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10 years of Points to Ponder on Parashas Noach

**אֵ֚לֶּה תּֽוֹלְדֹ֣ת נֹ֔חַ**  **This is the story of Noach (6:9) – Rashi** notes that the Toldos of Tzaddikim are Maasim Tovim. The **Lev Simcha of Ger quoted Rav Simcha Bunim of Pshischa** who explained that in Shomayim the gate to children is next to the gate of Gemilas Chessed, if one finds the gate of children closed, one can sometimes enter through the Gemilas Chessed gate and get to where he wants to go.

**נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו These are the offspring of Noach Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations. (6:9)**- The phrase b’dorosav, “in his generations,” has given rise to much commentary. Rashi cites a dispute among Chazal as to the nature of this phrase: Is it an accolade, meant to praise Noach? Or a deficiency, considering Noach to be righteous only in contrast to his generation? Some see Noach as a very righteous person who was able to withstand the extreme evil of his generation. Indeed, had he lived in the era of Avraham Avinu, Noach would have been even greater. Others view his righteousness through the lens of contraposition. He was a tzaddik, righteous man, only in contrast to the people of his time. But why not leave well enough alone? Why search for a way to paint his impeccable character in a deficient manner? **The Alter from Novoradok** explains that, indeed, both perspectives on Noach advanced by Chazal depict him as a tzaddik. The dispute is not concerning his level of tzidkus, but rather, concerning what motivated his righteousness. Some say that Noach wanted to grow spiritually, to grow closer to Hashem. He was self-motivated, because he understood the importance of a life of holiness and purity, a life of spiritual value in which morality is not one based on human subjectivity. The other position taken by our sages sees Noach choosing a life of piety because he was morally outraged by the behavior of his compatriots. When he saw how the members of his generation were morally corrupt he knew that he must distance himself from them as much as possible. Thus, both positions taken by Chazal applaud Noach as a tzaddik. The only difference was if it was positive growth? Or a reaction to society’s revolting behavior.

**נֹ֗חַ אִ֥ישׁ צַדִּ֛יק  Ish Tzaddik (6:9)-** What does it mean to be a man, a Tzaddik? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi**  explains that one who is able to control himself is called an Ish -- which is how man distinguishes himself from an animal. It is this distinction that begets a Tzaddik -- none of the other distinguishing differences can take man and make him into a Tzaddik.

**נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו Noach was a complete Tzaddik in his generation (6:9) – Rashi** cites the famous Midrash that notes that some used this phrase as a praise of Noach and some as a derision. Why would we deride Noach? And why is such a Machlokes even acceptable given its limited relevance? **The Alter of Novorhodok** explained that everyone agreed that Noach was a Tzaddik. The only issue was what pushed him to be the way he was. Those who use the words as a praise note that Noach’s Tziddkus came about without any counter-pressure from the outside. He merely lived a life of growth irrespective of the generation he was born in. The other position maintains that it was a reaction to the terrible environment that led Noach to figure out that he needed to be EXTRA careful but in a different generation, he might not have had the need to push so hard on himself. But there is no question that both positions praise Noach.

**נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו Noach was a Tzaddik in his generation (6:9) – Rashi** notes the different opinions in the Midrash. Some compare him positively in regard to Avraham and others do not. **Rav Amital**  explained that Noach chose to quarantine himself while Avraham got close and brought his message to his people. Noach was afraid of the people insofar as they were gifted with technological advancement from Hashem and instead of using their spare time for stronger, better achievement, they had used it for idleness and idleness without purpose leads to destruction.

**נח איש צדיק Noach Ish Tzaddik (6:9)** – **Rashi** notes that the primary Toldos (outgrowth) of a Tzaddik is his/her Maasim Tovim. **HaRav Shlomo Wolbe** (Shiurei Chumash) notes that people perform many good deeds. Still, the deeds are what they perform but are not really coming from the person. The Tzaddik is different, what he DOES is really an outward expression of who s/he is. When a Tzaddik does a Maaseh Tov, s/he not only performs the specific action but rather sets forth the chain of events wherein many more positive things happen to the world in the future. It is like the parent who raises a child but really is raising many more future generations in the process. That is what the word Toldos means – that the outgrowth of the Maasim Tovim is far-reaching. It is the opposite of Avoda Zara whose whole essence was doing actions that were meaningless. **(Maran HaRav Schachter**  makes a similar point in the name of Rav Soloveitchik in regard to meaningless actions being the epitome of Chukos HaGoyim).

**נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו This is the destiny of Noach, Noach was a Tzaddik (6:9)** – The Midrash Tanchuma expands on the virtue of the Yeshiva and the destiny of the holy Yeshivos that “were always there” and will always be present without the pain of the birthpangs of Moshiach. **Rav Yaakov Shapira quotes his father Rav Avraham Shapira**  who asked why this midrashaic exposition appears in the context of Parshas Noach. He explains that unlike Avraham who, although identified as a Zaken V’Yosheiv B’Yeshiva managed to transcend the boundaries of the doors of the Yeshiva to influence a whole world, Noach – and his descendants Shem and Eiver merely sought to influence their students. Rav Shapira adds that before one can influence an outside, one needs to have a Yeshiva wherein he too, can enter to recharge spiritually and stay off the threat to the outside.

**נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו Noach was a Tzaddik (6:9**) – The **Ponovizher Rav**  asked what is a Tzaddik or a Tzaddeikes? He answered that the first requirement is a “Gutzkeit” identified as a good heart. Chazal explain that Noach was a Tzaddik in his actions – in other words, he took care of the creations of Hashem (See Tana D’Bei Eliyahu Rabba 16). A sense of Compassion is a sign of tziddkus. If you have it, you’ve got it all.

**בְּדֹֽרֹתָ֑יו In his generation (6:9) - Rashi** famously contrasts Noach with Avraham. Rav **Kook**  noted that the contrast is also found in those who walk with Hashem who are only concerned with their own generation’s incremental movement toward perfection. Walking in front of Hashem, as Avraham did, involves thinking about the future generations as well. Hence Avraham and not Noach is the father of future generations.

