

Shiur L'Yom Sheni¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Noach:*** **Genesis 6:9-22**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 54:1-10**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Peter 3:8-17**

The earth was corrupted, ruined, wasted, headed for destruction
[Genesis 6:11a]

Today's Meditation is Ecclesiastes 1:1-11;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Gevurot*, the Prayer of His Powers.

Eleh toldot Noach – This is the epic, trans-generationally impactful story of Noach ...
Noach ish tzaddik – Noach was a man who met specifications ... *tamim hayah*
bedorotav – he was an example of wholeness in his generation ... *v'et-ha-Elohim*
hithalech Noach - and Noach walked/moved in step with the Eternal One. **Genesis 6:9a.**

Last week our Creator introduced Himself to us in grand style. We watched Him create, nurture, and maintain lifeforms of infinite variety, each with its own unique attributes and functions in the Ecosystem. We marveled at the intricacy of His design. We gazed in awe at His Artistry. Our jaws dropped. Our minds and hearts were captivated by His Brilliance, His Patience, His Power. And then we heard Him speak ... and ... well ... let's just say He *had us at Yehi Ohr* – i.e. *Light, BE! Yes! Oh, yes, a million times, YES! LIGHT, BE indeed.* When He spoke those beautiful words – in that amazing Heavenly language - we came undone. We found our first love. We discovered in His Glorious Persona *the ultimate, most worthy object of our attention, of our affection, of our adoration, of our devotion, and of our service.* We delighted in His Wisdom and Compassion. Our souls began to cry out, along with the Psalmist:

*The Heavens declare the glory of Elohim,
and the firmament displays His handiwork*

*The Torah of the Holy One is perfect, turning the soul!
The Testimony of the Holy One is sure, making wise the simple!*

It has been thousands of years since the Hebrew words *Yehi Ohr* rolled off our Creator's tongue. We are not *over it* yet, and I can't imagine that we ever will be. I can't fathom why anyone, anywhere, would ever want to be.

Ah, but Torah has also introduced us to our species prototype – who we have

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come to know as *Adam*. We found out his – and our purpose – to serve the earth and the universe as Elohim's *tzel* – i.e. *shadow/shadowing* - species. We found out that the reason we were first created like any other animal (our 'first Adam' identity); but then Torah described man a second, far more glorious way - as being set apart from the animal realm, and given an intimate 'kiss' of life from the Creator Himself to infuse us with an eternal *neshamah* instead of just a temporal, intelligent *nefesh like the rest of Creation*. This Divine 'Kiss' enabled this 'second Adam' – the *Messiah Exemplar* – to both [a] *see and hear in both the ha-shamayim realm [i.e. in the 'Heavenlies'] and the ha-aretz realm [i.e. in earth-bound 'real-time']*, and [b] *speak/release and build/make things happen in the ha-aretz realm with the 'Elohim Signature', consistent with what the Creator is building/making happen in the ha-shamayim realm*.

Ah, but Torah revealed to us what happens whenever a man – or a woman – abandons his/her mission and strikes out on the broad path of self-will. We thus now know how to recognize both the *Elohim Signature* and its antithesis – i.e. the *Human Self-Will Signature*. The *Elohim Signature* leads men to life, health, harmony, and *shalom*; the *Human Self-Will Signature*, on the other hand, leads mankind in the exact opposite direction – to death, toxicity, competition, and hyper-emotionalism. Which path have you chosen?

The Outworking – and Destructive Impact – of the Human Self-Will Signature

The first man sired three sons - *Kayin* [Cain], *Hevel* [Abel] and *Shet* [Seth]. Hevel, of course, was murdered by Kayin, leaving no natural descendants. Kayin and Shet established bloodlines that expanded generation by generation all the way to '*the days of Noach*'. What were those days like? Do you remember the state of the earth when it was first separated from the Heavens? It was '*tohu v'vohu*' – without form, structure, purpose, or functionality. In the days of Noach mankind was aggressively re-introducing the state of *tohu v'vohu* back to Creation again. As the *ha-aretz* realm was viewed through the Creator's eyes, Torah tells us:

V'tishachet ha-aretz lifnei ha-Elohim

The ha-aretz realm was corrupted, ruined, wasted, headed for destruction before God,

V'timale ha-aretz chamas

and the eretz was filled with oppression enforced through threats and actions of violence.

Vayar Elohim et ha-aretz v'hineh nish'chatah

God saw the eretz, and saw that it was corrupted/ruined/wasted/headed for destruction,

ki-hish'chit kol-basar et-dar'ko al ha-aretz

All flesh had perverted its way on the earth.
[Genesis 6:11-12]

The Holy One summed up the state of the world which mankind had in 10 generations built out of His perfect Creation with three descriptive phrases: it was *corrupt*, it was *filled with violence*, and it was *perverted in its way*. Let's look briefly at each of these descriptive phrases in turn.

1. The Utter Corruption of the World Man Had Made

The word our English Bibles translate as 'corrupt' is, in Hebrew, a derivative form of the Hebrew verb root *shachat*². The word has the connotation of *decadence, perversion, destruction, and damage*. It is especially used to refer to the prevalence of the closely related phenomena of *voyeuristic obsession with human sexuality* and *indulgence in idolatry* (Rashi³). In Genesis 9 the verb form of this word is used to describe what the raging flood waters did to the plant life of the earth [Genesis 9:11], and to the flesh of the men and animals who died in it [Genesis 9:15]. In Genesis 13 and 19 the same word is used to describe what the Holy One did to Sodom and Gomorrah. **Genesis 13:10; Genesis 19:29**. The clear implication from the Hebrew is that in the ten generations since Creation man had not just *corrupted* the earth – he had *destroyed* it. A thermo-nuclear device could not have done worse. Man's *pursuit of his own way* and his *obsession with his own appetites and lusts* proved to be the ultimate weapon of mass destruction.

