

– even glorify - violence. They break everything they touch.

Because mankind has abdicated its assigned role, the earth's oceans and landmasses, watersheds, fields, streams, and ecosystems have devolved into a *tohu v'vohu*-like state of chaos. Not having sufficient grains, fruits, and produce to eat – as a direct result of mankind's neglect of his earth-management responsibilities – some species have turned upon one another. Some have become predatory carnivores; others have resorted to lusting after and consuming carrion. Some wallow in and eat their own filth. Some devour their own mates. Some kill and eat their own young. Surely things cannot keep unraveling like this forever.

Enter the Protagonist

Rest assured, the Holy One is not about to abandon Creation. Nor is He going to give up on His Grand Plan just because the species He put in charge has gone over to the 'dark side'. Long before the cries of innocents started filling the airwaves above the earth, therefore, He began reaching out to any citizen of planet earth who still had ears to hear or eyes to see. He left a unmistakable trail of breadcrumbs - stunning sunsets, inspiring sunrises, glorious starry nights, heart-stopping scenery at the changing of each season. At strategic times He stepped out of His Cloak of Invisibility, Infinity, Eternality, and Incorporeality, and spoke discernible words to men.

And then, one day it happened. One human being – a man named *Noach* – got the message. So it was to him that the Most Beautiful Voice any man ever heard or will ever hear whispered these words:

Aseh lecha teivat atzei-gofer

Rough translation: *Make/build for yourself an ark out of 'goferwood'.*

[Genesis 6:14a]

Noach felt deep calling from unto deep. The Holy One followed with specific instructions: ***uvatah el-ha-teivah*** - *and you are to go into the ark ...* ***atah uvaneicha v'ishteicha ush'nei-vaneicha itach*** – *you and your wife, and your sons along with you.* Noach trembled. He now knew for certain that everything he had theretofore considered 'normal' was out the window. It made no sense to his pseudo-intellect. It offended his sense of 'morality'. But he knew it had to be. So, he put his livelihood, his social life, and any plans he may have had for his retirement – along with every other personal, economic, social, cultural, ideological or national agenda he had – on the back burner. His Creator had called him to duty; how could he – and why would he want to - refuse?

Welcome to the ‘New Normal’!

In a second, all Noach’s priorities shifted. Divine intervention was coming. A *great reset* was on its way. So, an ark had to be built – and it had to be built exactly according to the Holy One’s specifications. Such a task could not – would never - be entrusted to any government, to any group of academics or scientists, to any institution, foundation, or religious organization, to any ideological movement, or to any league of nations. The future of mankind was too precious to entrust to princes, principalities, powerbrokers, posers, intellectuals, or elites. The plan was revealed instead to one man – the head of a simple household of faith. The calling would bring the members of this family clarity, purpose, and direction as nothing they had ever known.

Noach sprang into action. He pulled his family out of the ‘normal’ activities of his times. He and his sons went out into the forests and found gopherwood. They harvested it. They harnessed beasts of burden and drug it to a selected staging ground. They milled the wood. They planed it. And slowly, painstakingly, meticulously following the specifications the Holy One had given Noach, over the course of 120 years, Noach and family forged an enormous, box-like, floating zoo – just as the Holy One had commanded. Now *that* is a story – right? But what is it designed to *teach us*? What is the trans-generational message of Noach’s ark-building regarding God-man interaction, and human involvement in the Grand Redemptive Plan?

The Quintessential Human Response to ‘Grace’

Every serious student of Torah knows that the Holy One did not need Noach – much less his sons - to build the ark. The Creator of the Universe is all-Powerful. He can make anything He wants, any time He wants, anywhere He wants, any way He wants, simply by *thinking a thought* and *speaking a word*. It wasn’t, therefore, that He was dependent upon Noach and his family – or anyone else on earth or in the Heavens - to do His work for Him. Something much more important for God-man relations was going on here. He knew, you see, that Noach and his family needed to build the ark. He knew they needed to have built it to be able to effectively understand it, to appreciate it, to engage with it, and to effectively utilize it. He also knew that they needed a great time and energy-consuming project to shift their focus away from what they would naturally think they were about to ‘lose’, and put it instead upon the new, much better life they were being given. He knew they needed to occupy their thoughts and passion not with the coming days of destruction, but with the coming season of redemption that would follow. He knew they needed a ‘segue way mission’ to help them make the transition from engagement with the old corrupted world and culture into which they were born, to the new, fresh, world

and culture they were called to establish. The Holy One also knew that men are far more motivated, fruitful, humble, and kindly disposed toward others when they feel like they are co-laboring with Him in a great project far beyond their natural abilities, instead of merely serving as passive observers of His great signs and wonders. They had to feel like their contribution meant something. They needed to play meaningful roles.

All human beings have these needs, Beloved. We need to be engaged in a great, seemingly impossible mission. And we need to do it all not out of fear of punishment or Hell, or out of hope of reward, but out of *love*. That is where the ‘grace’ of God - Hebrew *chen* – comes in. Grace is not ‘unmerited favor’; it is an inspirational *call to* and *empowerment for* great acts of service to mankind, to Creation, and most of all, to the Creator. Without a paradigm-shifting human response of gratitude, of awakened love, and faithful, costly service, what theologians want to call ‘grace’ is not grace at all. Noah found ‘grace’ – the REAL kind of grace - in the eyes of the Holy One. And the story of his building of the ark, and doing everything that followed exactly as the Holy One instructed, is given to us to show us, in all our generations, how a human being should – must - respond to the Holy One’s ‘grace’.