**בְּדֹֽרֹתָ֑יו In his generation (6:9)** - The midrashim compare and contrast Noach’s leadership with Moshe and Shmuel. Yet **Rashi** compares him to Avraham. Why? Furthermore, according to Seder Olam Rabbah, Noach and Avraham lived at the same time, during the Dor Haflagah, which was the time that Avraham was thrown into the כבשן האש. What is the message of the comparison? **Rav Ari Kahn** suggested that perhaps the idea is that Rashi is trying to highlight the fact that Noach was on the sidelines watching Avraham being thrown into the furnace and he did nothing about it, and this was his hallmark.  This also explains the midrash comparing him to Moshe. The **Arizal** notes that מחני and מי נח are the same letters. While Moshe was prepared to sacrifice himself for the people, Noach was happy to get onto the teiva without fighting for the people.

א**ֶת־הָֽאֱ הִתְהַלֶּךְ־נֹֽחַ Noach walked with Hashem (6:9) – Rashi** notes that Noach needed support as opposed to Avraham whose faith provided him strength on his own (See our Derasha from the first day of Rosh Hashana 5776). The **Eish Kodesh of Pisacetzna**  notes that the big difference here is one of steadfastness. Bnei Yisrael are identified with the trait of Ksheh Oiref which is identified as both a good and a bad midda. This is precisely because when it is a good midda it is steadfast. When it is used in the face of being wrong, it is called stubbornness. But it is committed. Avraham was the father of that steadfastness. No matter the challenge – Nimrod, the people’s rebellion, the lack of acceptance, the Kivshan, Avraham stuck to his guns. Noach too, met his challenges but remained on the job because of the support he received from Hashem.

**ויּ֥וֹלֶד נֹ֖חַ שְׁלשָׁ֣ה בָנִ֑ים Noach had three sons (6:10) – Rav Yaakov Ariel**  highlighted that the three sons of Noach really represent three distinct ideologies. The Cham ideology states that a person can free himself of the obligations of his station in life. Alcohol, free spiritedness, anything he wants, can simply free him of any identification that holds him in a place with responsibilities. The Shem style is the opposite. By virtue of the name of Shem itself, Shem is the person who finds an identity in himself and in the world around him and literally covers all his bases in life with responsible coverage. He is most at home in an ethical environment. Yefes is somewhere in between. Yefes is the representation of one who desires to bottle and contain the colors and aesthetics of free spiritedness within a context that it can be observed. Hence the ultimate Beracha for him is to have his beauty in Shem’s tent.

**וַתִּמָּלֵ֥א הָאָ֖רֶץ חָמָֽס: For the world has become filled with Chamas (6:11) – Rav Schachter**  would often note that there are 2 similar but different Mishnayos in Pirkei Avos – one speaks to the three things upon which the world stands and the other speaks to the principles that hold up the world. The difference says**, Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura**, is that one speaks to the pillars that the world was built upon – Torah, Avoda and Gemillas Chassadim. The other speaks to the purpose of the world – truth, justice and peace. If you are missing the latter, the world does not function and cannot exist anymore. Rav Schachter would remind us of the **Rambam** who notes that in general it is good to find a middle of the road approach between 2 extremes in life except when the world is pulling to one of the extremes when it is advisable to shift one’s practices to the other side “even if just a little bit” to try to balance one’s existence within world extreme. Rav Schachter would add that this was the case in the time of Noach where the world was so full of thievery. It is also true today where we have so much in the way of Arayos, lack of Tzniyus and Gezel that we probably should go to the other extreme to balance ourselves safely in the world.

**ותמלא הארץ חמסThe land became filled with graft & theft (6:11)** – Why was this so terrible? After all, the Torah had not been given as yet. Why punish the people for following their desires? **The Alter of Kelm** explains that they were not living with “Seder” with order in their lives. Without order in one’s life, there can be no life. If we are both hot and cold at the same time or dry and wet or burning and cooling – we will not be able to handle it. If it is so for the individual it is also true in the society at large which is why there cannot be a world or a society with chaos. This was the sin of the generation of the Mabul – everything went. When everything is ok, nothing is ok and the world destroys itself.

**קֵ֤ץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ בָּ֣א לְפָנַ֔י Hashem said to Noach “The end of man is coming as the land is filled with Chamas (6:13)** – The Talmud (Bava Metzia 44) notes that Hashem who punished the generation of the Mabul will punish those who do not remain steadfast in their word. Why is the comparison to the generation of the Mabul? **Rav Asher Weiss**  suggested that those who do not remain true to their world – like the generation of the Mabul, sin against their fellow man and Hashem and ultimately lie to themselves as well. The same is true to he who does not keep his word. He too, lies to everyone. It is the meaning of chamas.

**קֵ֤ץ כָּל־בָּשָׂר֙ בָּ֣א לְפָנַ֔י The end of all life is coming to me (6:13)** - What was the main sin of the people in the generation of the Mabul? The **Slonimer Rebbe (Nesivos Shalom)** explains that it was Taava -- and illicit relationships while **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky**  says that the ultimate Avaira was the theft. Still he remains troubled since the Midrash says that it was the violation of the 3 cardinal sins. Why then does the Torah say that it was because of Chamas? Rav Yaakov answers that when theft becomes so commonplace that it became the law of the land, that was Avoda Zara -- the people were living in a foreign lifestyle.

**כִּי־מָֽלְאָ֥ה הָאָ֛רֶץ חָמָ֖ס מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם Because the land has become filled with thievery (6:13)** - With all of the Aveiros that the people were doing, why was the thing that sealed their fate that of theft (See **Rashi** based on Sanhedrin 108a)? **Rav Yaakov Bender** noted that while there were other Avairos, it was the one of Gezel that displayed a culture of Gezel. Creating that culture makes people think that even the small things (like stealing less than a Perutah) don’t matter and that leads to a culture of lawlessness and destruction of society as a whole.

