

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel,
including the fallen soldiers of the IDF

בס"ד

25 OCTOBER 2025 | 3 CHESHVAN 5786

VOLUME 39 | #7

DAF HASHAVUA

נח | NOACH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 6.35pm
Birmingham: 6.40pm
Bournemouth: 6.46pm
Cardiff: 6.49pm
Dublin: 6.57pm
Edinburgh: 6.42pm
Glasgow: 6.46pm
Hull: 6.36pm
Leeds: 6.37pm
Liverpool: 6.46pm
Manchester: 6.41pm
Nottingham: 6.40pm
Sheffield: 6.40pm
Southend: 6.31pm
Southport: 6.47pm
Jerusalem: 6.33pm

נֹחַ
NOACH

2nd Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
153 VERSES
1,861 WORDS
6,907 LETTERS

Headlines:
**THE FLOOD
AND TOWER OF
BABEL**

NOACH:
Artscroll p.30
Hertz p.26
Koren Sacks p.45
Soncino p.34

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1131
Hertz p.41
Koren Sacks p.1413
Soncino p.56

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 6:9-22

Noach is introduced as a righteous man who “walked with God”. He had three sons, Shem, Cham and Yefet. The people have become thieving and corrupt. Noach is told by God that He will destroy the world with a flood and commands Noach to build a wooden Ark with specific dimensions. Noach and his family are to enter the Ark, as well as a male and female of every non-kosher species of animal and bird.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 7:1-16

In addition, seven males and females from each species of kosher animal and bird are to enter the Ark. Noach is 600 years old when the Flood starts. The rain falls gently for the first seven days, then heavily for 40 days and nights.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 7:17-8:14

The rising Flood waters cover the highest mountains and wipe out every living creature. The rains strengthen for a further 150 days, after which they stop and the waters start to recede. Ten months after the start of the Flood, the mountain tops become visible again. 40 days later, Noach sends out a raven and then a dove, to see if the Flood waters have receded.

4TH ALIYA (REVI’I) – 8:15-9:7

Upon God’s command, Noach, his family and the animals leave the Ark. Noach builds an altar and brings one of every kosher animal and bird as an offering. This pleases God, Who pledges never again to destroy life on Earth.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 9:8-9:17

God establishes His covenant never to destroy the world with another flood, with the rainbow

as its sign. Whenever a rainbow appears, it is a ‘reminder to God’ to keep this promise.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 9:18-10:32

Noach plants a vineyard, eventually drinking its wine and becoming drunk. Cham enters Noach’s tent and disgraces his father; Shem and Yefet then protect Noach’s dignity. After Noach wakes up, he realises what has happened and curses Cham and his descendants, but blesses Shem and Yefet. Noach dies at the age of 950. Cham and Yefet’s descendants are listed, including Nimrod, a mighty warrior and conqueror.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI’I) – 11:1-11:32

All people share a common language and live in Babylonia. They decide to build a city with a tower that can reach the heavens – the Tower of Babel. The Midrash says that, led by Nimrod, they wanted to wage war against God. However, God thwarts their plans, dispersing them around the world and introducing different languages so that they can no longer understand one another. Shem’s descendants are listed, up to the generation of Avram (later Avraham) and his nephew Lot. Avram marries his niece Sarai (later Sarah), who is not blessed with children.

Point to Consider: *Why does the Torah give no details of Avraham’s youth or upbringing?*

HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 54:1-55:5)

Chapter 54 of Yeshaya (Isaiah) refers to the Flood, labelling it “the waters of Noach”. The *Midrash* explains that Noach was partly to blame for the deluge, as he could have prayed more fervently for his generation to be spared.



To sponsor Daf Hashavua, scan this QR code or go to
www.theus.org.uk/daf-hashavua-sponsorship

For any comments or questions, contact
education@theus.org.uk

United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

Produced by US Education & Events together with the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

Editor-in-Chief: Rabbi Baruch Davis

Editorial and Production Team:

Rabbi Daniel Sturgess
Rebbetzen Nechama Davis
Laurie Maurer
Jennifer Dorling
Tatiana von Beelen

www.theus.org.uk

©United Synagogue 2025



COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

To mark the upcoming 5th yahrzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l and The Rabbi Sacks Global Day of Learning 2025 on 20 Cheshvan (11.11.2025), we will feature over several weeks a potpourri of parasha articles taken from the archives of the Covenant & Conversation Family Edition. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