The stage is now set. The ark is ready. The Great Plan for Renewing Creation and the Great ‘Second Chance’ Opportunity for mankind is one step closer to implementation. Noah and his family have completed their phase I assignment, and they have done it on time, within budget, and as directed. Whether they are ready for it or not, it is time for phase II of the Creation Renewing/Mankind Rebooting protocol. If you thought stepping aside from all normal activities of life and spending 120 years building an ark was ‘out of the box’ – well, wait till you see what the Holy One has them do next!

Something Big Is Going On Over At Noah’s Place!

For decades the area around Noah’s family’s dwelling was a *frenetic construction zone*. The flurry of activity could hardly have gone unnoticed – or *uncriticized* – by the neighbors. The airwaves around the creepy place where rumor had it *Hanoch* [Enoch] – Noah’s great-grandfather - used to hang out before disappearing into thin air were absolutely bombarding the region with the sounds of sawing, sanding, and hammering.

I am sure there was a lot of talk about what on earth was going on down at Noah’s homestead. And I am sure all the people within Noah’s various spheres of influence noticed a change in Noah’s countenance – and the tone and content of his conversations - as well. Noah had totally *refocused his life* – and *all his priorities*. And all he talked about now is his encounter with *the*

Creator of All Things. All he thought or spoke about now is that ‘thing’ he is building. He kept talking about how any day now *storm clouds were going to form* – that *thunder was going to peel* – and that *a hard rain was going to fall* – exactly as the Creator of the Universe had told him would happen.

To hear Noach tell it soon the ground beneath men’s feet was going to rumble and shake, and something mysterious he referred to as the *fountains of the deep* were going to start bursting forth everywhere. Then, Noach explained, *trickles of water, similar to artesian springs, would begin to appear* here and there across the earth. In a mounting swell, he warned, the earth would soon begin to shoot forth *ever-increasing volumes of water in towering geysers* everywhere. And I am sure Noach told everyone who would listen that soon it was going to seem as if the windows of heaven had been opened, as hurricanes and typhoons began to form everywhere simultaneously and pour forth watery fury over every square inch of the planet’s surface.

With the eyes of his soul Noach saw *rivers and streams overflowing their banks* and swallowing roads and houses and farms; he saw *tsunamis* crashing into helpless coastlines and harbors; and he saw *torrents of rising waters* surrounding cities and villages and turning them into shrinking islands of panic. He could sense that there would soon be terror, panic, and destruction too horrible for words. I imagine it pained him that soon, men, women, and children would soon find no place to run, no place to hide, as they found every escape route covered with rushing water too deep to cross.

Very soon, you see, absolutely everything Noach was told to prepare himself and his family for will really happen. Some would say this means that disaster looms. That is definitely *one way to look at it*. But it is not the only way. And it is not the Hebraic way. So let’s look again at what is going on – more closely, and this time *through Hebraic eyes*.

Ah, now we see it. Very soon *the unbearable cruelty practiced by perverse man against his fellow man will end*. Very soon *the oppression inflicted by the powerful upon the weak and helpless will be lifted*. Very soon *the rampant violence and terrorism that reaches into every city, every family, and every home will be quieted*. Very soon the horrible demonic forces that rule over and terrorize the world will all be whisked away like sewage. Very soon innocents crippled and maimed by the evil on earth will be received into Heaven’s embrace. *And in just a little while* mankind will have a chance at a new beginning – *a life lived out in a covenant of shalom with the benevolent and trustworthy Master of the Universe*.

A Closer Look At What Motivated and Compelled Noah

When the Holy One dropped *the great bombshell* on Noah – telling him that the entire realm of created order with which he was familiar had reached the tipping point of *corruption-beyond-repair*, and was about to be washed away in a great cleansing - Noah barely flinched. He did not question the Creator's *conclusion*, His *motives*, His *timing*, or His *methods* - not *for a moment*. Why? How could he not at least need a little time to process the bombshell his Friend the Holy One dropped on him? No doubt Noah had seen, was fully aware of, and been adversely affected by the depravity of the world in which he and his family lived. No doubt he and his family had personally witnessed – and suffered through - unspeakable acts of violence. No doubt Noah had seen his children affected by the appalling waves of rampant perversion and horrendous patterns of deception and oppression that constituted his age's definition of 'normal'. No doubt Noah and his wife knew firsthand the magnitude of the human and planetary suffering that accompanied the downward spiral of negativity that was ravaging his generation. No doubt Noah had seen firsthand how thoroughly successfully the serpent had, under the guise of 'enlightenment' and the banner of the public's 'right to know', turned every thought and intention of man's heart only to evil. No doubt Noah had personally encountered – over and over again, with increasing intensity - the toxic obsession of the men, women, and children of his day with the dark realms of *uncleanness*. No doubt he knew the utter futility of the thoughts and the impenetrable darkness of the hearts and souls of the people of his day very well. No doubt he knew exactly how thoroughly the human beings that lived around him – and in whose midst he tried to live an honest, God-fearing life - had plumbed the depths of the *lusts of the eye*, the *lusts of the flesh* and the *pride of life*.