**קִנִּ֖ים תַּֽעֲשֶׂ֣ה אֶת־הַתֵּבָ֑ה Make the Teiva with compartments (6:14)** - The midrash compares the compartments of the Teiva to the purification of the Metzora. **Rav Sternbuch**  explains the comparison is not haphazard. The Metzora is secluded from society for speaking disparagingly about it. This will motivate him to change. Similarly, Hashem was telling Noach that when the society is dangerous, the person noticing is in danger and needs to be secluded in order to protect himself from being vulnerable to popular opinion.

**וְזֶ֕ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּֽעֲשֶׂ֖ה אֹתָ֑הּ** **This is the way that you should make the Teivah –** 300 amos long and fifty amos wide and 30 amos high (6:15) – **Rav Shlomo Amar**  asked why the different sizes are specified for the Teivah. He explains – citing **the Vilna Gaon** – who explains that the Satan operates in many different ways in the world – sometimes known as Nachash and at other times as Samael. The Mikubalim know that the name Nachash has primarily evil in the center (the letter Chet) with sweetners in the ends (nun and Shin). Similarly, the name Samael has the Samach Mem (the primary name of Samael) as evil and the Alef and Lamed as the sweetners of enticement. At the time of the Mabul, Hashem saw just the evil (Rack Ra Kol HaYom) which meant that Evil shed its sweetners (hence the use of the word Chamas <Chet, Mem, Samech> ) and to counter it, Noach was told to build a Teiva of protection – 300 by 50 (Shin by Nun) and with a Height of 30 (V’El Ama Tichalena ) to bring the sweetners in which would protect Noach and the world’s future from Rack Ra. Rav Amar adds that if this is what we can learn from a single carpentry lesson in the Torah – think of the different secrets in each aspect of Torah life and mitzvah observance and the secrets contained in each of them.

**וַֽהֲקִֽמֹתִ֥י אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֖י אִתָּ֑ךְ** **And I shall uphold my Bris with you (6:18)** – Which Bris? This matter is hotly debated among the different Meforshei HaChumash. The simple understanding is that the Bris refers to an agreement that existed between Hashem and Noach. However, **Rav Elchanan Samet**  asks, we find no such Bris mentioned. **Rashi** suggests that it was a bris that Noach would not lose vegetation or a Bris that the people would not kill him but that too, is suspect as it has no source. **Abarbanel** opines that the Bris refers to a certain understanding that Hashem had from the beginning of the world that he would never wipe it out entirely. **Netziv and Cassutto** as well as **the Midrash HaGadol** all suggest similar themes. Thus, notes Rav Samet, it turns out that the reason why Hashem didn’t wipe out mankind, was not because of Noach, it was because of the Bris. Noach was the person chosen to carry out the Bris because of his Tziddkus. This will further explain why the rainbow Bris was not actually a new Bris but a renewal of an old one (and perhaps explain why Hashem didn’t use a new sign but rather an old one – see later thought…)

**מִפְּנֵ֖י מֵ֥י הַמַּבּֽוּל** **On this day Noach, his wife , family and their wives entered the Teiva because of the waters of the Mabul (7:7) – Rashi** explains that Noach was among the weak of faith. How could one referred to in the Torah as a Tzaddik be one of weak faith? **Rav Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch**  suggests that there are 2 types of Emunah. There is a factual Emunah and a practical one. The former does not require the person to do anything with the faith. The latter requires the person to act. When Noach heard that there was going to be a flood that would destroy the world he believed it but also believed that Hashem could change mankind as we know it through the process of Teshuvah. Until the final moment, he hoped that the flood would not signal the doom of mankind but rather the doom of the EVIL WAY of mankind. This was Rashi’s intent here and is not a negative of Noach – rather of his generation. Rav Rabinovitch adds that we also have a requirement to believe in ourselves and practically act on that Emunah to achieve greater success than we have achieved in the past.

**מִפְּנֵ֖י מֵ֥י הַמַּבּֽוּל Because of the waters of the Mabul (7:7) - Rashi** says that Noach was מקטני אמנה .. מאמין ואינו מאמין. How is this possible? **The Steipler** suggests that intellectually, Noach knew that mabul was going to take place. However, emotionally, he wasn’t ready to accept that the world would be destroyed. His emotions prevented him from getting on the teivah. We all encounter situations where we know intellectually the right thing to do and yet our emotions get the better of us. Our job is to train our emotions to be in sync with our intellect.

**מִפְּנֵ֖י מֵ֥י הַמַּבּֽוּל Because of the waters of the Mabul (7:7) - Rashi** comments that Noach was מקטני אמונה, he only went into the teiva because of the flood. This is difficult to understand given that defied his whole generation and dedicated his whole life to build the teivah. **Rabbi Baruch Simon quotes the Kedushas Levi** that this means that he had little faith in himself. He had emunah in HaShem, but he didn’t think that he could influence the rest of the generation. He didn’t think that he could rebuild after the mabul. This paralyzed him every step of the way and this is why he hesitated before he entered the teivah.

**בַּיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֗ה נִבְקְעוּ֙ כָּל־מַעְיְנוֹת֙ תְּה֣וֹם רַבָּ֔ה**  **On this day all of the wells of Tehom opened and the windows of Shomayim opened (7:11)** – The Tanaim note that there is not 15 amos of water level in the entire world. The additional waters must have come from the waters on top of the Rakiya. This water combined with the waters of the earth created the full waters. The Yirushalmi tells us that there was no flood in Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Schachter**  noted that this is why Terach sought out to get to Eretz Canaan. He saw that there was something special about the place and wanted to be there. This is not the intent of the Talmudic understanding of Eretz Yisrael Gavoha Mikol HaArazos – EY is not the highest point in the world. That refers to the singling out of the land which has ramifications for the international date line (according to the Baal HaMaor).

**נבקעו מיענות תהום רבה The fountains of the great depths burst forward (7:11) – Rashi** explains that this was Middah K’Negged Middah. They sinned “Rabba” and thus they were punished with the Tehom Rabba. Why is this a Middah K’Negged Middah? In word alone? **Rav Baruch Sorotzkin zt”l** explained that in the normal course of events Hashem has built in means of punishing a person to alert him to his misdeeds. There is no need to destroy mankind overall. However, this is the case when mankind destroys the basis of creation, allowing the animal world and even the botanical life to be a part of his debauchery, the punishment needs to be a bigger overhaul. That is the intent here – because the sin was so tremendously destructive, the punishment too, needed to be greater as well.