The parasha begins and ends with two great events, the Flood on the one hand, and the Tower of Babel on the other. On the face of it they have nothing in common. The failings of the generation of the Flood are explicit. "The world was corrupt before God, and the land was filled with violence." Babel, by contrast, seems almost idyllic. "The entire earth had one language and a common speech" (Bereishit 11:1). The builders are bent on construction, not destruction. It is far from clear what their sin was. Yet from the Torah's point of view, Babel represents another serious wrong turn because immediately thereafter, God summons Avraham to begin an entirely new chapter in the religious story of humankind. It is clear that after Babel, God concludes that there must be another and different way for humans to live.

Essentially, the Flood tells us what happens to civilisation when individuals rule and there is no collective. Babel tells us what happens when the collective rules and individuals are sacrificed to it.

From a historical context, the

extreme, as seen in Babel, seems to be reflective of the imperial practice of the neo-Assyrians, who imposed their own language on the peoples they conquered. The neo-Assyrians asserted their supremacy by insisting that their language was the only one to be used by the nations and populations they had defeated. In this reading, Babel is a critique of imperialism.

The parallel language between the builders of Babel and Pharaoh in Egypt - both using "Come, let us... lest" - highlights their shared imperial

“ When the rule of law is used to suppress individuals and their distinctive languages and traditions, this too is wrong.”

ambition to subjugate and control populations, suppressing their identities and freedoms. Keeping that in mind, Bereishit 10 describes the division of humanity into seventy nations and seventy languages. Bereishit



“ The miracle of monotheism is that the one God in Heaven created diversity on earth, and He asks us (with obvious conditions) to respect that diversity.”

11 tells of how one imperial power conquered smaller nations and imposed its language and culture on them, thus directly contradicting God's wish that humans should respect the integrity of each nation and each individual. When at the end of the Babel story, God “confuses the language” of the builders, He is not creating a new state of affairs but restoring the old.

Interpreted thus, the story of Babel is a critique of the power

of the collective when it crushes individuality – the individuality of the seventy cultures described in Bereishit 10. When the rule of law is used to suppress individuals and their distinctive languages and traditions, this too is wrong. The miracle of monotheism is that the one God in Heaven created diversity on earth, and He asks us (with obvious conditions) to respect that diversity.

So the Flood and the Tower of Babel, though polar opposites, are linked, and the entire parasha of Noach is a brilliant study in the human condition. There are individualistic cultures and there are collectivist ones, and both fail, the former because they lead to anarchy and violence, the latter because they lead to oppression and tyranny.

After the two great failures of the Flood and Babel, Avraham was called on to create a new

form of social order that would give equal honour to the individual and the collective, personal responsibility and the common good. That remains the special gift of Jews and Judaism to the world.



A BLUEPRINT FOR HUMANITY: THE SEVEN NOACHIDE LAWS

BY: **RABBI DR HARVEY BELOVSKI**

Emeritus rabbi of Golders Green Synagogue

Many years ago, a student at Oxford University approached me to ask for help converting to Judaism. It was a familiar story – she'd visited Israel over the previous summer where she had dated a Jewish man for a while and had fallen in love with the idea of 'joining up'. At a Shabbat visit to my home, I asked her if, before seriously investigating the demanding process of conversion, she'd explored the Seven Noachide Laws – the Torah's universal moral blueprint for all humanity. Unsurprisingly, she'd never heard of it, but she agreed to read a book I recommended. [Today there are many books and websites on the topic.] I'm not sure what happened to her, but I know she was excited by the Noachide alternative and dropped the idea of converting.

The Seven Noachide Laws are a set of universal moral

imperatives. According to Jewish tradition, these were given in an embryonic form to Adam and then to Noach after the flood. They are: prohibitions against i) idolatry, ii) blasphemy, iii) murder, iv) sexual immorality, v) theft, and vi) eating flesh taken from a living animal, along with vii) the obligation to establish systems of justice.

The Biblical roots of these laws appear in the early chapters of Bereishit, with the details elucidated in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 56a). For example, the prohibition against murder is explicit in Bereishit 9:6, while the command to establish courts is derived from Bereishit 9:5. Authorities such as the Rambam (Maimonides, 1138-1204) codified these laws as binding on all humanity.

