

DAF HASHAVUA

נח | NOACH

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 6.50pm
Birmingham: 6.56pm
Bournemouth: 7.01pm
Cardiff: 7.05pm
Dublin: 7.13pm
Edinburgh: 7.00pm
Glasgow: 7.04pm
Hull: 6.54pm
Leeds: 6.54pm
Liverpool: 7.03pm
Manchester: 6.58pm
Nottingham: 6.56pm
Sheffield: 6.57pm
Southend: 6.47pm
Southport: 7.04pm
Jerusalem: 6.42pm



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:
Artsroll p.30
Hertz p.26
Koren Sacks p.45
Soncino p.34

HAFTARAH:
Artsroll 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) – 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) – 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 Abraham) 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 Abraham’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.



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THE HIDDEN HERO

BY: **RABBI YOSHI HAMBLING**

Rabbinical Coordinator, KLBD

Who is the hero of our *Parasha*?

Naturally, when one thinks of *Parashat Noach*, we assume Noach (Noah) himself to be the “hero” of the narrative. In a world doomed to Divine destruction, Noach (together with his family) is considered worthy of a future. He spends years building the Ark. He cares for the animals throughout the flood. And it is seemingly as a result of Noach’s post-deluge offerings that God promises never to destroy the world again. (See *Bereishit* 9:20-21.)

And yet Noach is clearly not the personification of perfection; he fails to convince any other member of society to align with his Godly way of life. And in the immediate aftermath of the flood, we find him drunk and rolling around on the floor, seemingly having succumbed to a deep sense of despair about his future. In fact, we learn nothing more about his life, apart from the fact that it continues for another 350 years.

Thus, *Parashat Noach* seems almost tragic, its messages limited to a series of mistakes to be avoided.

Nevertheless, there is another, often overlooked, figure who can provide us with much needed positive inspiration: Shem, one of Noach’s sons.

“The message of Shem is crucial and timely: real spiritual maturity reveals itself in the simplest of acts in the quietest of moments, when no one else is looking, when we do the right thing just because we know that is what God wants from us.”

As Noach’s drunken episode progresses, it is Shem and Yefet – two of Noach’s three sons – who take a sheet and provide him with much needed dignity and privacy: “*And Shem and Yefet took the garment [...] and they covered the nakedness of their father...*” (*Bereishit* 10:23)

So great was this action that when Noach awakens, he gives both of them a *beracha* (blessing).

However, Rashi notes that, grammatically, the Torah speaks in the singular at the beginning of the verse. In other words: “And Shem took – also with Yefet.” As such, Rashi suggests that Shem took a greater role in this *mitzvah* than his brother Yefet.

Rav Soloveitchik (1903-93), however, goes further. He suggests that their motivations were completely different: “Shem was motivated by ethics, while Yefet was motivated by etiquette”. (Cited by Dr Arnold Lustiger in *Chumash Mesoras Harav: Bereishis*). In other words,

Shem wanted to do the right thing, whilst Yefet wanted the world to know he was doing what he was supposed to do.¹

As we move away from the busy month of *Tishrei* and deeper into the quiet month of *Cheshvan*, we may begin to feel a bit lost. After a month of “loud” Judaism – blowing the Shofar, fasting for Yom Kippur, physically building our Succot outdoors and generally spending a lot more time with community and family than usual – we start to wonder: Is there really a place for “quiet spirituality”? Are we, like Noach, emerging from the Ark into an overwhelmingly silent world?

The message of Shem is crucial and timely: real spiritual maturity reveals itself in the simplest of acts in the quietest of moments, when no one else is looking, when we do the right thing just because we know that is what God wants from us. And perhaps that is what real heroism looks like.

¹ How Rav Soloveitchik teases this out from the *Midrash* quoted by Rashi is beyond the scope of this article.



SEFER YIRMIYAHU (JEREMIAH) – PART 8

THE FINAL DESTRUCTION

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

In our last article, Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) was imprisoned underneath the streets of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), forced to watch while his beloved city was surrounded by the enemy. When the walls of Yerushalayim are finally breached, the Babylonian king gives orders that Yirmiyahu should not be harmed (*Yirmiyahu* 39:11-14).