**בעצם היום הזה בא נחIn the middle of this day Noach and his family came (7:13) – Rashi** notes that the people saw him going in and threatened to kill him and the family and destroy the Teiva. **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky**  would point out that the Yetzer HaRa is so convincing that even when they saw the message he had been professing for 120 years coming true, instead of being swayed by the message, they chose to ignore the point and kill the messenger. We too, sometimes fall prey to that Yetzer HaRa.

**וַיִּגְוַ֞ע כָּל־בָּשָׂ֣ר | הָֽרֹמֵ֣שׂ עַל־הָאָ֗רֶץ בָּע֤וֹף וּבַבְּהֵמָה֙ וּבַ֣חַיָּ֔ה וּבְכָל־הַשֶּׁ֖רֶץ הַשֹּׁרֵ֣ץ עַל־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְכֹ֖ל הָֽאָדָֽם: And all of the animals and the birds died (7:21)** - Why were the animals doomed in the Mabul? **Rashi** explains that they contributed to the decay of the moral fiber of the world. **Rav Schachter**  added in the name of the **Midrash (Koheles Rabba)** that when mankind sins so all of those who serve him need to be destroyed as they exist only to serve him. Rav Schachter added that the entire atmosphere needs cleaning in these situations -- hence even the solar year was opened for destruction and the Mabul lasted a full year.

**וישאר אך נחAnd Noach alone remained (7:23) – Rashi** notes that Noach was bitten by the Lion. **Rav Avrohom Kalmanowitz** asked why it is that although Noach took care of the lion for a whole year, missing one lousy meal time is what he should be remembered for? He explained that this was the absolutely last lion on earth. One cannot delay the food of the last lion on earth.

**וַיִּ֜מַח אֶת־כָּל־הַיְק֣וּם**| **And he wiped out all of the Yikum (7:23) – Rav Ovadiah Yosef**  notes the incredible gifts that Hashem gave the generation of the Mabul and how they were Kifuyeii Tova for all of it and took Hashem’s gifts for granted. He cites a **Midrash** that they only needed to plant once every 40 years and the ground continued to produce. The Midrash adds that one could travel throughout the world in moments, that people could uproot trees and that the animals feared them. The Midrash tells the story of one of the women who gave birth and told her child to cut his own umbilical cord. As the youngster looked around, he had a battle with the Melech HaShaidim that was stopped due to the time. The Melech HaShaidim told the baby to thank its mother that he didn’t kill the baby and the baby told Melech HaShaidim that he should thsank the baby’s mother for had she cut the cord, he would have destroyed the Melech HaShaidim. This type of confidence was inspired by the gifts given by Hashem yet went unrecognized. Hence, says Rav Ovadiah , the Dor HaMabul has no share in the world to come – for Hashem does not need Kifuyeii Tova.

**וַיִּזְכֹּ֤ר אֱלֹקים֙ אֶת־נֹ֔חַ And Hashem remembered Noach (8:1) - Rashi** explains that Elokim is Midas HaDin and through prayer of Tzaddikim it was changed to Rachamim. **Rav Yisrael Reisman** noted that this means Noach was saved because he davened. Rav Reisman added that although he was not able to daven to save his generation, Noach was able to up his Tefilla while in the Teiva in order to save the survivors. We therefore recall him on Rosh Hashana as we daven perhaps not because we are flawless but because we are not giving up.

**עַ֖ל הָרֵ֥י אֲרָרָֽט: On the mountains of Ararat (8:4)** – Why is it important to know where the Teiva landed? **Rav Meir Goldvicht**  explained that our job in life is to get close to Hashem even if it means from a distance like the solitude of Harei Ararat. We need to find means of a connection to Hashem and the connection always goes through Yirushalayim (hence the Yona brought the olive leaf from Har HaZeisim according to the Midrash) and even when as far from it as Harei Ararat are from Yirushalayim, there is always a place to connect to.

**וַיְשַׁלַּ֖ח אֶת־הָֽעֹרֵ֑ב The Raven (8:7) – Rashi** cites the Gemara in Sanhedrin (108b) that notes that the Raven accused Noach of wanting to cohabit with his wife. **Rav Frand**  notes that in his awareness this was the first example of Paranoia and is a sign of being a Shoteh. It also demonstrates a certain egoism on his behalf that when mixed with paranoia can have incredibly dangerous effects.

**וַיְשַׁלַּ֖ח אֶת־הָֽעֹרֵ֑ב He sent the Raven (8:7)** - The Midrash Rabba comments that Noach had a significant debate with the Raven as to why he was being sent. Noach noted to the Raven that he (Noach) didn’t understand what other purpose Ravens had in the world. After all, they could not be eaten or used for food. Hashem was the one who intervened and told Noach to take the Raven back in for the world would eventually need him. Indeed in eliyahu’s time, when hiding, it was the ravens who fed him. Seizing on the Midrash, **HaRav Yitzchok Ruderman** (Sichos Levi) once asked why Hashem didn’t use doves or another Kosher bird to feed Eliyahu. Why ravens? He answered that there are 2 types of people who serve as Hashem’s agents in the world. One group cannot handle seeing someone do something wrong and will respond rather strongly. The other will look for the opportunity to strengthen the community but without the fiery response of the first group. Hashem sent the Ravens to Eliyahu in order to show him that he was acting like they do – with a strong temper – but that even they could overcome their nature and feed him. He too, needed to overcome his nature and care for the Jewish people.

**וְהִנֵּ֥ה עֲלֵה־זַ֖יִת טָרָ֣ף בְּפִ֑יהָ**  **The dove came to him at evening time and behold it had an olive leaf in its mouth (8:11) – Rav Yehonasan Eybeshutz**  explains that the dove brought a branch and not the fruit because the animals of a Tzaddik do not eat non-Kosher and the dove did not want to take an olive lest Maaser not be taken from it. However, given that everyone had perished, weren’t all of the fruits Hefker and thus, exempt form Maaser**? Rav Chaim Kanievsky**  noted that it is possible that the fruit came from the stock of Og who lived and this would have necessitated the separation of Maaser according to the position that a non-Jew does not acquire the land to the point that he exempts the fruit from Maaser. Ergo, the dove was strict.