2. It was 'filled with violence'

The second phrase Torah tells us the Holy One used to describe the world in Noach's day is *timalei ... chamas*⁴. Our English Bibles translate that as '*filled with violence*'. The word our English Bibles translate as violence in this passage is *chamas*⁵. This word connotes *violence, cruelty, and lawless oppression* teaming up to effectuate widespread ecosystem-harming havoc.

The word our English Bibles translate as 'filled with' is an ultimate form [hence the prefix *tav*] of the word *male*⁶. This word means to *fill up to the brim, to the maximum*. It is the same word used in Genesis 1:22 to describe the proliferation of fish and sea creatures in the sea. It means *to fill [or be filled] too full to add*

² *Shachat* is spelled *shin, chet, tav*. Strong's Hebrew word #7843, it is pronounced *shaw-khat*.

³ *Rashi* [Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak of Troyes], was lived in France and Germany in the Eleventh Century - the era of the Crusades. *Rashi* is considered by many Jewish theologians as the greatest Torah commentator of all.

⁴ *Chamas* is *chet, mem, samech*. Strong's Hebrew word #2555, it is pronounced *khaw-mawce*.

⁵ Note the similarity to the Arabic word *Hamas* – the name taken by the most violent arm of the Palestinian Liberation Organization/Palestinian Authority.

⁶ *Male* is *mem, lamed, alef*. Strong's Hebrew word # 4390, it is pronounced *maw-lay*.

any more.

The world could not get any more *cruel*. The world could not contain any more *oppression*. The world could not bear any more *injustice*. Something HAD to be done.

3. It was ‘perverted in its way’.

The third and final phrase Torah tells us the Holy One used to describe the world in Noah’s day is *ha-shachit ... at dar’ko*. English Bibles translate this as ‘*perverted ... in its way*’. The operative verb is again *shachat*⁷. As we saw earlier, the word is usually translated as ‘*to corrupt*’ but literally means ‘*to so badly corrupt as to completely destroy*’. The word our English Bibles translate as ‘way’ is *derech*⁸. This word implies *direction* and *manner* of travel or lifestyle. The world was not just ‘messed up’ - it was *in the throes of a death spiral*. Unless something happened, and soon, man would self-destruct – and all the earth and its creatures – would perish. Think the Flood was bad? Imagine *the alternative*! Can you fathom the state the world and its species would be in today – and what a horror story life on this planet would be - had the Holy One not intervened when He did, as He did, to the extent He did?

Much as the spirit of Elohim brooded over the waters in the *tohu v’vohu* days of Genesis 1:2, then intervened powerfully to right the situation in Genesis 1:3-31, even so His Creative Breath is about to move upon the be waters, then right the situation, once again. Relax, Beloved - this is just part of the *Elohim Signature*.

Who REALLY Destroyed the Lifeforms of Days 5 and 6 of Creation in Noah’s Generation?

Many people of our day have been conditioned to think – and teach – that when He brought the Flood the Holy One turned upon His own Creation in a fit of rage and destroyed all life – well, except for the lives of the eight human beings and the multitude of animals that got a ‘ticket’, as it were, on the ark. That is, however, a totally serpentine-influenced spin on the true story. The real story is that *man* so corrupted the *ha-aretz* realm the Holy One had entrusted to him so badly that it could simply no longer continue to exist without radical reformation. The whole truth is that the Holy One’s intervention was an *act of extreme grace* – a painful but necessary surgery that was the world’s – and all its’ species – only hope of survival. The life that would have gone on – for a day, a year, or a millennium – but for the Flood, *would not have been a life worth living*. And man would not have – could not have – redeemed it. So as

⁷ *Shachat* is spelled *shin, chet, tav*. Strong’s Hebrew word #7843, it is pronounced *shaw-khat*.

⁸ *Derech* is *dalet, resh, kaf sofit*. Strong’s Hebrew word #1870, it is pronounced *deh'-rek*.

you study the Flood do not think of the Holy One's act in sending the waters as a horrible act of an angry, irrational, unapproachable deity bent on destruction. See it for what it *is* – an act of tough love wrought by a merciful Creator who is both hopelessly in love with the creature called man and fully devoted to that creature's survival and fulfillment.

***What Does the Story of Noach and the Flood
Have to Do With Us, In the Days of Atom Bombs
and Smart Phones?***

Some may ask: “*How is the story of Noach, the Ark, the Animals that came in pairs, the masses of humanity that would not come at all, and the devastation of the Flood important to humanity multiple millennia hence?*” Permit me to address that question. First of all, if you believe Yeshua is the Messiah then you should know that He taught that the 950-year period in which Noach lived is *fraught with prophetic significance*. In His Great Olivet Discourse the Master prophesied: ***as the days of Noach were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be***. Matthew 24:37. Could it be that if we want to recognize the ‘signs of His coming’, and understand what kind of conditions will prevail in the world when Messiah makes His glorious *end-time re-appearance*, we need to understand the conditions that prevailed in the ‘days of Noach’ – and perhaps also understand what made the relationship between the Holy One and man - at least *one man* - work, even in the midst of those challenging conditions?

