



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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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 first 2 parshiot in our Torah, 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. Noach 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 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".

There is a detailed description of the dimensions of the Ark, while there is hardly any description of man's evil that is causing the world to be destroyed. The Torah is more interested in the recreation 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 Noach.

Both aliyot began with Noach's righteousness and end with him doing as G-d commanded. In a word, righteousness is defined as doing what G-d commands.

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 process of creation is being

**May the Torah learning
from this issue of Torah Tidbits
be לעילוי נשמת**

Joseph (Joe) Manasseh ז"ל
יוסף בן גבריאל מנשה ומעתוקה ז"ל
on his third Yahrzeit - כ"ט תשרי

**Greatly missed by his children,
grandchildren
and great-grandchildren**

*Families Ross, Miller,
Lipnick & Manasseh*

undone. 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 Noach and all that are in the Ark. G-d remembers Noach. The waters recede. The Ark rests on Mt. Ararat. Noach sends out the raven. Then Noach 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. Noach removes the covering and sees there is dry land.

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. 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 “re-created” the existing world – saving Noach, 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 destroy it and rebuild it but use the world 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 Noach. 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.



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

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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? 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 Noah 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.

**Condolences to
Robin & Bruce Epstein and family
on the passing of her father
David Lefkovic ז”ל**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Noah 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)

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

Noah seems to follow in Adam's agrarian footsteps – Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, Noah plants a vineyard. But the decline of the new man is not long in coming.

The generations of Noah are described as different, distinct, separated into nations, into languages and distinct geographic regions. This gives rise to Nimrod, the warrior – distinctions and groupings give rise naturally to competition.



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 being 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. ■

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