ו**ְהִנֵּ֥ה עֲלֵה־זַ֖יִת טָרָ֣ף בְּפִ֑יהָ**  **And behold there was an olive leaf in her mouth (8:11)** – Why were the olive trees saved? **Daas Zekanim** opines that perhaps it was because in the future it would provide oil for the Beis HaMikdash. If that is indeed the case, wine too would be needed for Nesachim, why not save those as well? **Rav Gifter**  explains that olive oil is only used for positive purposes so it does not need man to sanctify it with a holy purpose. On the other hand, wine and alcohol need man to realize that it can be used positively or negatively and man needs to actively choose not to use it negatively. As we see Noach fails to learn that message.

**צֵ֖א מִן־הַתֵּבָ֑ה** **Hashem spoke to Moshe saying “Leave the Teiva” (8:16)** – Why would Hashem need to command Noach to leave the Teivah? After all, Noach and his family only entered the Teivah in order to avoid the impending danger of the Mabul. Why would he need the command to leave once the crisis was over? The **Or HaChaim** explains that the leaving from the Teivah signified an end to the prohibition against cohabitation which was in effect while Noach’s family was in the midst of the crisis. Hashem was informing Noach that the crisis was now over and that he could – perhaps SHOULD resume populating the world. **Rav Mordechai Gifter (Pirkei Torah)** suggests that there is a different lesson to be learned: While on the Teivah, Noach and his family attended an intensive seminar in the world of Chessed. Indeed, taking care of and feeding the animals was a lesson in Chessed and it was one that was unyielding while the family was on the Teivah. Noach might have assumed that he needed to remain in the Teivah until his studies were complete – that he was not READY to move on. For that Hashem told him “Leave”. Hashem wanted him to know that the time had come for him to move on – that he HAD completed the course of study and was now ready to move on to the next mission of building a world with that Chessed. Rav Gifter adds that Chessed is the antithesis of the middos that caused the world’s destruction: Chamas or petty theft is a lack of consideration of one’s fellow man. Chessed is the opposite – it is the supreme consideration – at times, even over one’s very self.

**צֵ֖א מִן־הַתֵּבָ֑ה אַתָּ֕ה וְאִשְׁתְּךָ֛ Go out of the Teiva, you and your wife (8:16) – Rashi** notes that while they were in the Teiva they could not live together and this command allowed them to reunite. **Or HaChaim** adds that even though the waters stopped and the danger passed, they were not to cohabit until they left. Why would this be so? The Gemara notes that when the danger is strong one cannot cohabit but why not after the danger? **Rav Goldvicht**  would often note that there were 2 reasons for the prohibition against living together – the first was in order to join with the rest of the world which is in distress. The other reason is that while in the Teiva, Noach and his family were undergoing training to rebuild the world. That rebuilding needed to be built on the principles of Chessed and until they knew that they graduated the training, they were not to rebuild yet.

**צֵ֖א מִן־הַתֵּבָ֑ה אַתָּ֕ה וְאִשְׁתְּךָ֛ Go out of the Teivah, you, your wife your sons and your daughters in law with you (8:16)** – The Yalkut Shimoni points out that Noach sinned by not following the command and thus was embarrassed by the episode with his drunkedness. A second opinion mentioned notes that he ADDED to the Kedusha and thus was rewarded with direct communication from Hashem. How does one explain such an opposing set of theories? **Rav Altusky**  suggests that the first opinion was (as Rashi explains) pointing out that Hashem was encouraging the end of the separation of man and wife – separate seating – that was the norm in the Teiva. Noach didn’t follow through and lost out on the chance for Pru U’Revu. The second opinion was that he just chose to remain strict in this separation and Hashem rewarded him. Rav Altusky adds that Hashem can recognize dual intentions in the action and reward some of it while punishing the other part. Noach ignored the word of Hashem in an attempt to eek out a guarantee that Hashem would not destroy the world Noach was supposed to populate. For this, he was punished. At the same time, he was able to utilize the chance to remain a Kadosh and for that intent he was rewarded. The person performing any action needs to remember that Hashem also sees the intentions and counts them too.

**כִּ֠י יֵ֣צֶר לֵ֧ב הָֽאָדָ֛ם רַ֖ע מִנְּעֻרָ֑יו  The inclination of man is evil from his youth (8:21)** – Is it true that our default is toward evil? **Ramban** notes that the inclination is toward bad but how we use it will have effects that can be good or bad. **Rav Kook**  disagreed noting that the initial inclination of a person is Tov not Ra. **Rav Soloveitchik**  noted that good and evil are definitions and irrelevant to the current discussion since technically humans are but potential. Man’s job is to create something out of the potential – that something could be either good or evil.

**כִּ֠י יֵ֣צֶר לֵ֧ב הָֽאָדָ֛ם רַ֖ע מִנְּעֻרָ֑יו  Because the nature of man is evil from his beginning (8:21)** – Is that true? Is man really inherently evil? **Ramban** notes that man has a nature toward negative and how he handles that pull toward the negative and how he chooses to handle that pull will determine if he goes toward the positive or evil. **Rav Hirsch**  notes that this line is conditional – as if to say, EVEN if man’s inclination is toward evil, I shall not destroy my world. **Rav Kook**  noted that the inherent nature of man is good but can be nurtured toward evil. **Rav Yitzchak Blazer**  disagreed noting that man is granted 2 inclinations, one toward desire and one that is truly destructive. His job is to figure out how to handle each.

**מוֹרַֽאֲכֶ֤ם וְחִתְּכֶם֙** **And your influence will be felt on the animals and the birds and even the fish (9:2)** – Why do the fish get special mention independent of other animals? **The Mikrei Dardikei (a student of the Chasam Sofer)** noted that this was not repayment for the human saving of the animals. It was the will of Hashem to have the world function this way. Therefore, even though the fish were not saved by the Teivah, they too, are subservient to man.

