבִיא  
אֶת-הַמַּבּוּל מִיָּם עַל-הָאָרֶץ  
לְשַׁחַת כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר-בוֹ  
רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם  
כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאָרֶץ יָגוּעַ.  
וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ  
וּבָאתָ אֶל-הַתֵּבָה אִתְּךָ  
וּבְנֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְנִשְׁי-בְנֶיךָ  
אִתְּךָ... וַיַּעַשׂ נֹחַ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר  
צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים כִּן עָשָׂה.

## Source 2 Genesis, 18:20-26, 32, 33

Centuries later, G-d decides to do a sort of 'mini-Flood', but this time it is only on the cities of Sodom and Amorah. He reveals to Abraham that the sins of Sodom are very grave ones, and therefore these cities are condemned to full extinction. How did Abraham react? He asked for mercy that at least the few righteous individuals who exist in these cities – would be saved. But when G-d assures him that there is not even a single righteous man there, he throws up his hands and concedes.

G-d said, “The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note.”

...Abraham came forward and said, “Will You sweep away the righteous along with the guilty? What if there should be fifty righteous within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the righteous fifty who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the righteous as well as the guilty, so that righteous and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

And G-d answered, “If I find within the city of Sodom fifty righteous ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”

... And He answered, “I will not destroy, for the sake of the ten.”

When G-d had finished speaking to Abraham, He departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' וְעַתָּה סֹדֵם וְעֹמֹרָה כִּי רַבָּה וַחֲטָאתָם כִּי כָבֵדָה מְאֹד. אֲרִבְדָּה נָא וְאַרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקוֹתֶיהָ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ כָלָהּ וְאִם לֹא אֲדַעָה. וַיִּפְנוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ סֹדֵמָה וְאַבְרָהָם עֹדְנֵנו עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי ה'.

וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֵף תִּסְפֶּה צְדִיק עִם רָשָׁע. אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר הָאֵף תִּסְפֶּה וְלֹא תִשָּׂא לְמָקוֹם לְמַעַן חַמְשִׁים הַצְדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּהּ. חֲלִלָה לָךְ מַעֲשֵׂת כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית צְדִיק עִם רָשָׁע וְהָיָה כְּצְדִיק כְּרָשָׁע חֲלִלָה לָךְ הַשֹּׁפֵט כָּל הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אִם אֶמְצָא בְּסֹדֵם חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְנִשְׂאתִי לְכָל הַמָּקוֹם בְּעַבְוֹרָם...

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל נָא יַחַר לְה' וְאַדְבָּרָה אֶךְ הַפַּעַם אוֹלֵי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם עֶשְׂרֵה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁחִית בְּעַבּוֹר הָעֶשְׂרֵה.

וַיֵּלֶךְ ה' כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל אַבְרָהָם וְאַבְרָהָם שָׁב לְמָקוֹמוֹ.

### Source 3 Exodus, 12:7-12, 32

About a thousand years later, G-d decides to destroy the People of Israel due to the sin of the Golden Calf, and to start it anew from Moses. Moses is not silent, nor does he ask for mercy only on the righteous among the Children of Israel who did not sin, but he also beseeches mercy for the sinners themselves, that they will not die. This is to the extent, that he puts his life on the line and tells G-d: If you kill them, you should kill me too.

G-d spoke to Moses, “Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely. They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined upon them. They have made themselves a molten calf and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, saying: ‘This is your G-d, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’”

G-d further said to Moses, “I see that this is a stiffnecked people. Now, leave me alone, so that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make you a great nation.”

But Moses implored G-d, saying, “Let not Your anger, O Lord, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. ...

Now, if You will forgive their sin [well and good]; but if not, erase me from the record which You have written!”

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ רַד כִּי שָׁחַת  
עַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.  
סָרוּ מִהֵרָא מִזֶּה הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִם  
עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֵגֶל מִסֹּכָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ  
לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִינוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת הָעָם  
הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עִם קָשָׁה עָרְפָּה הוּא. וְעַתָּה  
הַנִּיחָה לִּי וַיִּחַר אַפִּי בָהֶם וְאֶכְלֵם  
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתְךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל.

וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פְּנֵי ה' אֶלְקֵינוּ וַיֹּאמֶר  
לָמָּה ה' יִחַרְרָה אַפְּךָ בְּעַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר  
הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גָּדוֹל  
וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה. לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם  
לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאָם לְהָרֵג אֶתֶם  
בְּהָרִים וּלְכַלֵּתֶם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה  
שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהִנַּחֵם עַל הָרָעָה  
לְעַמְּךָ...

וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אִין  
מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ.

## >> The Rebbe

### Noah vs. Abraham

The Zohar states that there were three righteous individuals who lived among an immoral society: Noah, Abraham and Moses.

In the generation of Noah, with the advent of the Great Flood, Noah prayed for the salvation of his family and himself. He didn't think about the rest of humanity. Only when approached and asked about his construction of an ark did he rebuke the people of his generation and say that G-d planned to bring a flood and destroy humanity. The Zohar is critical of the fact that he waited to be approached and didn't make it his business to reach out to them.

איתא בזהר<sup>1</sup> אודות שלשה צדיקים שכל אחד ואחד מהם היה בדור שהיה שלא כדבעי: נח, אברהם ומשה.

בדורו של נח בשעת המבול - התפלל נח רק עבור עצמו ועבור בני-ביתו, ועל כל הדור לא חשב. רק בשעה שבאו אליו ושאלוהו לשם מה הוא בונה את התיבה - סיפר להם שהקב"ה עומד להביא מבול על העולם, והוכיחם. וכיון שזה היה רק בשעה שבאו אליו, שהרי הוא לא הלך אליהם - נאמר על זה בזהר ביטוי קשה.

### Source 4 Zohar, Part 3, P. 14-15

The Zohar explains that the Great Flood is called in the Torah "Mei Noah" ("the Waters of Noah"), because, in a sense, it is his fault that it came to be...

"G-d said to Noah: I have decided to put an end to all flesh..." Noah replied, "What will you do to me?" G-d said, "I will establish My covenant with you. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood..." Noah didn't pray for humankind; the rain fell and humankind was exterminated. Therefore, the verse calls it, "the waters of Noah." It is definitely his waters and he is responsible for them; he failed to pray for the entire world.

ויאמר אלקים לנח קץ כל בשר בא לפני וגו'. אמר לו נח, ולי מה אתה עושה? אמר לו, והקמתי את בריתי אתך וגו' עשה לך תבת עצי גפר. ולא בקש רחמים על העולם, וירדו המים והאבידו את בני העולם. ומשום כך כתוב מי נח. מי נח ונדאי, שבו הם היו תלויים, שלא בקש רחמים על העולם.

## >> The Rebbe

Abraham didn't wait to be approached. Rather, "Abraham called in the name of G-d," he reached out and spread his message of monotheism throughout the world. However, his goal was to create a society of righteous people. He didn't occupy himself with the wellbeing of the non-virtuous. When G-d decreed that Sodom be destroyed, he said to G-d, "Perhaps there are...righteous individuals inside the city," in whose merit the city shouldn't be destroyed. When he understood that there weren't even ten righteous individuals, "Abraham returned to his place,"<sup>4</sup> and had no more complaints.

אברהם - לא המתין עד שיבואו אליו, אלא "ויקרא שם בשם הוי' א-ל עולם"<sup>2</sup>, הוא הלך לכולם ופרסם אלקות בעולם. אבל אף על פי כן, במה התבטאה עבודתו - לעשות כולם צדיקים, ואילו עבור אלו שאינם צדיקים, לא ביקש. בשעה שהיתה הגזירה על סדום, ביקש מהקב"ה "אולי יש גו' צדיקים בתוך העיר"<sup>3</sup> שאם יש בה צדיקים לא יחריב את העיר בעבורם, ובשעה שענו לו שאין עשרה צדיקים - אזי "ואברהם שב למקומו"<sup>4</sup>, ולא היו לו עוד טענות.

*Abraham indeed wanted to save the entire city in the merit of its righteous, that is, that the sinners would also be saved, but this would all be credit to the righteous within the city. When he learned that there were none that were righteous in the city, he did not find the strength to look for merit within the sinners, but instead returned home.*

## A True Faithful Shepherd

Moses, however, as the faithful shepherd of the Jewish people, behaved differently. When the Jewish people sinned, Moses demanded of G-d to forgive them all, even the non-virtuous among them. Instead of following the example of Noah who prayed only for his own family, Moses demanded of G-d the very opposite: "If [you don't forgive the Jewish people], erase me from Your book."<sup>5</sup>

אבל הנהגתו של משה, רעיא מהימנא, היתה באופן אחר. בשעה שחטאו בני ישראל - תבע משה רבינו מהקב"ה שימחל לכל בני ישראל, גם לרשעים, ולא זו בלבד שלא התנהג כמו נח שהתפלל רק עבורו ועבור בני-ביתו, אלא אדרבה - משה רבינו אמר<sup>5</sup>: "ואם

(4) שם, לג.  
(5) שמות לב, לב.