***Introducing Noach as the New ‘Adam –
and His Assigned Role’ in the Holy One’s Grand Redemptive Plan***

All we learned about the man named Noach last week however could be summed up in a few words. We learned that he was of the lineage of Adam's third son, *Shet*. We learned that Noach's great-grandfather *Chanoach* [Enoch], ‘walked with – i.e. moved through life in step with - God’, and then ‘was not for God took him’. We learned that Noach's grandfather *Metushelach* [‘Methuselah’] lived a whopping 969 years [the Biblical record for longevity]. And we learned that at his naming ceremony his father [whose name was *Lamech*] prophetically declared concerning him:

Zeh yenachameinu mima'aseinu ume'itzvon yadeinu

This one will comfort us in the labor and anguish of our hands

min-ha-adamah asher erarah Adonai

caused by the limitations and restrictions the Holy One placed on the soil.

If Lamech was correct, this child's destiny is to be and do something ‘*special*’. As a result of his life, the earth is never going to be the same. But exactly how was his life going to *nacham* [i.e. *comfort, console*] mankind? Hmmmnn. We

need to know more — much more - about this man – and about the part he is destined to play in the redemptive plan of the Holy One for mankind on the one hand, and for Creation on the other. Come along with the Rabbi's son and let us go back to the future once again! Before this week is over we will indeed know more – much more - about not only the man named Noach, but also about the world-changing 950-year span of years in which he lived. We've already had a glimpse of the mess Noach inherited; now let's look at the man –the descendant of Adam and progenitor of each of us – through the Creator's eyes.

Noach's story has a lot to teach us right now concerning how we are to relate *to our families* – to *chaotic events going on around us* – and to *Creation*. Our goal this week therefore will not be just to become more familiar with Noach, or more conversant with the details of the story of his life and times, or even more aware of the risks of surrendering the human will to greed and lusts. All of those insights will merely be by-products of our true goal. Our true goals will be to come to better *know the Holy One and to trust Him more*, to *acknowledge and appreciate His love for and covenant with us*, and hopefully to *draw closer to the divine destiny and purpose for which we have been brought forth at such a time as this*. To help us accomplish these goals the Holy One has inspired Moshe to write a lengthy set of chronicles describing *the days of Noach*. These chronicles were not written for Noach – or for Moshe. They were written for you and me.

A Closer Look at Noach – Through Heaven's Eyes

The parsha starts by giving us a description of *Noach*. The information we are given about him has nothing to do with the way Noach saw himself, nor the way his wife or his children, much less his friends or his enemies, saw him. The perspective and the insight that the Torah provides concerning Noach is not *human at all*, but *Divine*. What we are told by Torah about Noach is how Noach was seen by *His Creator, Guide, Guardian, and Benefactor*. We are told how Noach – a man like us in many ways – looked through the Holy One's eyes. That means *Lover's eyes*. That means *Redeemer's eyes*. That means *eyes of chen* [grace]. Read the following beautiful words, you who love the Holy One and who *sh'ma* the Holy One's Torah, and understand – they describe how the Holy One sees *you*, as well:

Eleh toldot Noach

This is the epic, trans-generationally impactful story of Noach

Noach ish tzadik

Noach was a 'righteous man' – i.e. a man who met [His Creator's] specifications.

tamim hayah b'dorotav

He was faultless in his generation,
v'et-ha-Elohim hithalech Noach
and he, Noach, walked with- i.e. moved in step with - the Eternal One.
[Genesis 6:9]

I am sure that is not what Noach's fellow men saw. Men do not tend to look upon one another with *Lover's eyes*, or with *Redeemer's eyes*, or with *eyes of chen*. Men have been poisoned – and their vision distorted - by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *tov v'ra*. Men therefore tend to look upon their fellows critically, judgmentally, competitively, and suspiciously. They do not look for potential; they look for flaws. They do not see possibilities for greatness; they scour each other for blemishes they can expose and weaknesses they can exploit. But not the Holy One. Knowing that *ra* can never be overcome with *ra*, but only with *tov*, He chooses to focus His attention, speech, and His energy on the *tov* He sees in a man, never on the *ra*. Oh, that we who walk with the Eternal One would finally learn this lesson from Him!

Note how the Divine perspective starts with “generations”. The Holy One sees *far beyond your present situation*. He sees all the *high points of your life* - because He planned them for you long, long ago. And He sees *even beyond your life* – to your children, and your children's children forever. You who *sh'ma* the Holy One, and your seed, have the *chen* of the Holy One working in and for you.

Let's look at the Holy One's description of Noach – and all those who find *chen* in the Holy One's eyes - phrase by phrase. We should not remember Noach as a man who built an ark and survived a flood; we should remember him the way the Holy One wanted him to be remembered: *As a righteous man, faultless in his generation, who walked with God*. Otherwise we will try to be like Noach by building our version of an ark, instead of emulating his character.

Essential Noachic Attribute #1: ***He Was A 'Righteous' Man***

First of all, we are told that Noach was a *'righteous man'* - in Hebrew, *tzaddik*⁹. The verb root, *tzadak*, is taken from the building/construction trades. It means, basically, to *'meet architect's spec'*, be true to/consistent with the *Elohim signature* instead of the *Humanism Signature*, and therefore be 'usable' for the project at hand. It means to have no disqualifying trait or flaw. As an example, if one is talking about a board that is to be used in a building project, to be *tzaddik* that board must comply with all the specified dimensions, be of the specified quality, pass all the basic material tests, and possess the specified

⁹ *Tzaddik* is *tzade, dalet, yod, kuf*. Strong's Hebrew word #6662, it is pronounced *tzad-deek*'.

level of supporting ‘tension strength’ and functionality. If one is talking about a man to front a great redemptive movement of the Holy One, it means one who will *sh’ma* the Holy One’s Voice, tune out other voices, and follow the Holy One’s instructions.