No doubt Noah knew how grossly the people of his day were dishonoring the image of the Holy One in which they were formed. No doubt he knew how deceptively they were misrepresenting the intentions of their Creator to the world. No doubt he *got it* – and no doubt it broke his heart. But do not think for a moment that revulsion at the evil in the world was not what drove and compelled Noah to be who he was or do what he did. What drove Noah was something else altogether – something far more powerful. What drove Noah was a *greater vision*, a *greater mission*, a *greater plan*, and a *greater love*.

A Man Awash in a Flood of Divine Love

Noach 'got' the Holy One. Walking and communing with Him from infancy, Noach knew that what the Holy One was planning to do would not be *punitive* in nature, but *redemptive*. He knew the Creator is not in the business of *destroying*, but of *creating*. He knew the Creator's plan was not to *wreak havoc*, but to *give the world – and mankind – a sorely needed second chance*. And even more than this, Noach was absolutely *captivated by the Holy One's exquisite majesty*. He was *enthralled by His infinite beauty*. He was *mesmerized by His intractable goodness*.

Noach's mind marveled at the *unsearchable depths of wisdom* contained within every syllable of the Holy One's Words. Noach's heart swooned at *the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the kindness* He heard in the Holy One's voice. Noach was *engrossed in the persona and personality and holiness of the One Who spoke to Him*. And even more than that, Noach had *felt – and received, embraced, and basked in - the flood of pure love the Holy One had for him*. Noach had felt – and yielded his will, his thoughts, his emotions, and all his bodily members to - *the substantive pull of the favor of the Holy One* on his life. Noach had drunk deeply of the intimate pleasure of Holy One's companionship. He had delighted his soul in the Holy One's grace. He had experienced unspeakable joy, immeasurable peace, and an unshakeable sense of identity, mission, and destiny in the Holy One's Presence. And once Noach had been thusly touched by and bathed in the love and the goodness and the wisdom of the Creator ... well, Dear Reader, after that happened, the shallow, deceptive promises of fleshly pleasure and the overhyped attractions and distractions this world has to offer could not even come close to enticing Noach away. Is it like that for you? If not – why not?

The Natural Outworking of Embracing An Outpouring of Divine Love

The intimate companionship of the Holy One, and the immeasurable grace He demonstrated to Noach and his household, is what empowered and inspired Noach to be who he was and do what he did. Noach knew exactly who he was, and what he had to do. Why? Because the Creator of the Universe had spoken both his identity and his mission over him prophetically. Noach was ***ish tzaddik*** [*a righteous, upright man*] Noach was ***tamim hayah b'doratav*** [*blameless in his generation*]. Noach was a man who *walked with God*. And the Holy One had called him to spend his next 120 years –or however long it took - to make himself, his family, and a bunch of animals *an ark of cypress wood*.

The flood that obsessed Noach and drove him onward was not a threatened

flood of water – it was an ever-present *flood of Divine love*. And that flood of love was what caused Noach to set aside personal goals and earthly appetites and distractions and listen intently to every syllable the Holy One uttered. The flood of Divine kindness and mercy toward him was what caused his spirit to hang on and delight in every word from the Holy One’s mouth.

Noach’s motivation for spending decades building an ark exactly as directed had nothing to do with a desire to earn the Holy One’s favor. He had found ‘grace’, remember? Long before the building project ever began Noach knew he had all the favor he could ever want or need. Noach also did not follow the Holy One’s instructions all those years in hopes of earning or receiving some reward – either in this world or the age to come. Noach’s reward had already been determined, announced, written in the Book of all Books, and sealed with blood before Noach began his labor of love. Why, then, did Noach do what he did? Because doing the will of the Holy One is the only natural and reasonable response of a heart that is passionately in love with Him. *If you love me*, Yeshua would explain, the result will be that you *follow My commandments*. It is as natural as that. And that is why the instant the first great God-encounter of parsha *Noach* was over, Noach got every fiber of his being *full-on engaged* in the mission the Holy One had laid out for him and each its correlated assignments and tedious tasks. And that is why he carried through with every instruction of the Holy One all the way to completion – whether he understood the ramifications of what he was doing at the time or not.

Other Options – And Other Lifestyles - Are Always Available

Please understand that at the time of the great *revelation download* Noach received from the Holy One at the beginning of this week’s parsha the man had plenty of other options as to how he and his family could spend the next several decades of life. I doubt that building a huge boat the likes of which the world had never seen before and will never see again, and preparing to receive, feed, and care for the greatest menagerie in history during an epic, prolonged flood were previously anywhere near the top of Noach’s ‘bucket list’. I suspect he had personal dreams. I suspect he had financial goals. I suspect he had appetites and urges. I suspect he had vacation plans. And keep in mind that Noach had to put food on the table for himself and his family just like we do. He – and his wife, and his sons and daughters in law – all got hungry, tired, sick, and bored, and irritated, just like you and me. Each one of them was subjected to offense and intimidation and occasional spells of listlessness and loss of focus just like us.

Plenty of distractions – fleshly affections, desires, urges and appetites, peer

pressure, physical aches and pains, interpersonal conflicts, theological arguments, and political causes – regularly presented claims against Noach’s time and energy and passion. But Noach had walked with the Creator of Heaven and Earth, had conversed with Him, and had connected with His Brilliant Mind and Lion-like Heart. For him there was no turning back. For him there was no wandering from the narrow path. For him the mission and its assignments were not lofty goals to which to aspire – but a natural, integral part of walking with the One Who knew him best and loved him most. And so, Noach took the Holy One at His Word. He offered no excuses. He did not try to spiritualize what the Holy One told him. He surrendered to no doubts. He did not cave in to any of mankind’s clever seductions, incitements, or distractions. He refused to jump on any political, ideological, theological, or religious bandwagon movements. He just kept doing what the Holy One told him to do - never wavering, for *over 100 years*.

