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A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

"Come out of the Ark." - צא מן התבה (ח:טז)

Why did Noach not leave the Ark on his own volition when he saw the waters had rescinded? Why did Noach wait for G-d's command to leave the Ark?

The Midrash Rabbah (34:4) quotes a verse in Megillat Kohelet (10:4) "If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place." This refers to Noach who enters the Ark only after receiving permission from G-d. So too, leaving the Ark, similarly, requires permission from G-d.

The Malbim (Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser 1809-1879, Kiev) explains that the whole process in which Noach and his family were saved from the Flood was miraculous and unnatural. The Ark had no steering ability or braking system, to prevent smashing against boulders or rocks. As this complete encounter of being saved was miraculous, leaving the Ark seemed feasible only with G-d's command. G-d could have chosen any number of natural ways to save Noach, such as placing him on a high mountain untouched by the Flood. G-d affirmed that all inhabitants of earth would be destroyed. G-d ordered Noach to take up residence in the Ark, discarding his residence as an inhabitant of the earth. Noach would become like the fish of the waters which were not affected by the Flood. Since Noach was not aware how long the curse of earth's desolation remained, he waited on the Ark, until being informed by G-d. Shabbat Shalom