Not only do the Babylonians avoid harming Yirmiyahu, they also give him the option to remain in the land of Israel (40:1-6). After the final destruction of the First Temple, a small group of Jews do remain in Yehuda (Judah). The Babylonians appoint Gedaliah ben Achikam to be the governor of this remnant. Yirmiyahu is safe with Gedaliah, who comes from a family of Yirmiyahu supporters. For instance, Yirmiyahu was saved earlier in his career by Gedaliah's father, Achikam the scribe (see Chapter 26).

Why do the Babylonians treat Yirmiyahu like this? They view him as pro-Babylonian. He spent many years discouraging any rebellion against the Babylonians and they want to reward him for this. Yet, Yirmiyahu was not acting on their behalf! He was doing it at the behest of God and for the benefit of the Jewish people. The

special treatment he receives from the Babylonians seems to add salt to his wounds. It is too much for him to bear and he leaves the safety under Gedaliah, instead choosing to go into exile with his people.

The prophet is described as being "bound in chains among the exiles of Yerushalayim and Yehuda, on their way to exile in Babylon" (40:1). The exact order of events is unclear: the chief of the Babylonian army tells Yirmiyahu to "go back" to Gedaliah, implying he had already been with Gedaliah in Israel and left to join the exiles in Babylon. The prophet doesn't want special treatment. He wants to be with his people, with their shackles and chains, their pain and suffering. The Babylonians do not want to allow this and send him back to live with Gedaliah.¹

Yirmiyahu's story ends with the tragic assassination of Gedaliah, which also marks the end of Jewish leadership in the land of Israel. It will be many years before it is reestablished. Interestingly, the book of Yirmiyahu dedicates over two chapters to the assassination, in comparison to the very brief outline given in *Sefer Melachim* (Book of Kings). Essentially, rival factions

“ The prophet doesn't want special treatment. He wants to be with his people, with their shackles and chains, their pain and suffering.

develop and those against Gedaliah are frustrated with his and Yirmiyahu's approach of not rebelling against the Babylonians. The descendants of the Davidic line kill Gedaliah and all those with him, in a vain attempt to re-establish the Davidic monarchy.

Yirmiyahu doesn't only describe the political disaster in all its details, but also the ensuing bloodshed. Eighty fellow Jews, coming to mourn the destroyed Temple, are murdered in cold blood (41:4-9). Worried about the Babylonian retaliation for this violent coup, the leaders of the rebellion round up all the Jews and travel down to Egypt, taking Yirmiyahu with them. Whilst they do turn to the prophet for advice, they dismiss his prophetic response as lies (42:1-43:2). Yirmiyahu offers them hope if they were to remain in Israel under the Babylonian rule, but they refuse to accept this and travel down to Egypt instead.

¹ See Binyamin Lau, *Jeremiah: The Fate of a Prophet*, pp.195-198 for a wider discussion of this, including some poignant *Midrashim*.

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

NOACH: THE RESILIENCE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL IN THE FACE OF NATURAL DISASTERS

According to one opinion in the Talmud (*Zevachim* 113a), cited by the Ramban on *Bereishit* 8:11, though seemingly not accepted by Rashi (see 8:2), the waters of the Flood did not inundate the Holy Land. It was from its soil that the

dove brought Noach the olive leaf (*Bereishit Rabbah* 33:9).

In the same wondrous manner, Jerusalem was routinely saved from natural calamities (*Avot de Rebbi Natan*, 35:1).

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

Does **NAFKA MINA** mean:

1. Practical difference? | 2. Type of flat? | 3. Yemenite dish?

Nafka mina is an Aramaic phrase that literally translates as "emerges from it". It is commonly used in the Talmud in analytical debates to ask: "What practical difference emerges from the opinions cited?"

This signals a shift from theory to practice when the Talmud presents a debate between two opinions or conceptual approaches. It often then follows with the *nafka mina* (practical difference) to highlight how this disagreement has real-world consequences.

