



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS
RCA ISRAEL REGION

In memory of **Evelyn Rivers a"h**
חנה פעסא בת אהרן זלמן הכהן ע"ה
Mother of Reuven Tradburks

PARSHAT NOACH

Parshat Noach describes: the destruction of the world through the Flood, Noach and his family, the story of the Tower of Babel and the introduction of Avraham's family.

The theme we will develop in Parshat Noach is that the flood is a second try at creation. Breishit and Noach are essentially parallel creation stories, or more accurately a creation and a recreation.



1ST ALIYA (6:9-22)

Noach is righteous, while the world is filled with evil. Nocah is instructed to build an Ark, for while G-d is to destroy all living beings, He establishes a covenant with Noach to save him. Noach, his family, 2 of each animal and the food are to be brought into the Ark. Noach did all that G-d commanded.

The parsha break is curious. Because the story of the flood begins one paragraph before the beginning of our parsha.

The last paragraph of last week's parsha describes that the world became corrupt. G-d proffered that He would destroy all living beings, as He regretted creating them. Isn't that the logical beginning to the flood, that the world is to be destroyed? Why begin the parsha with Noach and not with the decision to destroy the world?

Perhaps the parsha break is deliberate. The story could begin with destruction. Or it could begin with the ones *not* to be destroyed. Beginning with the corruptness of the world and G-d's desire to destroy it would frame the story as one of destruction.

But beginning with Noach being a righteous man and describing his family frames the story as not one of destruction but of survival. The flood story is *not* the story of the destruction of the world; it is the story of the *survival* of the world through Noach.

This will become a recurring theme in the Torah; near destruction, deserving destruction. But not doing it. The world deserves to be destroyed. But it isn't destroyed. It is saved. Through Noach.

So, is it a story of destruction or a story of G-d's generosity and kindness, of wanting to destroy but not allowing Himself to do it? Of man deserving to be wiped out entirely, but not allowing Himself to do it.

There is far more detail of the dimensions of the Ark than there is of man's evil that is causing the world to be destroyed. The Torah is more interested in the survival, or more accurately, in the recreation of the world than it is in the story of man's failure. The title of the Flood story should not be the destruction of the world, but rather the recreation of the world.



2ND ALIYA (7:1-16)

Noach is again described as righteous. Bring 7 of each pure animal, 2 of the impure, and all the birds into the Ark. Noach was 600 years old and brought his

family into the Ark. The waters of the springs of the depths were released and the stores of water above were opened. All entered the Ark, as G-d had commanded Noah.

The world will be destroyed with water. The Torah describes in the second verse in the Torah, that the first thing to exist in the world was water: “The spirit of G-d hovered over the waters”. If you want to indicate that the world is getting a reboot, is starting again, cover it with water, as it was “In the beginning”.

The water floods the world from below and from above. We have seen water below and above before: in Creation, Ch. 1:6, G-d separated between the waters above and below and made the heavens between. Creation involved dividing the waters; while here the division of the waters is being undone. Let it all flood the earth. The waters that were gathered in creation are here being released. The Flood is Creation being redone.



3RD ALIYA (7:17-8:14)

The Flood covers the earth. All living things on land die, save Noah and all that are in the Ark. G-d remembers Noah. The waters recede. The Ark rests on Mt. Ararat. Noah sends out the raven. Then Noah sends out the dove to see if the water has receded enough for land to be inhabitable. She returns for she has found no place to rest. After 7 days, she is sent out again and returns with an olive branch. The third time she is sent out, she does not return. Noah removes the covering and sees there is dry land.

Water covering the earth is an echo of creation, where all that existed was G-d's spirit hovering over the water.

There is a lot of detail of water and of time. The rising water, the receding water, how many days it rained, how many days

it took to recede. The whole story, from the first drops of rain, until Noah leaves the ark takes a full year.

This stands in stark contrast to the initial creation of the world. In creation, G-d Said and it was. And after 6 days, the creation ceased. In this recreation, the covering of the world with water took months; the receding of the water took time. Why?

This is the most crucial part of this story. The world was *not* destroyed – I mean, not back to “tohu v’vohu – to void and empty”. G-d did not look at the evil of the world – man and animals - and destroy the world. He could have chosen to destroy the world entirely and begin anew with another 6 days of creation. He did not do that. He “recreated” the existing world – saving Noah, saving the world, covering it slowly with the water that existed.

It looks like G-d is committed to this world, even binding himself to it; He will flood it and rebuild it but use the world as it is. In fact, He said that to Noah – I will keep my covenant with you (6:18). What covenant was there? What was G-d Himself bound to? It would seem that He Bound Himself to this world, just as it is.

The story of the Torah is G-d's commitment to man and to the world He created. He saves the world. He saves Noah. But even before this; Adam and Eve sinned and were punished. But not destroyed. Cain killed Abel, the most egregious sin, and is punished; but is not himself killed. G-d is committed to this world and is committed to mankind. He destroys the world naturally, maintaining it, covering it slowly with water and waiting for the water to recede. That very process communicates His commitment to His world and to mankind just the way it is.