Embracing the Example of Noach

Do you know the Holy One the way Noach knew him, Dear Reader? Have you been overcome with the Holy One’s majesty? Have you been undone by the Holy One’s holiness? Have you, like Noach, felt the immense wave of love – and kindness, and favor – the Holy One has released in your direction? Have you trembled at the beauty and strength of the Holy One’s Voice?

Do you trust the Creator the way Noach did? Do you walk with Him, and follow His Leadership and all His Directions without complaining the way Noach did? If you haven’t done these things – or if you haven’t done them lately – will you close your eyes and bow your head right now. And before reading another line, will you humble yourself before Him, and ask Him to reveal His Heart to you, express His thoughts about you, your family, and your world, to you, and to walk with you the way He did with Noach?

So now you see it, don’t you? We are all like Noach. We are all called by the Holy One to invest our lives, our energies, our passions, our talents, and our love in a great project of building on earth, in real time, what which the Holy One has lovingly created, carefully prepared, and faithfully called us to build.

Noach’s ark and the Torah Lifestyle are one and the same eternal substance. Our mission – as Noach’s mission was - is to build His Kingdom, His Way, according to His Specifications, Ordinances, and Decrees – following His lead the entire time. Noach’s ark was built of *shittim wood and pitch*; the living edifice we are to build according to the blueprint of Torah is constructed instead with Divinely instructed and empowered *thoughts, attitudes,*

conversations, emotions, and behaviors. Noach's ark was built in the shape of a boat, to float upon the waters. Ours is in the shape of the footprints of the Messiah, to move across the face of the earth. Noach's ark was designed to carry one family and a representative bunch of animals through a great storm; our ark is designed to carry and bring the hope of life to all who will come, through all the obstacles, challenges, and distractions of this world.

So ... which side of the construction project are you presently on?

Keeping It All In Perspective

Many look at the Flood as an "end" - a devastating, almost unthinkable judgment upon ordinary people and innocent animals. What is lost on most people is the fact that the Flood was, in concept and effect, redemptive. The Holy One is *not a mass-murderer*. The Holy One's desire was not to kill and destroy, but to *purge*. After all, had the Holy One's purpose been simply to punish and to destroy, there certainly would have been *no reason for an ark*. Had He decided man was hopeless - a failure, deserving of annihilation - there would have been *no reason to preserve Noach*. Had He determined to abandon the plan He purposed in Genesis 1:1 and articulated in Genesis 1:27-28, there would have been *no need to preserve Noach's wife, sons, and sons' wives*.

No, the Holy One is no mad scientist bent on destroying the world. The Holy One is a giver of life, not death. He is like a surgeon in a trauma department, who debrides diseased and decaying tissue in order to save, not destroy life². He chose a human vessel to show that He was not rejecting man as the crowning accomplishment of His Creation. He directed the building of a huge, clumsy ark, so that other humans would see it being built and question why, and thus be given an opportunity to repent and return society to a level of morality where it was safe to live, and to a sense of purpose and destiny that would make life worth living.

Is the Holy One to blame that the masses did not take that opportunity? Is Noach³?

All this week, as we study the events of the Flood, search the Scripture for clues to the redemptive thought-processes of the Creator and King of the Universe. *Bend close* to Him this week, and *hear His heart*. There may be a 'God-encounter' in it for you. And speaking of 'God-encounters', it is about

² There is an ancient saying, "*Whoever is compassionate on the cruel will in the end be cruel to the compassionate*" (see Midrash Rabbah on Ecclesiastes 7:16). May that never be said of the Holy One.

³ If the Holy One had sent back one from the dead to warn the world, or if Noach had preached 1,000 sermons, sung 1,000 choruses, or passed out 1,000,000 tracts, would it have made any difference?

time for our friend Noach to have another one!

Noach's Second Recorded 'God-Encounter'

In today's aliyah the Holy One is going to visit Noach a second time. Noach has *sh'ma*-ed the instructions he was given, and built an Ark exactly as the Holy One instructed. The Holy One rewards this act of pure faith with another 'God-encounter'. He wants the relationship between Himself and Noach to deepen and strengthen. He wants Noach to know Him better. Noach is going to NEED to know Him better very, very soon.

We are not told in Torah how much time elapsed between the first appearance of the Holy One to Noach (when the Holy One gave Noach the instruction to build the ark) and the visitation we will read about today. We are told, however, that this second visitation came *just seven days before the flood began*. Since we know from Torah that the floodwaters began to issue forth on the seventeenth day of the second month (Cheshvan), we are able to understand that the Holy One's second visitation of Noach had to occur on *the tenth day of the month of Cheshvan*. That means it was in *autumn*. *The sages say it was in autumn of the year 1656 from Creation*.

When the Holy One appears to Noach exactly one week before the rains begin, what He tells Noach to do – and does not tell Noach to do – is puzzling to the modern evangelical mind. The words the Holy One chooses instead are *clear* and *calm*. They *leave no room for interpretation*. Here are those words:

bo-atah v'chol-beit'cha el ha-teivah

'Go - you and your household - into the ark,

ki-otcha ra'iti tzadik l'fanai b'dor hazeh

I have seen that you are righteous⁴ before Me in this generation.