For example, two sages might debate whether a certain custom is based on historical memory or divine command. The question is then asked, "What is the *nafka mina*?"

The Talmud may answer that the practical difference is whether the custom applies in a specific case today. Without this challenge, the disagreement could remain in the realm of the theoretical; with it, the Talmud is able to demonstrate how *halacha* (Jewish law) is affected.

Sometimes the *nafka mina* helps clarify the logic behind a law or it can reveal different outlooks and provide a point of crystallisation, moving a debate from abstract concepts to the definition of concrete practice.

Ultimately, it is a mechanism that underscores the Talmud's pursuit of definitive law and practice.





THE COMMENTATORS: RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

BY: **SHIRA JACKSON**

US Education

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch lived at a time of upheaval, as emancipation and extreme Reform reshaped German Jewry, to the extent of moving Shabbat to Sunday, and removing references to Jerusalem from the Siddur. Many drifted from a life of Orthodox observance, feeling sure Torah could not meet modernity. Rabbi Hirsch responded with his *Torah im Derech Eretz*¹ vision – Torah alongside engagement in the world – urging Jews to participate fully in society while remaining guided by Torah in the face of emancipation. Judaism, he insisted, could uncompromisingly face modernity without surrendering its soul.

Two early works defined this mission. In *The Nineteen Letters* (1836), Rabbi Hirsch addressed a young, disillusioned Jew, presenting the Torah as a coherent worldview, capable of engaging modern culture. A year later, in *Horeb*, he offered a systematic account of the mitzvot as a programme for the moral and spiritual formation of the human being. These works laid the foundations for his Chumash commentary, in which he uses the precision of Hebrew word roots and the moral vocabulary² of the Torah to educate and refine

the Jewish personality. This background illuminates his reading of *Parashat Noach*. The Torah describes Noach as “– a righteous man (*tzaddik*), wholehearted (*tamim*) in his generation” (*Bereishit* 6:9). Rabbi Hirsch begins by distinguishing between the two Hebrew terms. *Tzaddik* refers to one’s duties toward others – fairness, justice, honesty – righteousness expressed in action. *Tamim*, by contrast, describes the inner wholeness of a person – moral clarity, the integrity that resists fragmentation.

Rabbi Hirsch notes that the Torah attaches the word *bedorotav* – in his generation – specifically to *tamim*. It is far more difficult, he explains, to remain moral in an immoral age than merely honest in a dishonest one. A person’s inner life is shaped by the moral climate around them; to remain *tamim* when the world is coarse, cynical, or mocking requires unusual strength. For Rabbi Hirsch, this is the heart of Noach’s greatness. Even a “smaller measure” of righteousness, proven under such conditions, weighs more heavily on God’s scale than a greater measure achieved in a more wholesome era.

The Torah describes the *Avot*

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Name: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

When: 1808-1888

Where: Hamburg, Moravia and Frankfurt

Writings: The 19 Letters, *Horeb*, Commentary on Chumash



(Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov) as walking ahead of God, his emissaries in the world. Yaakov, blessing Ephraim and Menashe, sums up the family legacy in a single line: “the God *before* whom my fathers walked” (*Bereishit* 48:15). In contrast, “Noach walked *with* God” (*Bereishit* 6:9). Rabbi Hirsch reads this as a portrait of profound moral solitude. In a generation where corruption was normal and integrity isolating, Noach relinquished the company of contemporaries who mocked him, finding companionship in God alone.

Noach becomes the model for Rabbi Hirsch’s own project, *Torah im Derech Eretz*, requiring Jews to live in the world without being shaped by its moral weaknesses; to participate in society yet remain *tamim* in their generation. Noach, in the pre-Flood era, embodies that possibility, remaining whole when the world fractures. He walks with God when others walk away. Through that lonely faithfulness, Noach becomes the one through whom a futureless humanity finds a future again.