(2) בראשית כא, לג.  
(3) בראשית יז, כד.

Moses placed himself in danger for the sake of the Jewish people. There was no logical reason to pray for those who intentionally sinned with the Golden Calf, yet Moses risked his own place, resolutely and devotedly, for them as well. This behavior is dubbed by the Zohar – the Torah’s soul<sup>6</sup> – to be true perfection. This is the correct path to follow after the Giving of the Torah. This is a true “faithful shepherd.”

אין - מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת.”

משה רבינו סיכן את עצמו למען בני ישראל. ואף שעל פי שכל, על - פי טעם ודעת, אין מקום להתפלל עבור חוטא בעגל ובמזיד - סיכן משה רבינו את עצמו, ברצון חזק ומסירות-נפש שלמעלה מטעם ודעת, גם עבורם. ורק הנהגה זו קורא הזוהר הקדוש - “נשמתא דאורייתא”<sup>6</sup> - בשם “שלימו כדקא יאות.”

### Source 5 Zohar Part 3, P. 106

*The Zohar analyzes the behavior of these three righteous personalities, and says that only Moses acted in the most perfect way.*

The one who acted perfectly - was Moses. Because as soon as G-d said to him, “they have turned aside quickly from the way...they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it,” it is written, “And Moses implored G-d...” And the verse continues until he said, “if You will forgive their sin [well and good]; but if not, erase me from the record which You have written.” And even though they had all sinned, he did not budge from there until He told him, “I have pardoned according to your word.” But Abraham didn’t pay attention unless there was a righteous man among them, and if not, not. In this regard, there was nobody as decent as Moses, who was a faithful shepherd.

אָבֵל מִי עָשָׂה בְּשִׁלְמוֹת כְּרָאוּי?  
זֶה מֹשֶׁה. שְׂכִינֵן שְׁאָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ  
בְּרוּךְ הוּא (שְׁמוֹת ל"ב) סָרוּ מִהַר מִן  
הַדֶּרֶךְ וְגו', עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֵגֶל מִסִּכָּה  
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לּוֹ - מִיָּד כְּתוּב וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה  
אֶת פָּנָיו ה' אֱלֹהָיו וְגו', עַד שְׁאָמַר  
וַעֲתָה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין  
מְחַנֵּי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ. וְאִף  
עַל גַּב שְׂכָלְךָ חֲטָאוּ, לֹא זָז מִשֵּׁם  
עַד שְׁאָמַר לוֹ סְלַחְתִּי כְּדַבְּרֶךָ. אָבֵל  
אֲבָרְהָם לֹא הִשְׁגִּיחַ אֶלָּא אִם נִמְצָא  
בְּהֶם צְדִיק, וְאִם לֹא - לֹא. עַל זֶה  
לֹא הָיָה בְּעוֹלָם בּוֹ אָדָם שְׂיִגֵּן עַל  
דוֹרוֹ כְּמוֹ מֹשֶׁה שֶׁהוּא רוֹעֵה נְאֻמָּו.

## >> The Rebbe

### The Proper Path in Our Day

The leader of a generation, especially after the Giving of the Torah, endangers himself for the wellbeing of his people without distinction, regardless of whether they are deserving or not. He doesn't lock himself into an "ark" with his wife and children,<sup>7</sup> while leaving the rest of his flock to their fate without caring to pray for them. As the Zohar states, "That is why the Flood is called in his name, Noah's Flood."<sup>8</sup>

A true shepherd of his flock places himself in harm's way with genuine self-sacrifice for the sake of his people. This applies even to a generation like the Israelites who left Egypt, about whom Rabbi Akiva said "they do not have a portion in the world to come"<sup>9</sup> (even though Rabbi Akiva was a great lover of Israel, who taught that loving your fellow is a great precept of the Torah). Moses, the faithful shepherd sacrificed himself for their sake, and remained behind in the desert with them; the Midrash states<sup>10</sup> on the verse, "He carried out G-d's judgement and his decisions for Israel,"<sup>11</sup> that Moses remained with his generation in the desert in order to take them along when he ultimately leaves.