What the Holy One says during this last visit before the Flood basically is this [please excuse the literary paraphrase]:

“Noach! Noach, are you listening?

Seven days, Noach. You've only got seven days.

Then, the world as you know it will end. So take a good look around you.

In seven days, all the things you see – all the people you know – will be gone, swept away in My judgment, never to be seen again.

Seven sunrises. Seven noons.

Seven times your neighbor's roosters will greet the dawn – then they will fall strangely silent.

⁴ This is the very first reference in the Bible to the concept of *righteousness*, which will become one of its major themes.

***Seven times the dog down the road will bark
at coyotes and raccoons during the night – but no more.”***

What will Noah do? What do you think Noah *should* do given the circumstances? Your answer to the latter question will tell you volumes about yourself - if you let it. Seven days is not much time. And we might be really steamed at the Holy One for what He tells Noah to do. Or we might be tempted to look down our noses at Noah because he doesn't spend the last few hours engaging in the religious activities we think are important – preaching, evangelizing, praying and fasting, etc. What did the Holy One tell Noah to do with only seven days remaining? It may *offend you*. It may even *stun you*. What the Holy One told Noah to do with the seven days remaining He was to simply *gather his family, climb on the ark ... and wait*. Here is Genesis 7:1 in another translation:

***The Holy One said to Noah,
Come with all of your household into the teivah [ark/vessel],
for I have seen your righteousness before me in this generation.***

Perhaps the Holy One is *trying to tell us something*. Perhaps He wants us to know that. When it comes right down to it, *it is not man's responsibility to save the world, or to redeem mankind, or rescue lost and dying humanity*. Perhaps He is trying to say that His Arm is not too short to save, nor His Word too “still and small” to bring about redemption. Perhaps He wants us to know that the best programs our brightest men can develop are wood, hay, and stubble. Perhaps He wants us to learn, finally, that our task in life is to *sh'ma* His Words, and let those Words be the guide of our lives – and trust Him to bring about His Plan. Perhaps the important thing is not what a man or a woman can or should do that matters in such a time as this. Perhaps the best thing we can do is listen to the Holy One, let His Words become real to us, and base our lives around what He says - instead of clinging to our mixed-up religious notions which tell us that it is our job to save the world, and our fault if anyone goes to Hell without us explaining to them the “way to salvation”.

There is a time and a season for spreading the *good news of the love of the Holy One* – and the joyous hope of the kingdom of Heaven - throughout the world. There is never a point to yelling ‘*the sky is falling*’ or ‘*we are all going to die!*’ For people in covenant with the Holy One everything is to be done only as a *sh'ma* response to the Holy One's words, not on man's initiative, or according to man's ways and theories. The point is that the Holy One cares more about the salvation of men and women and children than all the evangelists and evangelistic societies put together, a million times over. The message is that when the time and circumstances are right, the Holy One will release the Kingdom ambassadors and disciplers in us all, and we will scarcely be able to

contain themselves. But when that happens it will not be a work for which any man or organization can claim one ounce of glory. It will, when it happens, be a clear, manifest work of the Holy One and of Him alone. And no one will get – or think of claiming – the honor *but the Holy One*.

So please resist the temptation to sit back smugly and say – “If *I* (or the religious movement of which I am a part) had been there, *thousands* would have been saved!” Do not be tempted to think you could - or now can - by any human action avert the judgment of the Holy One. Let these words from the Torah teach us all: ***Noach did everything that the Holy One instructed him.*** Genesis 6:22. Noach did absolutely everything the Holy One told him to do. That just about says it all. And the judgment *still came*. And one day it will come again. And there is nothing you or I can do to stop it – anymore than there was anything Noach could have done to stop what happened in his generation.

120 Years of Warning

As previously referenced in this study, according to the sages a whopping 120 years [less 7 days] passed between the first God-encounter, when the Holy One warned of the coming Flood, and the second God-encounter, when the Holy One told Noach to take his family and get on the ark. During the interval, the Holy One had been looking for righteous ones. He who never slumbers nor sleeps has not been idly twiddling his thumbs while Noach built the ark and tried to explain his activities to his curious but corrupt neighbors. The Holy One has been looking, and by His Spirit He has been calling and drawing men and women and children to Himself. But *no one was listening*. No one. No one heeded the song of Creation. No one had learned from the righteous examples the Holy One provided in Hanoah, Metushelach, or Lamech. No one responded to the testimony or strange conduct of Noach.

The Holy One carefully examined the spiritual condition of every person on earth. He knew that evil had so pervaded mankind that no one – not a single soul - was *listening*. He knew no one – not a single human being outside Noach’s immediate family - was *coming*. The Holy One did not need Noach’s counsel on that issue. He did not solicit Noach’s ideas for saving the world. So for Noach, as the time drew near for the Great Flood, the fields were not white with the harvest, and it was not a time to preach, teach, stage tent-meetings, or pass out tracts; it was a time to leave home, possessions, and friends, to say good-bye to everything that was familiar, to climb aboard the ark of God ... and *wait*. That is what he was told to do, and that is what he did. As Torah puts it:

V'ya'as Noach k'chol asher tzivahu Adonai
And Noach did all that the Holy One enjoined him.
[Genesis 7:5]

We can learn much from Noach. Our job is not to take nations for God. Our job is simply to walk with the Creator, do what He says, and love mankind and Creation as He loves them.