**אַךְ־בָּשָׂ֕ר בְּנַפְשׁ֥וֹ דָמ֖וֹ לֹ֥א תֹאכֵֽלוּ Only meat with its soul you shall not eat (9:4)** **– Rashi** explains that this refers to Eiver Min HaChai. However, from this point forward, man was permitted to eat meat**. Ramban** explains that this is because Noach saved the animals in general so he was given permission to consume from them for his own needs. The Talmud (Pesachim 49b) notes that one who is a Talmid Chacham is permitted to eat meat but one who is an Am Haaretz is not. Why? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky**  <Pirkei Avos> explains that while humans aspire for growth, animals do not aspire to self improvement. If an animal did, it would aspire to be the BEST in life – and have the best life. The way that this happens is when it is improved by man. That improvement happens when man who consumes the animals uses the energy it provides for his own betterment. That only happens by the Talmid Chacham – who uses the meat properly.

**שופך דם האדם באדם He who spills the blood of a person (9:6**) – Why did Hashem mention murder after the Mabul? The Mabul was a result of Chamas? **Rav Schachter**  explained to us that the **Meiri** notes that in the Luchos the Dibbros are linked 1 & 5 and 2&6 etc. Thus, there is a connection between knowing there is a Hashem and not murdering. Lest one think that after the generation of the Mabul, we lost our Tzelem Elokim and murder was therefore allowed, Hashem reminded us that this was not so. **Rav Hutner** adds that when the possuk mentions that day and night Lo Yishbosu means that a non-Jew is not to observe the Shabbos. Why is that mentioned here? Rav Hutner explains that until the Mabul everyone could keep Shabbos but the Tzelem Eloim was so reduced that only those so commanded could keep the Shabbos and others could not.

**כִּ֚י בְּצֶ֣לֶם אֱלֹ-ים עָשָׂ֖ה אֶת־הָֽאָדָֽם:For man was created in the image of Hashem (9:6)** – The reason not to murder is because of the Tzelem Elokim? Is it permitted to murder if one were not a Tzelem Elokim? Moreover, the Gemara (Sanhedrin 57b) uses this possuk in order to include abortion within the context of Tzelem Elokim as forbidden to Bnei Noach but the same possuk is utilized to be somewhat more lenient in that we do not see the child as a Nefesh as yet (See Erachin 7a). Now if the child is a Nefesh for a Ben Noach why is it not so for a Jew**? Rav Tzaddok HaKohein** suggests that Tzelem Elokim refers to the potential for creating life. In that regard, man mimics Hashem in a certain sense in that both have the ability to create. Therefore, when one chooses to do the opposite of creating – killing – he ruins his whole purpose in the world. **Rav Betalel Rudinsky** explained that included in this idea is a two-fold problem with killing. The first is that the purpose does an action of killing. Additionally, he is not fulfilling his purpose on earth – to be a creator and not a destroyer. This second idea applies even when one aborts a fetus. For even if it lacks a Nefesh, the one who takes away the potential for creation is reversing the course that Hashem set for HIM as a creator and not a destroyer.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן The Rainbow (9:13)** – The Talmud (Chagigah 16) notes that one who gazes at a rainbow has his eyesight diminished. Why this punishment? **Rav Moshe Shapiro**  explained that the conditions of a rainbow – the cool weather and the clouds often bring on feelings of Yiush/despair. However, in the same way that light pierces the clouds, so too, Hashem can remove the despair. Avraham doesn’t despair, Moshe doesn’t despair but Noach does. He deals with the people in a cool, detached manner. He didn’t see the potential from beyond the clouds. Hence, it is a statement --- his eyes are weakened – he only saw the despair. We need to see beyond it.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן The Rainbow (9:13)** – Why is the Rainbow used as the symbol f the promise between Hashem and man? **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik**  once pointed out that we need to understand the depth of the colors of the rainbow and yet, at the same time that they represent but one aspect of the human being and his experience. Man (and particularly his soul), said Rav Aharon, is like a white light and how he refracts that light and what he chooses to highlight as his primary colors helps him identify the stronger areas of his identity and personality.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן It will be the sign of a covanent (9:13)** – Why will a rainbow be a sign of a Bris? **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik**  explained that in order to understand the depth of the colors of a rainbow it needs to refract the otherwise white light. Similarly, the soul of a person is like the white light and how it is refracted defines the perception of its color too.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן I put my rainbow in the cloud and it should be a sign of a connection between us (9:13)** – Why was the rainbow used as a sign? **Rav Schachter quotes Ramban** who assumes that the past tense here is to show us that the rainbow was there from Sheishes Yimei Berashis . Why then is the rainbow a sign? Ramban suggested that the direction of the natural curve of the rainbow is up – instead of downward which is suggestive of an attack outward. The rainbow’s reverse direction demonstrates that Hashem is showing Rachmanus upon us. The Gemara in Kesubos describes the sign of Tzidkus as a generation in which there was no rainbow. However, in the generation of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi, there was no rainbow and still when he was in shomayim, he fibbed and said that there was. Rav Schachter learned that from here, one is allowed to lie about Tzidkus issues when the intent is not for a practical purpose.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן My rainbow I have placed in the clouds (9:13)** – Why is the Rainbow the sign from Hashem that he will not destroy his world again? **Rav Chaim Amsallem**  suggests that the generation of the flood was destroyed because of Chamas which means corruption. That is, the disparate parts of the world could not, and did not, function appropriately in society. Thus, Hashem had no choice but to destroy the society and create a new one that, by being stuck on a Teiva together, would need to function together and co-exist. The Rainbow is the sign that disparate things (colors) can come together by reaching in disparate ways toward the sky (heavens) and reach up, link up and enlighten the world.

**אֶת־קַשְׁתִּ֕י נָתַ֖תִּי בֶּֽעָנָ֑ן I put my rainbow in the cloud (9:13)** - Why is the Rainbow the sign from Hashem that he will not destroy his world again? **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik** once pointed out that we need to understand the depth of the colors of the rainbow and yet, at the same time that they represent but one aspect of the human being and his experience. Man (and particularly his soul), said Rav Aharon, is like a white light and how he refracts that light and what he chooses to highlight as his primary colors helps him identify the stronger areas of his identity and personality.

