



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

Why Didn't Noach Pray on Behalf of The People in His Generation?

Many commentaries take issue with the fact that Noach does not seek to defend the people of his generation before God. Noach is a true servant. God asked Noach to build an ark and he did so. God requests that he gather the animals and Noach abides by His request. The Torah uses the phrase “*va'yaaas Noach*” several times to highlight that he indeed fulfilled all of Hashem's requests. Why did Noach not daven to Hashem or request that the generation be saved?

In Parshat Vayera, when Avraham learns of the imminent destruction of Sedom, he pleads with Hashem to spare the inhabitants of Sedom. When Moshe hears of Hashem's desire to annihilate Am Yisrael and start a nation from Moshe's descendants, Moshe pleads for their forgiveness. Why did Noach not attempt to persuade Hashem to reconsider bringing a flood to destroy the earth's inhabitants when he was informed of the fate of his generation?

In defense of Noach, the Ohr Hachaim offers two explanations. The first is based on linguistics and the second is based on logic. When Hashem appears to Avraham in connection with Sedom, Hashem tells

Avraham “I will descend and see” ארדה נא ואראה - It is clear that a final decision has not yet been taken (Bereshit 18:21). Hashem is telling Avraham that he is evaluating whether or not to destroy Sedom. Therefore, Avraham has the ability to try to persuade Hashem to spare the inhabitants of Sedom. Similarly, when Hashem informs Moshe that he is frustrated with the nation, it does not appear that Hashem made a final decision (see Bamidbar 14:11). Therefore, Moshe is able to defend Am Yisrael before Hashem.

In contrast, when Noach is informed of the flood – it is presented by Hashem as *fait accompli*. God tells Noach: “I am destroying them from the earth” והני משחיתם את (הארץ) (Bereshit 7:13). Once God makes a decree there is no ability for Noach to change God's will. Avraham and Moshe were presented with God's considerations, Noach with God's final decision. Therefore, Noach's prayers would be useless in changing the will of God.

In addition, Hashem's appearance to Avraham and Moshe was not necessary. Hashem could have carried out His destruction without consulting them. The mere fact that Hashem raised his considerations

with them was so that they could plead for mercy on behalf of the sinners. Noach however, had to be informed of the immediate danger, since he had to build an ark in order to be spared. Hashem's revelation to Noach was not a hint to pray, but practical advice so that Noach and his family can survive the flood.

For some reason Noach is viewed as a very ambiguous figure. Some claim that he was righteous compared to those wicked people who lived in his generation, but if he lived in the generation of Avraham he would not have been viewed as such a righteous individual (see Rashi on first pasuk). The Ohr Hachamim cleverly defends Noach so that we understand why he merited being saved. It is always good when judging others to give them the benefit of the doubt. ■



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