4TH ALIYA (8:15-9:7)

Noach is told to leave the Ark with his family and with the animals, blessing the animals to teem over the land. Noach offered sacrifices on an altar. G-d committed to never again curse land and animals because of man, nor the constellations. G-d blesses Noach and family to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth. They may eat creatures but may not kill man.

The echoes of Creation continue. Noach and the animals receive the same blessings made to the animals and to man in Creation, to be fruitful and multiply. Noach is the new Adam. But with one dramatic difference. G-d pledges that never again will there be a destruction of land, animals or seasons. This was not promised at Creation.

The notion of G-d promising is shocking. **G-d** making promises to **man**? Really? **He** promises to **us**? Could it be that all the horrible evil that man is capable of perpetrating, and has perpetrated in the history of mankind – that in spite of all that evil, He guarantees the world will never deserve to be destroyed?

The Torah is conveying a dramatic philosophy of mankind. It must be that mankind, in just the way it has been created, capable of evil but capable of good, *that* creation of mankind is so precious to G-d that He commits to us, regardless of our failings. As such, the story of the Torah is a love story; G-d's love and commitment to mankind, just the way it is.



5TH ALIYA (9:8-17)

G-d tells Noach and his family that He is making a covenant with all living things that the world will never again be destroyed by Flood. The rainbow is a sign of this covenant between us. I will see the rainbow and remember this eternal covenant.

The word “brit”, covenant occurs 7 times in this paragraph of 9 verses. We are so familiar with the story of the rainbow after the flood that its plain meaning slips by unnoticed. G-d is pledging himself to the world. And, as if to make sure He Himself doesn't forget, He places a sign, a reminder of His pledge.

Noach has got to be looking around, wondering, “is He talking to me? What did I do to deserve this? The Master of the Universe, who just covered the world in water due to man's failings, He is committing to us? And binding Himself with a rainbow, lest He forget?”

The Creation story crowned man with majesty, created in the image of G-d. The Flood recreation story is a love story, the love of G-d for man, the commitment He has to man. And while a covenant has two parties, each of whom pledges to the other, in this covenant nothing is demanded of man. Only He pledges to us.



6TH ALIYA (9:18-10:32)

Noach plants a vineyard, becomes drunk and lies exposed in his tent. Cham sees Noach; the other sons cover Noach without looking. Cham is cursed, Shem is blessed, Yefet granted beauty. Noach's numerous descendants are listed, distinctive in geography and in language.

The echoes of creation continue. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, to work it and guard it. Noach plants a vineyard. Adam (and Eve) sinned in that Garden, eating of the fruit they ought not to. And covered themselves with fig leaves. Noach drinks to excess and his nakedness is also covered.



7TH ALIYA (11:1-32)

The Tower of Babel, an attempt to unite mankind results in a dispersion and proliferation of languages. The

genealogy of Noah's descendants continues until Avraham's family is introduced, who journey toward the Land of Israel.

The story of the Tower of Babel begins as a desire for unity but ends with people scattered the world over. The desire for unity would seem to be a good thing. However, unity often implies united under me, coercing all to be like me.

World history is the history of empires seeking to make the world a better place by being just like me. The theme of dispersion, of exile which began with Adam being exiled from the Garden of Eden, and Cain exiled to wander the world has its next chapter with the dispersion, the exile of the builders of the Tower of Babel.

The dispersion and exile of the first 2 parshiot of the Torah will be reversed with the call to Avraham to come to the Land of Israel.

HAFTORAH: YESHAYAHU 54:1 - 55:5

This Shabbat the haftorah for *parshat Noach* is taken from chapter 54 in the Navi, *Yeshayahu*. It describes the nation of Israel after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. The Navi assures the people that Hashem will forever share his kindness and love with His people and He will continue to protect and sustain the people.

The special connection to *parshat Noach* is contained in pasuk 59:9 which refers to the destruction of Yerushalayim as "...this is like the waters of Noach to me..."

The Navi concludes with the reassurance that Hashem remembers His covenant with the world and His Chosen People. The degree to which we reveal Hashem's presence in our lives is the degree to which Hashem's

protection and close concern is realized. It is our responsibility to reveal Hashem. We achieve this by observing His commandments and learning His Torah. ■



STATS

2nd of 54 sedras, 2nd of 12 in Bereshit.

Written on 230 lines in a Torah, rank: 15.

18 Parshiyot; 5 open, 13 closed; rank: 12.

153 pesukim - ranks 4th. Largest in Bereshit - tied w/Vayishlach.

1861 words - ranks 11 (6th in Bereshit).

6907 letters - ranks 13 (6th in Bereshit).

Drop in ranking for words and letters is due to Noah's very short pesukim. Noah ranks 49th in words/pasuk and 51st in letters/ pasuk in the Torah.



MITZVOT

None of the TARYAG mitzvot are from Noah, yet there are mitzvot in the sedra, specifically (but not only) references to the Noahide laws. So too is P'RU URVU repeated to Noah - it is counted as a mitzva from Bereshit, when it was commanded to Adam.



Mazal Tov to

Eitan & Hadara Fund

on the birth of their daughter

Mazal Tov as well

to the proud grandparents



Simcha & Susie Fund

and Zev & Bayla Gross

and to the Great-Grandparents

Dr David & Miriam Stein