**וְנִרְאֲתָ֥ה הַקֶּ֖שֶׁת בֶּֽעָנָֽן**: **And when I set my clouds on the land, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds (9:14) – Rav Schachter**  would often remind us that the symbol of the Rainbow was a reminder of the Ohr HaGanuz from the 6 days of creation that have been hidden inside each and every human. Even when it looks like we are pretty rotten and not deserving of being saved, the Rainbow reminds us and Hakadosh Baruch Hu that everyone has an Ohr HaGanuz and Tzaddikim who give up on the Dor (like Noach did) should reconsider – since Hashem does.

**וַיָּ֥חֶל נֹ֖חַ אִ֣ישׁ הָֽאֲדָמָ֑ה** **Noach the man of the land** (9:20) – Rashi derides Noach’s fall from grace as an Ish Tzaddik to becoming a common Ish Adama – a man whose whole life was based solely on the land and the here and now. In other words, he was no longer interested in spiritual pursuits. **Rabbi Dr. Binyamin Lau (Esnachta)** argues that perhaps another interpretation is appropriate. He notes that the term “Ish” often refers to a leader. In other words, after the Mabul, Noach took a more active role in running the world. In fact, Rabbi Lau suggests that Noach remained a Tzaddik even during this time as it is stated that he was Tzaddik “B’dorosoav”, or as noted by the Pesikta both in his youth and in his seniority. Rabbi Lau adds that Noach’s is a story of a man who saw a calm world destroyed traumatically and then merited to see 70 nations spring forth from him again. This only happened because he WORKED at it -- as an Ish HaAdama.

**וַיָּ֥חֶל נֹ֖חַ אִ֣ישׁ הָֽאֲדָמָ֑ה** **And Noach began to be a man of the earth (9:20- translated according to Ramban) – Rashi** notes that Noach debased himself with this process (Chullin). While it seems clear that the Torah recognizes his error in not choosing wisely, what was it in his character that led to this mistake? **Rav Haim Sabato**  suggests that unlike Moshe and Avraham, Noach was a personal Tzaddik who felt that his own Tzidkus could not even save the generation. So he removed himself from it. **Sforno** explains that a Tzaddik who perfects himself can only be saved himself. While Moshe grows from being Ish Mitzree to Ish HaElokim, Noach goes in the opposite direction. This happens because he does not take the generation with him – he winds up alone and lowly, at ground level.

**וַיַּ֗רְא חָ֚ם אֲבִ֣י כְנַ֔עַן**  **And Cham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father and told his 2 brothers outside (9:22) –** **Rashi** quotes the dual opinions as to whether Cham castrated or abused Noach. **Rav Wolbe**  explains that the literal physical castration is impossible since the Torah only uses the word “saw”. Rather, he notes that the issue must be more spiritual/psychological impotence. We find many examples in the Gemara of Hezei Reiya. We see the power of the gaze in the earlier generation. (This is especially true in the generation of shaming).

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה  And Shem and Yefes took the cloak (9:23)** – Rashi notes that the Torah uses the word VaYikach which is singular, in order to show that Shem moved faster and was more bent on doing the job. Yefes too, did the action but without the same desire and energy. Thus, the reward for Shem was the Mitzvah of Tzitzis and the reward for Yefes was burial for his children in the final battle of Gog U’Magog.

**HaRav Steinman (Ayeles Hashachar**) notes that although they did the very same act, the two brothers received entirely different rewards. One reward (Tzitzis ) was eternal and ongoing. The other’s was a one time event (a single burial). Rav Steinman observes that we see that a single Mitzva includes all aspects of the Mitzva when the reward for doing it is brought forth. Showing more enthusiasm and initiative in doing the Mitzva can change the reward in the end. People do not realize how not only does Mitzva performance affect world destiny but the WAY one does a Mitzva affects the world’s future as well.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה**  **And Shem and Yefes took the garment (9:23)** **– Rashi** notes that as a result of their involvement, Shem received the Mitzva of Tzitzis while Yefes received the promise that his children will merit burial in the future. The **Avnei Nezer (as cited by the Shem MiShmuel**) explains that while Shem was motivated internally to care for his father’s Kavod and thus received a Mitzva in return which comes with Kavana, Yefes was motivated merely for external reasons – hence he followed – and Hashem rewarded him with an external reward as well – the limitation of embarrassment.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה  Shem and Yefes took the cloak (9:23)** – The two men were rewarded with different rewards for the same action. Why? **Rav Soloveitchik**  explained that each was motivated by a different motivation. Shem was motivated by the ethical and Yefes was motivated by the rules of etiquette. Shem who was motivated by the ethical received the reward of the Mitzva of Tzitzis which are primarily worn under the garment while Yefes who was concerned about the look was given the reward of burial in the battle of Gog and Magog which is about Kavod HaBriyos. **Rav Sorotzkin**  offered a different idea. He noted that while both did the men did the same mitzva, Shem did so with Hislahavus – with enthusiasm while Yefes followed. Thus, Shem received a reward in a living Mitzva while Yefes followed almost inactively, hence his reward came in death.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה Took the garment (9:23)** - Why were they rewarded in 2 different ways if they did the same thing? **Rav Soloveitchik**  noted that they were motivated by 2 different motivations -- that of ethic (Shem’s motivation) versus that of etiquette (Yefes’s motivation). Hence they were rewarded in kind. **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin**  added that one did the Mitzva with energy while the other merely followed. The first was rewarded with zest and life. The other merited a good end as he ended the action.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה Shem and Yefes took the coat (9:23) - Rashi** notes that the word VaYikach means that Shem rushed ahead and showed more fortitude than Yefes. The problem is that both did the action so why does Shem get more reward? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** explained that one who shows more fortitude gets the Mitzva called on his name. The word L’Hitametz means to put in one complete effort and might differ from person to person but one thing remains consistent. Namely that one utilizes every moment toward spiritual growth and brings the people along with him.