In Genesis 18:23 we learn that a *tzaddik* is the opposite of *rasha*¹⁰. *Rasha* [*resh, shin, ayin*] is the word English Bibles usually translate as ‘wicked’, but which literally means a *noisemaker*, an *agitator*, a *troublemaker*, a *disturbance-causer*, a *tumult-instigator*, or a *rebel-rouser*. Picture someone whose primary modus operandi is to complain, to rant, to promote protest movements, and /or to incite riots. Picture one who fear-mongers, who mocks, who foments discontent, who spreads *lashon hara*, who uses inflammatory rhetoric, who stirs up division, who demonizes opponents, who promotes prejudice, and/or who adds fuel to the fire of negative human emotions like jealousy, rage, lust, shame, anxiety, paranoia, or hate. In Ecclesiastes 5:2, the wisest man on earth, Kohelet, therefore cautions: *Do not be rash with your mouth; and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in/of the Heavens, and you are on/of the earth. Therefore, let your words be few.* Echoing this wisdom, Ya’akov, called ‘James’ in English Bibles, wrote: *Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* James 1:19-21.

Biblically, we can say a *tzaddik* is ‘righteous’. But that does not mean we think he is totally sinless. It just means he is not so badly warped, corrupted, damaged, or *out of spec* that he is unusable in for the Kingdom of Heaven’s projects in His generation. It means he has *no blemish that is not, or cannot be, accounted for, dealt with, and made up for elsewhere*.

There is no way for us to make *ourselves* righteous. Indeed, as Avraham’s experiences teach us, ‘righteousness’ comes solely from *trusting and sh’ma-ing the instructions of God* – not fomenting great political/ideological movements or doing great deeds of ‘social justice’. See Genesis 15:6¹¹. if we are righteous in our own eyes, we are *rasha* to the Holy One. He rejects as ‘out of spec’ and unusable any form of righteousness other than that which flows from intimate relationship with and submission to Him. So the righteousness the Creator pronounced over Noah was not based on great *deeds Noah did* or what great

¹⁰ *Rasha* is *resh, shin, ayin*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7563.

¹¹ Genesis 15:6 says of Avram: “*And he trusted* – i.e. *sh’ma*-ed, put his reliance in, and followed the instructions of- *the Holy One, and He accounted it to him as righteousness.*”

sacrifices Noah made. Nor was it based on how passionately Noah ‘worshipped’ [publicly or privately], or on how much time he devoted to study and prayer, or on how well he ministered in whatever giftings with which he had been blessed. Nor was it based on whatever degree of moral purity or cultural impact Noah attained or maintained. Righteousness, for Noah and for us, was found in and trusting in the Holy One’s goodness and *chen* [grace], and thereby surrendering to the Creator’s will, *sh’ma*-ing His voice, and doing what He said – and *nothing else*. It was so in the beginning, and it will be so until the end.

Essential Noachic Attribute #2:

He Was ‘Blameless’ in His Generation

Secondly we are told that in the eyes of the Holy One Noah was ‘blameless’ among the people of his time. The Hebrew word we translate as ‘blameless’ is *tamim*, *tav*, *mem*, *yod*, *mem sofit*. The root word, *tamam* – i.e. *tav*, *mem*, *mem sofit* - means *fully utilized and functional*. It is the opposite of *dysfunctional*. Noah – within the constraints that come with living in a totally depraved society - made himself *fully available to the Holy One*. He engaged with, listened to, followed the instructions of, served, and worshipped the Holy One functionally. He was, like *Kalev* [Caleb] would be in the days of Wilderness wandering, *whole-hearted* in his devotion. He took his assigned mission to heart and to hand. Why? Because, I surmise, he had child-like faith/trust/confidence that the Creator’s way was always *the best possible way*, and because his *heart panted after his Maker and King*.

Some English translations use the word ‘perfect’ to translate *tamim*. This may have been a valid translation into the primitive form of English language that was in use in King James’ era, but not today. Today the English word ‘perfect’ is considered to mean ‘sinless’, and ‘without fault’. Noah was *not that*. No human being is or could be. All the *tamim* description of Torah means is that Noah’s passions and energies were consumed in his relationship with, and the instructions of, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

So, how about you, Dear Reader? Are you surrendered to the Holy One’s plan to make you ‘blameless in your generation’ – and accomplish His redemptive purposes *in your world and appointed time*?

Essential Noachic Attribute #3:

He Walked With – i.e. Moved in Step With - the Holy One

Finally, we are told that Noah ‘walked with God’. What an awesome idea. But what does it mean? The phrase our English Bibles translate as *Noah walked with God* is *et-ha-Elohim hithalech Noah*. The Hebrew verb at the root of this

phrase is *halak, hey, lamed, kaf sofit*. This is the word Torah used in chapter 5, verse 24, to describe the way in which *Chanoch* [Enoch], Noach's grandfather, related to the Holy One. It was said of Chanoch, he "*walked [halak] with the Holy One, and he was not, for the Holy One took him.*"

Walking with the Holy One is the easiest - and the hardest - thing in the world. It means that *wherever He goes, we go*. It means *whatever He is doing, we are doing*. Yeshua of Natzret spoke of this, saying: ***I only do what I see My Father doing.*** What is involved is a *surrendering of self-will*, a *willingness to focus on the Holy One's every movement*, and a *cultivated sensitivity to His every verbal and non-verbal cue*.