¹ A phrase first said in the name of Rabban Gamliel in *Pirkei Avot* 2:2, found on p530 in the Authorised Daily Prayer Book.

² See the example below of how Rabbi Hirsch uses the words *tzaddik* and *tamim* to teach life lessons.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT NOACH

16-17 OCTOBER | 6 CHESHVAN

WOULD YOU STAND OUT FROM EVERYONE ELSE?



BY: **GABRIEL KUTTEN**

Tribe Leader

Imagine everyone around you is doing something they know is wrong. Your friends are joining in, nobody seems concerned, and speaking up would mean being the only person who refuses to go along with it.

Would you have the confidence to be different?

This is one of the challenges at the heart of this week's parasha, *Noach*.

The Torah tells us:

"Noach ish Tzadik, tamim hayah bedorotav".

"Noach (Noah) was a righteous

man; he was faultless in his generation." (*Bereishit* 6:9)

But why does the Torah add "*Bedorotav* – in his generation"?

Rashi (1045-1105) gives two interpretations. The first praises Noach: he remained righteous despite living in a society filled with corruption, violence and theft. If he had lived among better people, Rashi suggests, he might have become even greater.

The second interpretation is more critical. Perhaps Noach only appeared especially righteous compared with the people around him. Had he lived in the generation of Avraham (Abraham), one of the greatest figures in Jewish history, he might not have seemed so remarkable.

These two interpretations leave us with an important question: how should we judge ourselves?

It is admirable to resist negative influences, but simply being better than the people around us should not be enough. Judaism challenges us to develop our own standards rather than allowing the crowd to set them.

For us, this might mean refusing to join in when others are putting someone down or having the confidence to say 'no' when 'everyone else is doing it' is the most comfortable approach.

Noach therefore teaches us two lessons: have the courage to stand apart from the crowd and never use the crowd as the standard for how good you can become.

Help the dove find Noah's Ark!



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

The City of Ai – A Clever Plan!

After the events at **Yericho** (Jericho), **Yehoshua** sent a small group of men to the city of **Ai**, but the attempt to settle the city was unsuccessful.

WE MUST UNDERSTAND WHY THIS HAPPENED.

WE THOUGHT WE WERE PREPARED. SOMETHING WITHIN THE CAMP IS NOT AS IT SHOULD BE.

That's correct. **Achan** took something he was not supposed to take from **Yericho** and **God** was not at all pleased!

I MUST NOT BE AFRAID, AND I MUST NOT BE DISCOURAGED. I'M READY TO GO AGAIN!

WILL EVERYONE PLEASE LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY THIS TIME!

Yehoshua appointed a group to position themselves quietly behind **Ai**, prepared for the moment they would be needed.

BE READY! REMAIN PREPARED! YOUR ROLE IS IMPORTANT.

Yehoshua led another group toward the front of **Ai**, following the plan exactly as **God** had given it.

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY ARE HURRYING OUT TOWARD US, AS I THOUGHT THEY WOULD. EVERYONE, STAY WITH THE GROUP AND WALK AWAY FROM THE CITY.

Yehoshua lifted his hand, giving the sign that the group waiting behind the city had been instructed to watch for.

THE PEOPLE OF **Ai** WILL COME OUT AFTER US. WALK STEADILY.

I WONDER WHAT THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CITY ARE GOING TO DO? ...I'VE WORKED IT OUT...IT'S GENIUS!

EVERYONE GET UP. IT'S TIME TO MOVE INTO THE CITY OF **Ai**.

Entering the empty city of **Ai**, the people secure it and prepare for the next steps.

After some time, the group which had been at the front of the city joined the others, and the people waited for their next instructions.

Yehoshua gathered all the people and read from the **Torah**.

IT'S DESERTED! WHERE HAVE THEY ALL GONE?!

PERHAPS THEY HEARD WE WERE COMING!

NEXT TIME WE GO TO **Ai**... CAN WE JUST ASK THEM TO STAY HOME? IT WOULD SAVE EVERYONE A LOT OF WALKING!

The mission to settle the **Land of Israel** continued...