זוהי הדרך לאחרי מתן-תורה, וזהו סימנו של "רעיא מהימנא". מנהיג הדור, ובפרט לאחרי מתן-תורה, מסכן את עצמו עבור כל בני ישראל ללא יוצא מן הכלל, בין אם יש לזה מקום בשכל ובין אם לאו.

הוא אינו נועל בתיבה את עצמו "ובניו ואשתו ונשי בניו אתו", ואילו שאר בני ישראל - "לא בעי רחמי עליהו", כיון שהם כו', "ובגין כך איקרון מי המבול על שמייה"<sup>8</sup>, רועה ישראל מסכן את עצמו ובמסירות-נפשו בפועל עבור דור שהוא אפילו כמו "דור המדבר" שעליהם אמר רבי עקיבא - אף שהיה אוהב ישראל, ואמר "ואהבת לרעך כמוך". זהו כלל גדול בתורה" - ש"אין להם חלק לעולם הבא"<sup>9</sup>, ואף על פי כן, משה רבינו, הרועה הנאמן, מסכן את עצמו גם עבורם, ונשאר במדבר בשבילם, כמו שמובא במדרש<sup>10</sup>, כמו שנאמר<sup>11</sup> "צדקת הוי' עשה ומשפטיו עם ישראל", שמשה רבינו נשאר במדבר כדי לקחת את דור המדבר עמו.

Shabbos Parshas Shelach, 5715  
(Toras Menachem vol. 14 pg. 158)

(10) במדב"ר פי"ט, יג  
(11) דברים לג, כא.

(7) בראשית ו, ו.  
(8) זח"א טו, ב.  
(9) סנהדרין קח, רע"א (במשנה).

## B. Why Noah Couldn't Pray

After we've learned about the virtue of Abraham our forefather who tried to save the people of Sodom, and especially about the virtue of Moses who gave his life for the people of his generation, a question remains: How is it possible that Noah did not even try to teach justice about his people? Was he so self-centered that he did not care at all about the rest of the population?

In the following talk, the Rebbe explains the inner purpose of the Great Flood and its effect on the world, thereby explaining why Noah did not have the mental ability to view the sinners in a favorable light, as Moses did hundreds of years later.

### >> The Rebbe

#### The Flood was a Mikveh

It is known that the purpose of the Flood was to purify the world, and therefore the rain of the Flood was for a period of 40 days, similarly to the concept of purification accomplished by the 40 se'ah (a liquid measurement) of a ritual "Mikvah" bath, and this effected a general purification in the world, which helped the purification accomplished by the Egyptian exile in preparation for the Giving of the Torah. And the purification of the world done by the Flood – is the idea of Teshuvah, Repentance.

ידוע שענין המבול הי' לטהר את הארץ, שלכן היו גשמי המבול במשך ארבעים יום, דוגמת ענין הטהרה שעל ידי ארבעים סאה במקוה<sup>12</sup>, ועל ידי זה נעשה זיכוך כללי בעולם, שסייע להזיכוך שנעשה על ידי גלות מצרים בתור הכנה למתן תורה<sup>13</sup>. וזיכוך העולם שנעשה על ידי המבול - הוא ענין תנועת התשובה.

#### Source 5 Torah Ohr, 8c

The purpose of the Flood was not only to bring destruction to the world, but also to purify it.

For seemingly the whole concept of the Flood is not understood, that if it were only to remove and destroy the sinful people, why was it necessary to such a great tumult? Why, in but a single moment G-d could have removed them even without the Flood!

כִּי הִנֵּה לְכַאוֹרָה אֵינוּ מוֹבֵן עֲנִין הַמִּבּוּל, שָׁאִם הָיָה רַק לְהַעֲבִיר וּלְשַׁחַת הָאֲנָשִׁים הַחוֹטְאִים, לָמָּה הֲצָרָךְ לְבַחֲיַת רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל כָּזֶה? הֲלֹא בְּרִגְעַ אֶחָד הָיָה בִּיכְלֹת ה' לְהַעֲבִירָם אֶף בְּלֹא הַמִּבּוּל!

(13) שם שמות, ג, סע"ב. יתרו עד, סע"א ואילך. ובכ"מ.

(12) תו"א ריש פרישתנו, (ה), סע"ג ואילך. ובכ"מ.

Rather, the Flood had in fact come to purify the world, as it is said: For the whole earth was filled with robbery, and was greatly corrupt, and was in need of purification. And for this purpose precisely the Flood came upon the world; being that it is the idea of water, in order to purify the unclean. And as the “Mikvah” bath of 40 se’ah, which purifies the unclean, similarly came the Flood to purify the whole world. And as it is written: (Ezekiel ch. 36) “and I will sprinkle pure water upon you, so that you may become cleansed.”