Have you ever watched a couple of really good ballroom dancers dance together? They often seem to move as one. How do they do it? The man leads, and the woman follows. The woman learns to respond to the man's non-verbal cues and to flow with his movements. She *yields to his will* and as a result *flows with his movements*. He moves, she responds. After a while she begins to *anticipate his movements*, and *memorize the steps*. But *she does not start any step until he does*. She *does not make any movement except in response to His movements*. That is what it is like to walk with the Holy One, Dear Reader. Think of your life as a ballroom floor. Let the Holy One take you into His arms. Start like a little child, standing on the tops of His shoes, so to speak, and letting Him drag you around like a rag doll. Then gradually start to respond to His movements one at a time.

When you begin to hear the music of Creation play, I *hope you'll dance*. Just watch the dips and try not to get dizzy in the spins. Don't step on your Divine Partner's toes - and He won't step on yours.

What Do the Sages Say About The State of the World - And Mankind – Right Before the Flood?

"*The generation of the Flood*", the sages say, "*was arrogant on account of the great good that the Holy One had bequeathed unto it*". Sanhedrin 108a. Lawlessness, lust, and intermarriage of species resulted in a people blessed with both natural strength and physical beauty. The earth was more bountiful than it is today. Humans lived longer, and were not hindered by physical weaknesses or diseases of any kind. There was no arthritis. There were no bad backs or knees. There was no diabetes, hypertension, nearsightedness, deafness, or senility. Because they intermixed their bloodlines with animals, however, they took on animalistic characteristics. They lived totally and wholly for themselves and their appetites. Each man looked out for his own, enjoying and

indulging in every pleasure his corrupted, animalistic flesh fancied. They put their great strength, longevity, and potential to work in pursuing their own selfish ends – no matter who got hurt along the way. They began to think -and act like - nothing was impossible for them; and, hence, that they did not need, and had no use for, the Creator. They saw no reason to pray. Eternally virile and youthful, they lived their lives in endless pursuit of physical pleasure. They were like a malevolent version of Peter Pan, simply refusing to ‘grow up’.

The Divine Apprehension of Noah - A ‘God-Encounter of the Torah Kind’

Enter the Holy One. He cared too much about Creation – and the species of mankind – to let this downward spiral continue. He intervened. Is that hard for you to believe?

The Holy One is not aloof from His Creation. He does not [except when it serves some specific purpose] make a practice of *hiding* – or concealing Himself - from mankind. He is always speaking – we just get too preoccupied with temporal, fleshly things to hear what He is saying. So, the Holy One *pursues* mankind with passion, always seeking to communicate and interact with mankind in wonderful ways. That is why much of Torah is about ‘*God-encounters*’. The process started in the Garden. It continued at the threshold of Kayin’s tent, and in the field of Hevel’s blood. And it is still going on today - as at place after place and time after time the Holy One apprehends and confronts this or that man – and then, once a connection is established, communes with that man repeatedly and progressively in life- and world-changing ways.

I cannot even imagine life without *God-encounters*. I don’t want to. I hope you have had many such experiences - and I pray that in the near future you will have many, many more. If you have not had an encounter with the Creator of the Universe lately I encourage you to stop what you are doing right now, and diligently seek His Face and His Words. Just be prepared to make whatever adjustments to your lifestyle and priorities it takes to make yourself available for a visitation. I am confident that *He will not disappoint you* – or keep you waiting very long!

Nevertheless, the Holy One remains sovereign. He – and He alone - sovereignly chooses *when* and *where* and *how* – and for what reason - to manifest Himself to and/or communicate directly with any particular human being or group thereof. We cannot – and should not - expect the Creator of the Universe to appear on demand for us like a genie from a bottle. We can *ask for* God-encounters. We can – and should – in preparation for God-encounters *humble*

ourselves and submit our lives to do His Will. We can lay down our ministries and our reputations and our priorities and our theologies and doctrines, and just trust in Him. Once we have done those things however, only He has the right to decide whether to come to us as a mighty rushing wind, a powerful earthquake, a burning bush like Moshe's, or a raging fire like Eliyahu's [Elijah's] – or to merely manifest Himself through a still, small voice. Make no mistake however, the Holy One has a God-encounter - and probably a series thereof - in mind for you. When He comes, our job is to throw everything we have ever known away, prostrate ourselves before Him in worship, grab hold of the hem of His garment – and not let go 'til His Will is perfected in us.

But we were talking about Noach, weren't we? Noach's first God-encounter is described for us in detail the ancient scroll. The Holy One – as always - initiated the contact. He broke through the 'finitude barrier', and spoke these words to His friend Noach:

Ketz kol-basar ba l'fanai

An end of all flesh has come before Me.

ki-male'ah Ha-aretz chamas mipeneihem

The world is filled with [man's] crime.

V'hineini mash'chitam et ha-aretz

I will therefore lay waste/bring destruction to the aretz-realm.

Noach could not call any human being to help him deal with this. Theology, doctrine, and opinion would not assist him. Man's advice or opinion simply did not matter. Oh there are times for such things as advice and counsel and instruction of course. But legitimate God-encounters like those Noach experienced make all such secondary sources pale in comparison.

Making B'rit [Covenant] – the Next Phase of the Elohim Signature

We have discussed, albeit briefly, the fundamental nature of the 'God-encounter'. The 'God-encounter' is the foundation of all spiritual revelation. And the capstone of the entire structure of revelation – that upon which every aspect of it hinges, is the *b'rit*. The Holy One told Noach:

V'ha-kimoti et-briti itach

And I will establish my covenant with you ...