But What About the Animals?

The Holy One did not forget the animals of the earth. He spent the last precious moments of this second encounter with Noach instructing the latter regarding preparations to be made for the redemption of the species of living creatures He created prior to man. Aquatic creatures are no problem, of course – they will not be affected by the rising of the waters. But the creations the Holy One had made dependent upon the earth were another story. They had all been part of His perfect creation. They would be a part of the bright new world He was bringing to pass through Noach. And so the Holy One concluded His final instructions to Noach [in verses 2-4] as follows:

Mikol ha-behemah ha-tahorah tikach-lecha shiv'ah shiv'ah

Take seven pairs⁵ of every t'hor animal,

ish v'ishto umin ha-behemah

each consisting of a male and its mate.

asher lo t'horah hi sh'nayim ish v'ishto

Of every animal that is not t'hor, take two, a male and its mate.

Gam me'of ha-shamayim shiv'ah shiv'ah

Of the birds of the heaven also take seven pairs,

zachar unekeivah

each consisting of a male and its mate.

Introduction to the Realms of the Tahor and the Tamei

Please note that the Holy One quietly introduces something startling and highly offensive to modern sensitivities in this passage – the idea that some species of animals are *tahor* [our English Bibles say 'clean'], and others are what is now called merely *lo tahor* [not clean], but which will eventually be called *tamei*. Seven pairs of each *tahor* creature were to go with Noach. One pair of every *lo tahor* creature was to accompany them.

We will learn about the *tahor/lo tahor* classification by characteristics and

⁵ Literally 'seven by seven.' This is a detail not mentioned by the Holy One in Noach's first God-encounter [in Genesis 6]. At the time of the earlier God-encounter, all the Holy One revealed to Noach was the animals of each species would be coming in pairs, male and female. Now, the Holy One clarifies that 7 pairs of *tahor* animals would be coming.

species later in Torah, particularly in Leviticus 11. For now, understand, by way of example, that there were 2 pigs, 2 squirrels, 2 serpents, 2 rabbits, 2 horses, 2 ravens – but there were 14 sheep, 14 cows, 14 goats, 14 chickens, and 14 doves. We will learn, among other things, that the *tahor/tamei* distinction, though it has definite physical manifestations and serious physical implications, is not primarily a *physical* distinction, but is instead primarily a *spiritual* one. It is a distinction that, though it was there from the beginning, did not become particularly important to man, it seems, until the animals started boarding the ark.

Prior to the Flood, you see, man did not eat the flesh of animals. Pre-Flood man's diet had been set out in Genesis 1:29 as '*every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed*'. Since animals were not being eaten, there was no reason for the Holy One to explain to pre-Flood man the distinction He had made between animals that were *tahor* and those that were not *tahor*. After the Flood, however, the devastated world would produce vegetation gradually, according to seasons of seedtime and harvest. Hence to survive in those special times Noach and his sons would have to eat some animal flesh.

Our English Bibles translate *tahor* as 'clean' and *lo tahor* [and subsequently, *tamei*] as 'unclean'. That is unfortunate. That is not at all what *tahor* and *lo tahor* mean. We will be discussing the nature of the division between that which is *tahor* and that which is *lo tahor* [it will eventually be called *tamei*] in great detail in later studies. For now, just keep in mind that the distinction existed from the beginning, and was part of the Holy One's plan for Creation.

How did Noach know which animals were *tahor* and which were *lo tahor*? the Holy One did not go into as much detail about the differences between *tahor* and *tamei* animals with Noach as He would later with Moshe in the book of Leviticus. But Noach knew more than enough to understand what the Holy One's instructions meant, because 'he walked with the Holy One'. So let's move on, for now, to the rest of the Holy One's instructions to Noach.

Gathering Provisions for the Journey

After telling Noach how many animals would be going with them the Holy One explained:

L'chayot zera al p'nei chol ha-aretz

They are for keeping seed alive on the face of all the earth,

Ki l'yamim od shivei'ah

because in another seven days,

anochi mametir al ha-aretz arba'im yom v'arba'im laylah

I will bring rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

umachiti et-kol-ha-yeikum asher asiti

I will obliterate every organism that I have made

me'al p'nei ha-adamah

from the face of the earth.'

Did you ever wonder how Noach rounded up all those animals in just seven days? Let's give that matter some thought.

How Did Noach Get All Those Animals on the Ark?

The Holy One had said in the first God-encounter with Noach that once Noach and his family got in the Ark He [i.e. the Holy One - not Noach] would cause all animals and all birds, two by two, male and female, to come to the ark, and to enter it. **Genesis 7:20**. There was therefore no need to call the Crocodile Hunter, no need for a round up, no cause for a frantic search for exotic species, no reason to stage a whirlwind stun-gun safari. Miraculously the animals the Holy One called [unlike mankind] would just make their way to the ark. And lo, it was good. Hence we are told:

Min ha-behemah ha-t'horah

*Of the **tahor** animals*

Umin ha-behemah asher eynenah t'horah

*the animals that were not **tahor**,*

umin-ha-of v'chol asher-romes al ha-adamah

the birds, and all that walked the earth

Shenayim sh'nayim ba'u el-Noach el ha-teivah

two by two they came to Noah, to the ark.

zachar unekevah ka'asher tzivah Elohim et-Noach

They were male and female, as the Holy One had instructed Noah.