אֲךָ בְּאֶמְת הַיָּהּ הַמְּבּוּל בָּא לְטַהֵר אֶת  
הָאָרֶץ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כִּי מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ  
חֲמָס, וְנִתְקַלְקְלָה מְאֹד, וְהָיָה נִצְרָךְ  
לְטַהֵרָהּ. וְלִזְאת בָּא הַמְּבּוּל דְּוָקָא,  
שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת מַיִם, בְּכַדֵּי לְטַהֵר אֶת  
הַטְּמְאִים. שֶׁהוּא כְּדִגְמַת הַמִּקְוָה מ'  
סָאָה, שֶׁהִיא מְטַהֶרֶת אֶת הַטְּמָא,  
כְּמוֹ כֵּן הָיָה הַמְּבּוּל בָּא בְּכַדֵּי  
לְטַהֵר אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ. וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב:  
(יִחְזַקְאֵל לוֹ) וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מַיִם  
טְהוּרִים וְטַהַרְתֶּם כו'.

## >> The Rebbe

### The Strict Divide

The point is as follows: Before the Flood, there was no element of Repentance in the world, but rather, all that existed was one of the two extremes: on the one hand – in every generation there were righteous individuals who kept mitzvot, at least the six mitzvot which were given to the first person, Adam, as we find that Adam learned Torah with his son Shais, and Shais passed it on to his sons after him, from generation to generation, and in addition to that, since they kept mitzvot, they must also have studied the Torah, for “Learning brings to Action”. And on the other hand – this was the second extreme – “the world was filled with robbery”, But the Teshuvah element was not in the world then.

Similarly, the Talmud in Tractate Sanhedrin states: "that Noah the righteous one would reprove them . . and they would shame him", meaning, that Noah’s reproof was not successful in arousing them to repent and return to ways of good.

והענין בזה: קודם המבול לא היה ענין התשובה בעולם<sup>14</sup>, כי אם, אחד משתי הקצוות: מחד גיסא - היו בכל דור צדיקים שקיימו מצוות, על כל פנים שש המצוות שניתנו לאדם הראשון, וכמו כן למדו תורה, כפי שמצינו<sup>15</sup> שאדם הראשון למד תורה עם שות, ושת מסרה לבניו אחריו, מדור לדור, ונוסף לזה, כיון שקיימו מצוות, הרי בהכרח שהיה אצלם גם לימוד התורה, שהרי "תלמוד מביא לידי מעשה"<sup>16</sup>. ולאידך גיסא - היה הקצה השני - "מלאה הארץ חמס"<sup>17</sup>; אבל תנועת התשובה לא היתה אז בעולם.

וכדאיתא בגמרא במסכת סנהדרין<sup>18</sup> "שהיה נח הצדיק מוכיח בהם . . והיו מבזין אותו", היינו, שתוכחתו של נח לא הועילה לעוררם לתשובה.

(17) פרשתנו ו, יג.  
(18) קו, א-ב.

(14) בנוגע להתשובה דאדה"ר וקין - ראה לקו"ש שם הערה 41  
(15) ראה פרדר"א רפ"ה, ובביאור הרד"ל שם אות י"ד.  
(16) קידושין מ, ב. וש"נ.

There may be those who might ask: Seemingly we see from here that Noah indeed tried to save his contemporaries – by means of reproach – so what is the claim against him? But it is important to note, that the “complaint” on Noah here is, primarily, that he didn’t pray for his fellowmen that G-d should forgive them. Contrast that with Moses’ approach, who asked G-d to pardon the sinners as well. So it has nothing to do with the fact that he tried (a little) to bring them back to repentance.

And the reason for this: Before the Flood, the nature and materiality of the world was one of greater strength and intensity, so there was no spiritual service of “Repentance” whose purpose is purification and elevation. The whole idea of “Repentance” only came about via the Flood, which effected purification within the world.

### Who Can Learn Merit On Others?

And by prefacing the words of the Zohar that the Flood was called on Noah’s name, for he hadn’t prayed for the people of his generation – , for seemingly it is incomprehensible: Why did he not pray for the people of his generation, nor find some merit for them?

To explain: according to the abovementioned, that before the Flood there was no “Repentance” element in the world, and since by Noah himself the whole “traction” called Repentance was not around, therefore he could not look for some merits for his contemporaries, because, to be merit-seeking about others, one must experience this matter himself.