The Holy One does not, you see, just come to *converse with*, or even to *bless*, a man, or a woman, or a child. He comes, when He comes, to do something much more lasting and meaningful - He comes *to cut covenant*. Failing to understand and appreciate that truth about the Holy One and His dealings with man, and to lay hold of the awesome implications of that truth, is perhaps the single greatest mistake of our world, its cultures, and its institutions. A

covenant [*b'rit*], you see, is not just a promise – it is *a spiritual union*, like a marriage. It is something eternal, unchanging, and absolutely trustworthy and one hundred per cent certain and sure. It is binding in every conceivable way – not just legally, morally, or ethically - but SPIRITUALLY. A *b'rit* with the Holy One *changes everything* about us and our lives. It is *attitude altering*, and *perspective changing*, and *behavior modifying*, and *purpose- and priority-reshaping*. It is that which gives substance and predictability to our relationship with God. It is more valuable than anything else we possess - or could ever possess - this side of Heaven.

Do you have a covenant with the Holy One, Dear Reader? Has He met with you and pledged to you not only His undying and unchanging love, but also the eternal protection, provision, and guidance, of your soul? Has He sealed this pledge to you with the gift of the *Ruach HaQodesh*, a measure of the breath of His own Mouth?

Has He committed to you the vastness of His resources, and the incomparable strength of His Right Arm? Have you experienced what it means to have an eternal covenant with the Creator of Heaven and Earth? If not covenant, then *in what do you trust*? If covenant with God is not for you, then *who is it for*? If now is not the time for you to cut or renew covenant with the Holy One, then when is the time?

Every time you see, in Torah [or any part of Scripture] where the Holy One has cut a covenant with someone – Noach, Avraham, Ya'akov, David, Israel under Moshe, etc. – ask Him if you may be included – *i.e. grafted in* after the fact – to that covenant. Be careful in this regard however. Do not demand that the Holy One *change the covenant* for you. Do not *seek to replace those already in covenant*. Just ask humbly to be permitted to *share the crumbs from the table of the children of that covenant*. And don't forget to ask the Holy One to *seal* your inclusion and grafting into the covenant in question forever, with a *visible sign*, or token. Noach, after all, received a *teivah* [ark], and ultimately a *bow in the clouds*. Avraham received a *mark in his flesh* [circumcision], and a *son of his own loins*. Ya'akov [Jacob] received *safe journey*, and *provision*, and *blessing*, from Beit-El to Paddan-Aram, and back again. David received a *kingdom*, and a *dynasty*, and a *house*. The slave population redeemed by the Holy One from Egypt with a mighty Hand, an Outstretched Arm, and great miracles – as well as all who embrace the covenant of Torah that redeemed slave population received at Sinai - received the 7th day Shabbat and the 'festivals', and an all-encompassing empowerment to serve the Holy One as His Light to the Nations.

In this ‘engrafting’ process, the covenant the Holy One made with Noah is a good place to start. The Holy One covenanted with the father of Cham, Shem and Yafet as follows, saying:

*You are to come into the **teivah** [ark],
you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.*

[Genesis 6:18(b)]

Ask the Holy One to give you your sons, your wife, and your son’s wives [or daughters husbands]. But do not expect them to come where you do not go. Noah was to go first, and lead them in the Holy One’s way – they would come WITH HIM. The Holy One then continued:

*Of every living thing of all flesh,
you are to bring two of every sort into the teivah [ark], to keep them alive with you.*

They are to be male and female.

*Of the birds after their kind, of the cattle after their kind,
of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind,
two of every sort are to come to you, to keep them alive.*

[Genesis 6:19-20]

Ask the Holy One to bring to you, as he covenanted to bring to Noah, such as He desires to save, and such as He desires you to be responsible for and serve. It is not your job – nor would it fulfill the purposes of your covenant with The Holy One – for you to go out and try to *save the world*. He will bring *to you* those He wills. *Pray* for them. *Watch* for them. *Receive* them. *Care* for them. *Serve* them. *Feed* them whatever the Holy One gives you to feed them. As the Holy One said to Noah:

*Take with you of all food that is eaten, and gather it to you;
and it will be for food for you, and for them.*

[Genesis 6:21]

And then, if you do these things regarding those the Holy One brings to you, the Holy One will ‘*keep them alive*’. That is His covenant promise. When harvest season comes, labor night and day – not to save the world, but *for the absolute privilege and joy of getting the opportunity to co-labor with the Holy One in the miraculous ingathering of that which He causes the earth to produce for you*. Work hard at your schoolwork, and at your job or vocation – not for the praise of men, or for a feeling of satisfaction, or for monetary reward - but *in order to honor the One who gives to the man with whom He is in covenant wisdom and insight and the ability to produce wealth*.

Whatever the Holy One gives you to harvest, harvest *with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength*. And whatever He gives you, share it with those He brings your way. *It will be food for you – and for them*. That is the way covenant [b’rit] with the Holy One works.

Amazing Secrets of Noach's 'Ark'

The Holy One did not tell Noach to make a plan to reform improve the corrupt world in which he lived. What the Holy One instructed Noach was:

Aseh lecha teivat atzei-gofer

Make/build/create for yourself an ark¹² of cypress¹³ wood.

kinim ta'aseh et-ha-teivah

Make for yourself compartments in the ark.

V'chafarta otah mibayit umichutz b'kofer

And caulk/seal the inside and outside with pitch¹⁴.

Note that the ark is the first thing the Holy One ever told mankind to build. If the firstfruit is holy, the whole is holy!