[Genesis 7:8-9]

Noach and his family gathered seeds and every form of plant life, and got on the Ark. And the animals and the birds and the insects and the reptiles came, just as the Holy One has said. The lion came with the lamb, the leopard with the antelope, the eagle with the dove. So many species, from everywhere, of every size, shape, and color imaginable, suddenly appeared, and ascended the rampart or flew in the window of the Ark. Some from each species had heard Creation's song. And they came - two by two, male and female, and/or in groups of seven. And they converged at the ark Noach built.

Wow! What a parade! Imagine the spectacle! Imagine the sounds the animals made! Imagine the clouds of dust they created! Imagine the shaking of the

ground as they walked. Imagine how they cleared the earth of all edible greenery along their path. Even the odor testified of that something of tremendous consequence was happening.

You would think that confronted with such a supernatural parade of living creatures all moving in one direction at the same time, from all parts of the world, surely the population of the planet would sit up and take notice. I mean, if the animals could make it to the ark – *so could the people*. Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, to the greatest show on earth! But note this curious fact. No one came. No one came at all. No one. Not so much as one person outside Noach's family. The human population of earth was simply too preoccupied with self-promotion, violence and perversion to notice pairs and/or sevens of every kind of animal and bird in the world beating a path to Noach's place, bleating and crowing, mooing and squealing and kicking up dust all the way. Donkeys prophesied even then – and *no one even noticed*.

Two-by-Two

Why did the animals come two by two? Don't just smile at your paper or computer screen and say "Don't you know where babies come from?" Give the question some thought. Consider that the Holy One had caused every species of animal life to come into existence by the mere word of His mouth - before Adam was formed of the dust of the earth. He did not need an Ark or a man, or two of each species, to cause the earth to teem with animals, birds, and the like. He could create animals, or repopulate the earth with them, simply by the breath of His Mouth.

Contrary to popular opinion, *the Ark was not for the preservation of the animals*. It was for Noach and his family. Man's purpose in Creation, after all was to “ ***... take dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the eretz.***” The animals' presence on the ark was arranged by the Holy One so that, in the midst of the Flood, and the death and destruction that resulted therefrom, Noach and his family would be surrounded not by *death*, but by *life*, and by *the capacity to produce life*. Animals were provided on the journey so that, when they eventually disembarked from the Ark, after the Flood, they would see the animals giving birth to their young, and focus on the Creative wonders of the Holy One, and hope for the future, rather than remember the corruption and the death and destruction of the past. They were given the animals so that they would not despair. This was not, after all, to be the end - it was to be *a bright new beginning!*

The Waters

The concluding verses of today's aliyah describe for us the beginning of the new era of mankind. It does not start with rain. It starts with waters springing forth from the earth. Here is how Torah records it.

Bish'nat shesh-me'ot shanah l'chayei-Noach

It was in the 600th year of Noach's life,

B'chodesh ha-sheni b'shiv'ah-asar yom l'chodesh

in the second month, on the 17th of the month.

B'yom hazeh niveikei'u kol-mayenot tehom rabah

On that day all the wellsprings of the great deep burst forth

v'arubot ha-shamayim niftachu

and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.⁶

[Genesis 7:11]

The time is drawing short. The escape routes are now closed off. Those who delight in inflicting oppression, perversion, and violence on the innocent are being systematically destroyed. And even as Noach and his family lead the last of the animals to its designated stall in the ark, there is a sound. It is the sound of the closing of the door of the ark. But no human hand closed it. Here is how Torah describes it:

Elohim vayisgor⁷ Adonai ba'ado

Elohim [God] then sealed them inside.

[Genesis 7:16]

The door is not just closed. It is *sealed*. No one *gets in*. No one *gets out*. The die is cast. Phase II of the Holy One's Brilliant Plan to Redeem the earth and humanity is underway.

Thunder rolls. Lightning flashes. The Heavens tremble. The earth quakes. Darkness suddenly seems to be prevailing. Our planet seems to be slipping back into the *tohu v'vohu* [*without form and void*] state of the First Day of Creation

⁶ The sages teach that the *mabbul* started with the release of contained waters from two separate sources; one from above by way of rain, and one from below by way of hot eruptions from the earth's core. During the period of cataclysm, devastation is believed to have come upon the earth and its inhabitants by way of unrelenting rain. Eruptions from the earth's core caused parts of the sea to boil. The Continental Shelves as we know them today were probably formed at that time. The whole ecosystem of the earth was drastically reconstituted.

⁷ The root word of this Hebrew phrase is *sagar*, *samech*, *gimel*, *vav*, *resh*, Strong's Hebrew word #5462, pronounced *saw-gar'*. The first Biblical usage of this verb is in Genesis 2:21, to describe what the Holy One did to the flesh of Adam's side after removing the 'rib' from which He formed Chava [Eve]. The same verb is used in Genesis 19:10 to describe what Lot did to his door to prevent the perverted men of S'dom from entering the house and sodomizing the angelic visitors the Holy One had sent.