As it is well known the story about the Baal Shem Tov, that one of his disciples did not have the virtue of highlighting the merits, and the Baal Shem Tov made it so that this disciple

וטעם הדבר - לפי שקודם המבול היה טבע וחומריות העולם בתוקף ביותר, ולכן לא היתה עבודת התשובה שענינה הוא הזדככות. וענין התשובה נתחדש על ידי המבול שפעל זיכוך בעולם.

ובהקדם ביאור דברי הזהר שהמבול נקרא על שמו של נח, לפי שלא התפלל על אנשי דורו - דלכאורה אינו מובן: מדוע אמנם לא התפלל על אנשי דורו ולא לימד זכות עליהם?

והביאור בזה - על פי האמור שקודם המבול לא היה ענין התשובה בעולם, וכיון שאצל נח עצמו לא היה עדיין התנועה דתשובה, לכן לא היה יכול ללמד זכות על אנשי דורו, כי, כדי ללמד זכות על הזולת צריך לחוות בעצמו ענין זה.

וכידוע הסיפור<sup>19</sup> אודות הבעל שם טוב<sup>20</sup>, שאצל אחד מתלמידיו לא היה הענין של לימוד זכות כו', וסיבב הבעל שם טוב כמה ענינים שהלה יגיע בערב שבת בשעה מאוחרת לפנות ערב, וכאשר ראה עד כמה יכול להיות גדול

אדמו"ר, ולכן אינני מאריך בפרטי הדברים.

(19) ראה "סיפורי חסידים" (להרשי" זעווין), מועדים ע' 39 ואילך.  
(20) כ"ק אדמו"ר שלישי"א הפסיק ואמר: לא שמעתי סיפור זה מכ"ק מו"ח

would arrive on a late hour on Friday evening approaching nightfall, and when he saw how great the difficulty in keeping Shabbat could be, then he, too, began to look for merits in his fellow men.

הקושי בשמירת שבת, אזי התחיל ללמד זכות על אחרים.

## Noah's Simple Life

According to the above, it becomes understood: Since Noah himself did not experience the element of Repentance, he could not seek out the merits in others of his generation, for, one who has not had difficulties or obstacles – or at least, intense difficulties – cannot at all comprehend how it is possible to not listen to G-d, and therefore cannot highlight or see the merits of others.

This is all – on the part of the period before the Flood, when there was still no precedent of Repentance in the world. But on the part of the period after the Flood, when the element of Repentance had begun – it became a concept that "Like the waters of Noah, this shall be to Me: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again pass over the earth, so have I sworn not to be wrathful with you nor to rebuke you", as it will come to be in the days of the future Redemption, which will be preceded and brought about through Repentance.

ועל פי זה מובן, שכיון שנח עצמו לא חווה את ענין התשובה, לא היה יכול ללמד זכות עליהם, שכן, מי שלא היו לו נסיונות, על כל פנים נסיונות קשים, אינו יכול להבין כלל איך שייך שלא לשמוע להקב"ה, ולכן אינו יכול ללמד זכות על אחרים.

וכל זה - מצד התקופה שקודם המבול, שעדיין לא היתה התנועה דתשובה בעולם. אבל מצד התקופה שלאחרי המבול, שאז נתחדשה התנועה דתשובה - נעשה הענין ד"אשר נשבעתי מעבור מי נח עוד על הארץ כן נשבעתי מקצוף עליך ומגער בך", כפי שיהיה בימות המשיח<sup>21</sup>, על ידי הקדמת התשובה.

*The Rebbe explains here a wonderful idea: Noah himself did not experience trials, and he did not experience repentance. (Because the matter of repentance, as mentioned, did not exist then in the world. There were only the categories of the "righteous" and the "wicked". But there were no people who experienced sin and returned to their original ways, by means of repentance). Therefore, he could not find in his mind the wherewithal to search for the good inherent within the sinners. Because he did not experience it, and because this thing did not exist at all in the world at the time.*

Only after the Flood had purged and purified the world, and made that Repentance be possible and attainable, only then could people experience trials and tribulations in the service of G-d, and to be repentant. And only then could the righteous understand the soul of the sinner and highlight the good that is within him.

## How To Judge Someone

It is in this manner too – that the genuine element of judgment and decision-making is performed, as was explained in the talk of Simchat Torah thirty-one years ago: that it is not in a way that the judge sees only the deed itself, but he must also contemplate and dig deeper to find the reasons or symptoms that led to the commission of this action.