The sages teach that the construction of the *teivah* [ark] occupied Noach for 120 years. The Holy One gave him the design, the dimensions, the material specifications, and the finishing directions. Noach had to collect and assemble two things - *atzei-g'fer* [gofer wood] and *kofer* [pitch]. Do you notice any similarity between the two components that the Holy One said were to be used in the construction of the *teivah*? It is invisible in English. In Hebrew however the root verbs for both *atzei-g'fer* [gofer wood] and *kofer* [pitch] are very similar. One is *g'far* [*gimel, peh, resh*]; the other is *kafar*, *kaf, pey, resh*. Both have to do with what we in English call 'covering'. *G'far* [the kind of wood to be used] is a verb root meaning 'to house'. It was a kind of wood used in houses [or perhaps a tree large enough to make one's house inside of]. *Kafar* is atonement – *the covering of sins*. It is the root of the phrase 'Yom Kippur' – the day of atonement, and for the *k'poret* [mercy seat]. Noach was therefore to make a *household of atonement*. The ark thus contained a message - to Noach, and to all mankind. There is a house in which the Holy One provides atonement.

When the Holy One instructs Moshe regarding the building of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle], He is going to tell Moshe to build it *according to a pattern* – i.e. to

¹² The word our English Bibles translate as 'ark' is *teivah*. Literally this means *a box*. The sages say this indicates that it did not have the shape of a boat (**Abarbanel**)

¹³ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'cypress' is *Gopher* in Hebrew. This word is usually translated as cypress because it has long been assumed that the Greek word for cypress, *kyparissos* (from *kaphar* or *gaphar*), is derived from the Hebrew. Some commentators disagree, however. Arbanel considers it a species of pine, and Ibn Janach, based on Saadia Gaon, opines that it is a species of boxwood. The *Targum* renders the Hebrew word gopher as *kadrom* or *kadros*, which the Talmud defines as a species of cedar (**Rosh HaShanah 23a**). The Talmud itself translates *gopher* as *mabluga* or *golmish*, both species of cedar (**Sanhedrin 108b, Rosh HaShanah 23a**; cf. *Arukh* s.v. *Adar*). The Septuagint, however, translates it as 'squared timber.'

¹⁴ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'pitch' is *kofer*. The word also denotes asphalt or bitumen. See Genesis 11:3.

pattern it after what the Holy One had shown Moshe ‘*on the mountain*’. After *what* was the *Mish’kan* – with the *k’poret* [mercy seat] and its *ritual for Yom Kippur* [atonement] – patterned? Perhaps it was same thing after which the *teivah* of Noach’s covenant with the Holy One was patterned. In My Father’s house are many mansions.

The Biggest ‘Noach Secret’ of All

Noach was by no means a ‘great man’ *as the world tends to judge great men*. He did not build any cities, head up any government, found any new religion or religious movement, or even fight any wars. He did not acquire a fortune. He did not excel at sports, at music, or at oratory. He did not hold any crusades, or perform a single miracle/sign/wonder, or in fact have any visible impact upon society at all. He did not win a single ‘lost soul’ outside of his own family. He did not build or give money to, or serve on the board of, any religious, educational, or other institution. But Noach had one secret of success that led to his deliverance, and the deliverance of his wife, and each of his children and their households.

Do you want to know Noach’s secret? It is contained within the final sentence of today’s aliyah.

Vaya'as Noach k'chol asher tzivah oto Elohim

According to all that [the Creator] instructed him,

ken asah

so he did/built/implemented [asah-ed].

[Genesis 6:22]

To *asah* means more than to ‘do’. It means to interact with raw material the way a potter interacts with clay. It means to make visible and tangible that which was only spoken or thought or believed. To *asah* the Holy One’s instructions means to build them into something visible, tangible, for all to see. Noach did not only build a *teivah* [ark], you see. He was the first¹⁵ to build – and model – a *sh’ma* lifestyle. He did not do or build what seemed right in his own eyes, or what would win accolades of men. He did not initiate anything. He merely responded to the instructions of the Holy One. He merely *yielded to whatever the Holy One said*, and *submitted to whatever the Holy One willed* – whatever the cost.

Alas Noach’s secret appears *all but forgotten* in the halls of culture, philosophy, and religion today. Today by and large men live their lives in pursuing acceptance by and recognition from other men, and ask the Holy One to bless

¹⁵ Except, of course, for Enoch.

their selfish pursuits. Today men build ministries¹⁶, schools and hospitals modeled after secular business and entertainment practices, and insist not only that the Holy One use them but that His people spend their money and all their spiritual energy to support them. Today the ‘Lord’s work’ tends to be pretty much just another form of big business – from corporate identity to governing boards to mortgages and retirement plans¹⁷.

Where is the man – or woman – or child – who will lay aside his/her agenda, reputation, and ‘ministry’ to *just do whatever the Holy One says*? Where, today, is there a man like Noach, of whom it can be truly said: *According to all that God instructed him, so he did* [asah-ed]? People of whom that can be said do not come along very often. There may only be *one* in any given generation. Enoch was like that. Noach was like that. Avraham was like that. So was Yosef [Joseph], for most of his life at least. Are you the one for this generation?

Questions for Today’s Study

1. Let’s get started on our study of parsha *Noach* with the following basic questions:

[A] In Strong’s and Gesenius look up the word “Noach [Noah]”. Write the Hebrew word and its Hebrew verb root. Write the definitions of the word and its root.

[B] Who was Noach’s father? grandfather? great-grandfather?

[C] What three descriptions does today’s Torah give of Noach?

[D] List Noach’s sons. From which of these three sons are you descended?

2. Now let’s dig a little deeper.

[A] In Strong’s and Gesenius look up the words “righteous/just”, “blameless/perfect” and “walked” as used in verse 9. Write the Hebrew words in Hebrew consonants with vowel markings. Search out the Hebrew verb roots, and write those as well. Then, for each word and its verb root, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing.