While the formulation of the Laws is simple, they form the ethical bedrock upon which civilisation can stand.

For Jews, the Torah prescribes a complex and demanding system of behaviour – the 613 mitzvot that govern every aspect of life. Yet, the Torah also recognises the dignity and spiritual potential of every human being, who is not expected to accept the full yoke of Jewish law. Instead, the Seven Noachide Laws provide a universal framework for righteous behaviour and the creation of a functional, moral society. Alongside Jews who observe the Torah, all adherents of

the Noachide Code are guaranteed a share in the Afterlife, as the Rambam writes in his *Mishneh Torah* (*Hilchot Melachim* 8:11).

This approach is striking – Judaism neither envisions nor desires a world in which all people become Jews. Rather, it sees the diversity of humanity as part of the Divine plan, with the Noachide Laws serving as a universal moral code. In a world often fractured by religious and cultural conflict, these shared values – respect for life, property, family, and the sanctification of God's name – can serve as a common language for ethical living.

This vision is particularly compelling today. The Rambam understood the Noachide Laws not as a relic of the past but as a living covenant, a way for all people to participate in achieving God's purpose for the world. In our fragmented era, when moral consensus can seem elusive, the Seven Noachide Laws offer a timeless foundation for justice, compassion, and peace.

“Judaism neither envisions nor desires a world in which all people become Jews. Rather, it sees the diversity of humanity as part of the Divine plan, with the Noachide Laws serving as a universal moral code.”





THE FINAL EXILE

SEFER MELACHIM (KINGS) II: CHAPTER 25, PART 1

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**
Ma'ayan and US Educator

The final chapter of *Sefer Melachim Bet* recounts the second stage of the Babylonian exile: the total exile and destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple). In the 9th year of King Tzidkiyahu's reign, the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem. This began on the 10th of Tevet, which we commemorate with an annual fast day.

Other biblical sources fill in the missing context here. Tzidkiyahu decides to rebel against the Babylonian superpower, presumably hoping for support from the nations that are rebelling against them at the same time. This goes against the advice of Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) the prophet, who repeatedly insists that rebellion against the superpower will end in disaster. As Yirmiyahu predicts, the rebellion is immediately crushed, with the Babylonians laying siege to our capital city.

For two and a half years, the inhabitants of Jerusalem suffer greatly. There is no food left in

Jerusalem. Finally, the walls of the city are breached, and Jerusalem is invaded. According to *Sefer Melachim*, this breach occurs on 9th Tammuz (*II Melachim* 25:3-4). The same date is recorded elsewhere in *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible), for example in Yirmiyahu 39:2 and 52:6-7. However, the *Talmud Yerushalmi* records this as happening on the 17th Tammuz.¹

The discrepancy over dates becomes more confusing when we consider the annual fast day of 17th Tammuz. This fast is due to several tragedies that befell the Jewish people on this date. One such tragedy is that the walls of Jerusalem were breached before the destruction of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*. One explanation for the apparent contradiction regarding the First is that each refers to different stages of the invasion. On 9th Tammuz the outer walls of the city were breached, whilst on 17th Tammuz the walls of the *Beit HaMikdash* itself were breached.

King Tzidkiyahu is captured while trying to flee Jerusalem, and he is forced to witness the murder of his own sons before he himself is blinded and carried off to Babylon in chains.

On the 9th Av, the Babylonians set fire to the *Beit Hamikdash*, destroying the holiest site for the Jewish people. Many people are killed or sent into exile. Only the poor are left behind to work in the fields.

The *Tanach* spends many verses describing the plundering of the Temple treasury in painstaking detail. We are now in the final chapter of *Sefer Melachim*. This book began by recounting the dedication of the *Beit Hamikdash*, describing in great detail how King Shlomo (Solomon) lovingly built the Temple. The contrast between the beginning and the end of *Sefer Melachim* could not be more stark.

As 21st century Jews, living 2000 years after the destruction of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*, we are very used to life without the Temple; it can be hard to fully understand what we are missing. The structure of *Sefer Melachim* emphasises how far we have fallen since the Golden Age of King Shlomo (Solomon). It allows us to appreciate the terrible tragedy that has befallen the Jewish people.