Week all over again. The waters above and the waters below, which so gloriously separated on the second day of Creation Week, are rejoining, and inundating the earth. The stunning mountains and valleys of dry land, which appeared so majestically on the third day of Creation Week, are disappearing once more beneath the infusion of waters - and all the species of plant life and their associated micro-organisms are disappearing right along with them. The sun, the moon, and the celestial bodies the Creator set in place in the Heavens on the Fourth Day of Creation Week are completely obscured by cloud cover. It is impossible, from the vantage point of earth, to even know if they are still there. All the living creatures the Creator spoke forth on the Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation Week are being swept away, the air in their lungs being displaced by water. It was here, and noisy, and bustling with activity - and then it was not.

But wait ... is that a boat I see somehow managing to stay on top of the waters? How is it able to dodge the lightning bolts? How is it holding together despite the monstrous waves? How is it staying upright in this wind? Who could the captain of this strange vessel be? And how precious must be its cargo!

Questions for Today's Study

1. As today's reading begins, the Holy One visits Noah a second time, after Noah has done what the Holy One instructed, and built a huge ark.

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word that is translated "*righteous*" in verse 1 of chapter 7. Write the Hebrew word and describe the Hebraic word picture you see concerning it.

[B] What do you think it means that Noah was "seen" by the Holy One to be "righteous"?

[C] What do you think it means that the Holy One saw Noah as "righteous in his generation"?

[D] Why do you think the Holy One allowed Noah's sons and their wives on the ark?

2. After telling Noah to prepare his family to enter the ark, the Holy One gives Noah additional instructions.

[A] Of which animals did the Holy One instruct Noah to take 7 pairs rather than just 1 pair? Why do you think the Holy One wanted 7 pairs of these animals?

[B] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word translated "*clean*" in verse 2. Write the Hebrew word and describe the Hebraic word picture it describes.

[C] According to Torah, had animals been given to man as food at the

time Noah was receiving these instructions?

[D] How do you think Noah knew which animals were “clean” and which were “unclean”?

3. Finally the waters burst forth.

[A] How old was Noah when the waters burst forth?

[B] In what two ways is the bursting forth of the waters described?

[C] How were the movements of the Ark directed? Could Noah control its direction or its speed?

[D] Write an imaginary “dear diary” entry of Noah’s son Japheth (or his wife) the day the waters burst forth, describing all that happened and how it made ‘you’ feel.

[E] Looking back at the genealogy of Shet’s descendants in Genesis 6, can you tell which of Shet’s descendants were still alive when the flood began? Explain how you come to your conclusion.

4. In today’s haftarah reading we receive a direct message from the Holy One, about the good that He has planned for us from before the foundation of the world. First, He speaks to us of the glorious city that He is preparing for us:

*You [who have been] afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
behold, I will set your stones in beautiful colors and lay your foundations with sapphires.
I will make your pinnacles of rubies, and your gates of emeralds,
and all your border of precious stones.*

[Isaiah 54:11-12]

Second, He informs us that He Himself will take responsibility for the education and training in Torah of our children:

*V’chol-banaych limudei Adonai
All your children will be taught of the Holy One;*

*V’rav shelom banaych
and great shall be the shalom of your children.*

[Isaiah 54:13]

The Holy One then describes the circumstances/conditions in which He will cause us to live. Terrorism will not be a problem in the Messianic Kingdom:

*B’tz’dakah tikonani
In ‘righteousness’ will you be established:*

*rachaki me’oshek ki-lo tira’i
you will be far from oppression, for you will not be afraid;*

*umimchitah ki lo-tik’rav elaych
and from terror, for it will not come near you.*

[Isaiah 54:14]

May it come to pass, quickly, and in our day. *Selah*.

[A] In what three ways does the Holy One, through the prophet Yeshayahu [Isaiah], describe the remnant of Israel?

[B] List the five things the Holy One tells the remnant of Israel He will establish for them with beautiful stones.

[C] Aside each one of the five things the Holy One said He will establish, write the description of the specific stones the Holy One promised to use in establishing that thing.

[D] How does the Holy One say the children of the remnant's families will be "taught"?

[E] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the word that is translated "taught" in verse 13 [KJV]. Write the Hebrew word and describe the Hebraic word picture that that verb reveals to us.

[F] What shall be "great" concerning the children/descendants of the families of the remnant?

[G] How will the remnant be "established"?

5. In today's reading from the B'rit Chadasha we read:

Because Messiah also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which he also went and preached⁸ to the spirits in prison

[I Peter 3:18-19]

[A] According to verse 18 for what did the Messiah have to suffer?

[B] According to verse 18 what was different between the death of Messiah and the death of those of the generation of Noach, for instance?

[C] How did the death of Messiah "bring us to God", as verse 18 says?

*May you rest in Him, knowing the fullness of His power,
and the splendor of His Presence.*

And May He seal you and your family securely in the ark of His covenant.

The Rabbi's son

⁸ The Greek word our English Bibles translate as 'preached' in this verse is *kerusso*, Strong's Greek word #2784, pronounced *kay-roos'-so*. It does not mean to sermonize. It means to herald – to proclaim something verbally as a herald or non-verbally, by ushering in a new way of living.

Meditation for Today's Study

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

I, Kohelet, was king over Yisra'el in Y'rushalayim. I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under the sky.

It is a heavy burden that God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun;

and, behold, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

That which is crooked can't be made straight;

and that which is lacking can't be counted.

*I said to myself, "**Behold, I have obtained for myself great wisdom above all who were before me in Y'rushalayim**".*

Yes, my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly.

I perceived that this also was a chasing after wind.

*For **in much wisdom is much grief;***

and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.