¹⁶ Please do not read more into this paragraph than is here. The purpose of this paragraph is not to condemn or disparage any man, ministry, or religious organization. Good people are often involved in ministries and often serve in religious organizations. The purpose of this paragraph is solely to point out that *there is always a stark – and often glaring and irreconcilable - contrast between the ways of man, on the one hand, and the ways of the Holy One, on the other*. As the Holy One pointed out, “*Your ways are not My ways*”. So it was when these words were spoken. So will it always be. Surely we can agree on this.

¹⁷ This is not to say that governing boards or mortgages or retirement plans are evil in themselves. It is merely to show that the model of leadership and organization which modern religion follows today is very clearly *a worldly model*, not the Holy One’s model.

[B] In your Bible Dictionaries, and also in Strong's and Gesenius, look up the names of Noah and his three sons. Write these Hebrew names in Hebrew consonants with vowel markings. Search out the Hebrew verb roots, and write those as well. Then, for each of these names and its verb root, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing.

3. After describing Noah the Torah gives a description of the condition of earth [Hebrew, *eret*] and mankind [Hebrew, ***kol-basar*** (literally, all flesh)] in the days of Noah.

[A] List the various descriptive words/phrases employed in verses 11-13, to describe the earth (*eret*).

[B] List the various descriptive words/phrases employed in these verses to describe mankind.

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the words "*corrupt*" and "*violence*". Write the Hebrew words so translated in these verses [per the KJV] and describe the Hebraic word pictures you see regarding those Hebrew words.

4. In verses 17-22 of today's aliyah the Holy One makes the first covenant with man since the garden of Eden.

[A] With whom besides Noah did the Holy One make this covenant?

[B] Summarize the basic terms of this covenant.

5. Describe the "calling" of Noah as we read about it in Torah. In so doing state what you think the Holy One *called Noah to do*, what the Holy One Himself *promised to do*, and *how that division of labors and responsibilities relates to whatever "ministry" we may do in the name of God today*.

6. This week's haftarah readings are from the prophet *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah]. In chapters 54 and 55 Yeshayahu is speaking prophetic words of the Holy One over a group of people who like Noah and his family found *chen* in the sight of the Holy One and made a fresh start, departing from the "norm" of society. In Yeshayahu's case it was the remnant of *sh'ma*-ing Hebrews [primarily descendants of Y'hudah (Judah)] who returned to the land of promise after the Babylonian captivity. Only a handful of the Jews returned. Those who did faced a seemingly impossible task. *The rubble* was so great, and *the enemies* were so strong, that it seemed hopeless I am sure. The only thing they had to rely upon was ... *the Word of the Holy One*. And *that was enough*.

The same holds true for us today. Those who *sh'ma* the Words of the Holy One in the Torah are called away from all that is "normative" in our society and to trust only in the instructions and covenant of the Holy One to sustain us. In today's Haftarah we find bread upon which to survive and prosper:

*Sing, barren, you who didn't bear;
break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who did not travail with child:
for more are the children of the desolate
than the children of the married wife, says the Holy One.*

*Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let them stretch forth the curtains of your habitations;
don't spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes.
For you shall spread aboard on the right hand and on the left;
and your seed shall possess the nations,
and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*

* * *

*In overflowing wrath I hid my face from you for a moment;
but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on you,
says the Holy One your Redeemer.*

*For this is [as] the waters of Noach to me;
for as I have sworn that the waters of Noach shall no more go over the eretz,
so have I sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.*

*For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed;
but my lovingkindness shall not depart.*

[Isaiah 54:1-10]

[A] Who is the “barren woman”, and why is she to sing?

[B] How are the days spoken of by the prophet “as the waters of Noach” to the Holy One?

[C] The words the Holy One speaks through Yeshayahu in this passage are words of covenant [*b'rit*]. What all is the Holy One covenanting to do [and refrain from doing] in regard to those returning from exile and starting over on a Torah-based lifestyle?

7. In today's opening Brit Chadasha reading for parsha *Noach* the stage is set for the main passage which we will study this week. *Kefa* [Peter] will define for us the basics of what a true Torah-based lifestyle must look like to others. Here is what he says:

*Finally, be all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brothers,
tenderhearted, courteous,
not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but instead blessing;
knowing that to this were you called, that you may inherit a blessing.*

* * *

*For the eyes of the Holy One are on the righteous, and his ears open to their prayer;
But the face of the Holy One is against those who do evil."*

[A] Make two columns on your paper. Above the column on the left, right “do”. Above the column on the right, write “do not”. Using the appropriate columns, list the ways in which *Kefa* [Peter] suggests in verses 8-11 that people should and should not act toward [and in relation to] one another.

[B] How does *Kefa* [Peter] say we should react when people speak evil of

us?

[C] In what attitude should we, even in evil and treacherous times such as these, discuss with others the Torah truths that cause us to have hope?

*May you, as Noach, find chen in the eyes of the Holy One.
May you come to recognize His Words as your life source ... and your life mission.
And May all your generations be tzaddikim [righteous ones].*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

The words of Kohelet, the son of David, king in Y'rushalayim:

"Vanity of vanities," says Kohelet; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

What does man gain from all his labor

in which he labors under the sun [Hebrew, tachat shemesh]?

One generation goes, and another generation comes; but the eretz remains forever.

The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and hurries to its place where it rises.

The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north.

It turns around continually as it goes,

and the wind returns again to its courses.

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full.

To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again.

All things are full of weariness beyond uttering.

The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

That which has been is that which shall be;

and that which has been done is that which shall be done:

and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there a thing of which it may be said, "Behold, this is new?"

It has been long ago, in the ages that were before us.

*There is no memory of the former; neither shall there be
any memory of the latter that are to come, among those that shall come after.*