Indeed, in this manner will be, in the future era, the true decision-making and judgment by Moshiach, as it is written “Righteousness will be the girdle around his loins”, and therefore “he will judge the destitute with righteousness”, that is, he will find merits also for those who are in the status and condition of “poor” in the spiritual sense.

from Shabbos Parshas Noah, 5721

(Toras Menachem vol. 29 pg. 159)

ובאופן כזה הוא אמיתית ענין הדין ומשפט - כמבואר בשיחת שמחת תורה לפני שלושים ואחת שנה<sup>22</sup>, שאין זה באופן שהדיין רואה את המעשה בלבד, אלא עליו להתבונן ולמצוא את הסיבות שהביאו לעשיית מעשה זה,

ובאופן זה יהיה הדין והמשפט האמיתי אצל משיח, כמו שכתוב “והיה צֶדֶק אזור מתניו”<sup>23</sup>, ולכן “ושפט בצדק דלים”<sup>24</sup>, דהיינו שימצא זכות גם עבור אלו שהם במעמד ומצב של “דלים”.

24 שם, ד.

22 שיחת יום שמוח"ת תר"צ סלי"ט ואילך (סה"ש תר"ץ ע' 117 ואילך).  
23 ישעי' יא, ה.

## A Story By Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

In his youth, the famed Maggid of Zlotchov, Rabbi Yechiel Michel, lived in a certain town, where he would sit all day in the local Beit Midrash (study hall and synagogue) and pursue his studies.

In that town there lived a simple Jew who earned his livelihood by transporting travelers and merchandise in his wagon. One day, the wagon driver came to the local rabbi in a state of great distress. “Help me, Rebbe!” he wept. “I have committed a terrible sin. I have desecrated the holy Shabbat. How can I atone for my transgression?”

“How did this come to pass?” asked the Rabbi.

“Last Friday,” the man explained, “I was returning from the marketplace with a wagonload of merchandise when I lost my way in the forest. By the time I found my way to the outskirts of the city, the sun had already set. So preoccupied was I with my worry over the merchandise, that I failed to realize that the Shabbat had arrived until it was too late...”

Seeing how broken-hearted the man was, the rabbi comforted him and said: “My son, the gates of repentance are never closed. Donate a pound of candles to the synagogue and your transgression will be forgiven.”

The young prodigy, Rabbi Michel, overheard this exchange, and was displeased by the rabbi’s approach. “A pound of candles to atone for violating the Shabbat?” he thought to himself. “The Shabbat is one of the most important mitzvot of the Torah. Why is the rabbi treating the matter so lightly?”

That Friday afternoon, the wagon driver brought the candles to the synagogue. As Rabbi Michel watched disapprovingly from his table against the back wall, he placed them on the lectern for the synagogue beadle to light in honor of the Shabbat. But this was not to be. Before the beadle arrived, a stray dog carried off the candles and ate them.

The distraught penitent ran to report the incident to the rabbi. “Woe is me!” he wept. “My repentance has been rejected in Heaven! What shall I do?!”

“You’re making too much of the matter,” the rabbi reassured him. “These things happen — there’s no reason to deduce that G-d is rejecting your repentance. Bring another pound of candles to the synagogue next week, and everything will be alright.”

But when the beadle lit the candles on the following Friday afternoon, they inexplicably melted down, so that by the time Shabbat commenced, nothing was left of them. And upon his third attempt on the week after that, a strong wind suddenly blew out the candles just when Shabbat began and it was not possible to relight them.

The rabbi, too, realized, that something was amiss, and advised the wagon driver to seek the counsel of the great Chassidic master, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov.

“Hmm...” said the Baal Shem Tov, upon hearing the man’s story. “It seems that a certain young scholar in your town finds fault with the path to repentance that the rabbi has prescribed for you. Never mind. Next week, donate another pound of candles to the synagogue. This time, I promise you that everything will be alright. And tell Rabbi Michel that I would be honored if he could trouble himself to come visit

Rabbi Michel wasted no time in abiding by the Baal Shem Tov’s request. But no sooner had he and his coachman set out that all sorts of troubles beset their journey. First, the wagon tumbled into a ditch. Then, an axle broke many miles from the nearest town. After which they lost their way altogether. When they finally found the road to Mezhibuzh it was late Friday afternoon and the sun was about to set. They were forced to abandon the wagon and continue on foot.