“ This book began by recounting the dedication of the *Beit Hamikdash*, describing in great detail how King Shlomo (Solomon) lovingly built the Temple. The contrast between the beginning and the end of *Sefer Melachim* could not be more stark.”

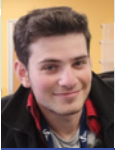
¹ See *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Taanit* 4:5.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT NOACH

24-25 OCTOBER | 3 CHESHVAN

WHEN JUSTICE BREAKS DOWN



BY: **SAM STONEFIELD**

Chinuch Worker,
Bnei Akiva, and
former Tribe
Fieldworker

This week's *parasha* tells us why God brought the flood in the days of Noach (Noah):

"The earth became corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with *chamas*" (Bereishit 6:11)

Chamas is the Hebrew word which describes what the corruption was. Although

today, it is the name of a vicious terrorist group, it has a different, unexpected meaning in this verse, as explained by ancient Jewish teachings: *chamas* means theft.

This seems strange. Is theft really bad enough to destroy the whole world?

Chamas is about more than just stealing small things. It means that those with power cheat others and change the rules to benefit themselves. It's not just one person doing something wrong, it's when injustice becomes part of the system, and nobody tries to fix it.

That's what made the world fall apart in the days of Noach. But the Torah doesn't just warn us about bad examples. Later on, it teaches us how to build something better.

"Justice, justice you shall pursue, so that you may live and inherit the Land [of Israel]" (Devarim 16:20)

This means that if we care about fairness, if we stand up for others, speak the truth, and act with honesty, we can help create the kind of world God wants for us. Even in a broken society, one person can make a difference. Noach did. We can too.

Kosher vs Non Kosher

How many of the following animals did Noach bring into the Ark?

Hint: He brought 2 (one male and one female) of each non-kosher animal and 14 (seven males and seven females) of each kosher species.

1. Camel



2. Kudu



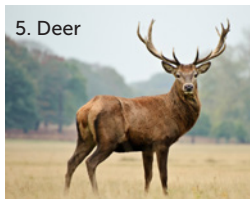
3. Pig



4. Bison



5. Deer



6. Goat





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

NOAH: REFUGE FROM THE DELUGE!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** IS A TOTAL WASHOUT. LITERALLY.

BUILDING AN ARK WAS THE ULTIMATE DIY PROJECT.

INTRODUCING THE FLOOD OF ALL FLOODS... STARRING **NOACH** (NOAH) AND HIS FAMOUS FLOATING ZOO.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: WOOD, NAILS, PATIENCE... OH, AND THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS WITH SPECIAL DIETS.

WHEN THE WATERS ROSE, **NOACH'S** ARK BECAME THE WORLD'S FIRST AQUATIC ZOO.

BUT THE **PARASHA** IS NOT JUST TELLING US ABOUT ANIMALS AND RAIN. IT'S ABOUT WHAT YOU DO WHEN LIFE FEELS LIKE IT'S FLOODING AROUND YOU.

LIFE

NOACH HAD HIS ARK; A SAFE SPACE IN THE CHAOS OF THE FLOOD. IT'S USEFUL TO PREPARE OUR OWN MINI-ARKS TOO!

FLOODS TODAY DON'T ALWAYS INVOLVE WATER. SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE WE ARE DROWNING IN HOMEWORK, THE NEWS, FOMO, OR TOO MANY WHATSAPP GROUPS!

RABBI BERZOVSKY REMINDS US THAT WE HAVE THREE **SUPER-ARKS** CALLED **SHABBAT**, **TORAH** AND **JEWISH UNITY** TO PROTECT US WHEN WE FEEL LIKE WE ARE GETTING SWEEPED AWAY.

WE CAN ALSO CREATE OUR PERSONAL ARKS. EVERYONE'S ARK LOOKS DIFFERENT. IT MIGHT BE PAINTING, LEARNING **TORAH**, PLAYING FOOTBALL OR **DAVENING** (PRAYING). IF YOU ARKS' ME, WHAT MATTERS IS FINDING WHAT KEEPS YOU AFLOAT.

SO WHAT'S YOUR **NOAH'S ARK**? FIND IT, BUILD IT, SAIL IT... IT MIGHT JUST BE A LIFESAVER!



tribe
www.tribeuk.com

Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.