Rabbi Michel arrived at the Baal Shem Tov’s door an hour into Shabbat, weary and traumatized by his near-violation of the holy day. “Good Shabbat, Reb Michel,” Rabbi Israel greeted him, “come in and warm yourself by the fire. You, Reb Michel, have never tasted sin, so you did not comprehend the remorse a Jew feels at having transgressed the will of his Father in Heaven. I trust that you now understand something of the agony that our friend experienced. Believe me, his remorse alone more than atoned for his unwitting transgression...”

From Rabbi S. Y. Zevin’s Sippurei Chassidim;  
translation/adaptation by Yanki Tauber.

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The conduct of Moshiach, says the prophet Isaiah, will be such that “he will be imbued with a spirit of fear for G-d; he will not need to judge by what his eyes see nor decide by what his ears hear”, but rather “with righteousness he will judge the destitute, and will decide with fairness for the humble of the earth”.

The most unique thing, is that he will not judge according to what he sees with his eyes, nor will he prove according to what his ears hear, but will justly judge the poor and prove those who are fallen of the spirit.

That is the conduct and mannerism of Moshiach, one that is above nature. The law and judgment of people in general is only according to what they see with their eyes and what they will hear with their ears. When one judges another, both when the judgment is a visible one, open to the public, and also when one judges the other in his heart alone, then the elements of law and morals are only according to what he sees and hears, he does not enter the life of the one on the judgment stand, he does not consider his status and condition. That is, he does not enter into his inner life and does not delve into the reasons that brought him to such a type of life. He judges him solely on the face of that which he sees and hears and not according to

הנהגתו של משיח היא  
”והריחו ביראת ה' ולא  
למראה עיניו ישפוט ולא  
למשמע אזניו יוכיח” אלא  
”ושפט בצדק דלים והוכיח  
במישור לענוי ארץ”.

הדבר מופלא ביותר, הוא  
לא ישפוט בהתאם למה  
שראה בעיניו, ולא יוכיח  
אחרי משמע אזניו, אלא  
ישפוט בצדק את העניים  
ויוכיח את נפולי הרוח.

זוהי הנהגתו של משיח,  
הנהגה שלמעלה מן הטבע.  
הדין והמשפט של בני  
אדם הוא רק בהתאם למה  
שבעיניו יראה ובאזניו  
ישמע. כשאחד שופט את  
השני, גם כשהמשפט הוא  
גלוי, ברבים, וגם כשהוא  
שופט את השני בלבד, הרי  
יסודות המשפט ויסודות  
המוסר הם רק לפי מה  
שהוא רואה בעיניו ושומע  
באזניו, אין הוא נכנס  
לחיו של השפוט, אין  
הוא מתחשב במעמדו  
ומצבו ובמה שסובב אותו,  
כלומר, אין הוא נכנס לחיו  
הפנימיים ואינו מתעמק  
בסיבות שהביאו אותו  
לחיים כאלה. הוא שופט  
אותו אך ורק לנוכח מה  
שהוא רואה ושומע ולא  
לנוכח מצבו ומעמדו של  
השפוט. משפט כזה איננו

the condition and status of the judge. Such a sentence or decision is not a real sentence, such a sentence is too dry, being as it's built on light foundations. The real judgment is such, that the judge must put himself in the place of the one being judged, he should – and must – know all the reasons that brought the fellow being judged, to such a situation.

The Talmudic Sage Hillel's stern warning: "Do not judge your friend until you reach his place", when you see that someone has failed in his inability to stand a particular test or tribulation, do not judge him until you have passed such a test yourself. This great warning is word of G-d.

We can judge or decide only when the judge puts himself in the place of the one being judged and lives that individual's experience.

משפּט אַמיתי, משפּט כּזה  
הוא יבש מדּי, בנוי על  
יסודות קלים. המשפּט  
האַמיתי הוא, שעל השופּט  
להעמיד את עצמו במקומו  
של השפּוט, הוא צריך  
ומוכרח לדעת כל הסיבות  
שהביאו את השפּוט למצב  
כּזה.

אזהרתו הגדולה של הלל  
"אל תדין את חברך עד  
שתגיע למקומו", כשאתה  
רואה שאחד נכשל באי  
יכולתו לעמוד בנסיון, אל  
תשפוט אותו עד שיעבור  
עליך עצמך נסיון כּזה.  
אזהרה גדולה זו היא מאמר  
השם.

יכולים לשפוט רק באשר  
השופּט מעמיד את עצמו  
במקומו של השפּוט וחי את  
הנסיון שלו.