**וַיִּקַּח֩ שֵׁ֨ם וָיֶ֜פֶת אֶת־הַשִּׂמְלָ֗ה Shem and Yefes took the coat (9:23) - Rashi** notes that the word VaYikach means that Shem rushed ahead and showed more fortitude than Yefes. For this reason, Shem merited that his children would receive the mitzvah of tzitzis and the children of Yefes were zocheh to kevurah. How do we understand this? **Rav Schachter quotes Rav Soloveitchik** who explained that the idea is that Shem was motivated by ethics — doing the right thing. Yefes was motivated by etiquette — doing what is right in the eyes of others. Tzitzis is a private mitzvah. Magen Avraham 8:13, writes that it should specifically be worn under one’s clothes. Kevurah is a mitzvah of kavod habriyos, of etiquette.

**וַיְהִ֥י כָל־הָאָ֖רֶץ שָׂפָ֣ה אֶחָ֑ת** **And the whole land spoke one language (11:1)** – One needs to approach the story of Migdal Bavel and the sin carefully to fully appreciate the storyline. After all, even the intent of the builders is shrouded in Machlokes – was the tower a weapon built to fight Hashem or merely a pillar to keep the sky from falling down? Why did everyone join in? And what did mixing up the languages do to solve the problem? **Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger**  suggests that the generation of Haflaga wanted world peace with everyone living in close proximinty. The problem with this type of world peace is that it breeds complacency before its proper time and without the will of Hashem . Therefore, Hashem sent them apart in order to guarantee that they would not be complacent but rather that He runs the world. (It should be pointed out that **Rav Yosef Yehuda Leib Bloch zl. of Telz** takes a serious exception to this approach)

**וַיְהִ֥י כָל־הָאָ֖רֶץ שָׂפָ֣ה אֶחָ֑ת** **The land spoke a single language with a few issues (11:1)–** The prelude to the story of Migdal Bavel is somewhat contradictory. Earlier we had read that the nations had spread themselves throughout the world based upon family and language. Now it seems like the Torah is suggesting that there was a single universal language. How does that make sense? Moreover, Achdus or unity seems to be a desired state in life. Why would Hashem punish the people for wanting to stay united? **HaRav Yaakov Ariel**  notes that there is a fundamental difference between a Safa and a Lashon. While both are normally assumed to refer to spoken languages, the Safa refers to the external language of the people, utilized when explain mundane, external issues to each other. Lashon speaks to the internal language of the people – its heart and soul. The differences between the nations are not merely in the spoken word, it is in each country’s style, culture and mentality. When the nations aligned to build the Migdal (tower), each wanted to make a name for itself. THAT ALONE, was a recipe for disaster. **Maran HaRav Schachter**  often notes that true unity is a gift unique to Am Yisrael. We have the ability to relate and unite internally and fully – not just superficially. Hence the nations of the world are referred to as “Mishpichos Haadama” while we are “Am Yisrael.”

**ויהי כל הארץ שפה אחתThe land was filled with one language and a few things (11:1)** – As we are introduced to the episode of Migdal Bavel, we become somewhat mystified as to what exactly was their Aveira. Why could they not simply have made a miscalculation and treat them accordingly? (Indeed no one smaller than **Rashbam** seems to have trouble (based on the Pshat) figuring out what the people did that was sinister.) Moreover, assuming **Rashi**’s explanation, why take away their Achdus**? Rav Elchanan Samet**  suggests that the people were not interested in working together. They merely wanted to cast off Hashem in the communal sense in the same way that Adam did in Gan Eden. In the same manner (and the same style linguistically) that Adam needed to be cast away from Gan Eden, The people in Bavel needed to be broken apart to see that without a binding under the banner of Hashem, they are not strong at all.

**אֲשֶׁ֥ר בָּנ֖וּ בְּנֵ֥י הָֽאָדָֽם: Hashem went down to see the city and the tower that the sons of man built(11:5)** **– Rashi** explains that the people were the children of Adam HaRishon. What is he adding? **Rav Eizik Ausband**  explained that like Adam HaRishon, they were not thankful as they did not recognize where their goodness came from. This leads to people raising Kofrim. People who are Makir Tov recognize the name of Hashem forever.

ה**ָ֚בָה נִלְבְּנָ֣ה לְבֵנִ֔ים וְנִשְׂרְפָ֖ה לִשְׂרֵפָ֑ה** **Let us make bricks into a tower whose head will be in Shomayim (11:3-4) – Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld** was once asked by Emperor Franz Yosef why it is that when the world gets to make more and more scientific discovery, it begins to believe in Hashem less and less. Rav Yosef Chaim answered using our possuk. You see, normally in building, people first develop the plans for building and later make or purchase the bricks for them. When the people came to the idea of building, they sought to use rocks. They did not have proper stones to build in the areas and had to solve their lack with the invention of bricks. When they figured out how they could, by making bricks, they decided that they were just as creative as Hashem – and decided that they didn’t need Him in their lives.

**הָ֚בָה נִלְבְּנָ֣ה לְבֵנִ֔ים וְנִשְׂרְפָ֖ה לִשְׂרֵפָ֑ה** **Let us go down and mix up their languages (11:7) – Rashi** notes that as a result, one asked for a brick and the partner brought cement and the first one would argue with him and kill him. Why did Hashem need to thwart the efforts with such extreme force that one would literally murder his friend? Why not stop at getting them to end the project**? The Brisker Rav**  answered that when 2 people are joined in any project, then any stumbling block placed in front of them will be eventually overcome as they remain untied until their goal is achieved. That’s why the story had to end with the entire unity being broken. (This explains why in Achav’s generation the Reshaim could still win wars as they remained united in goal).

**אֵ֚לֶּה** **תּֽוֹלְדֹ֣ת שֵׁ֔ם The generations from Noach to Avraham (11:10)** – The Mishna in Pirkei Avos notes that these are listed to show the degree of Hashem’s patience. The **Bartenura** explains that there is comfort in knowing that while our enemies continue to survive, in the end they all drown. But what can be said today as our Galus continues to grow? **Rav Reuven Feinstein**  explained that the only reason pure evil is allowed to exist is because the time for retribution hasn’t come. As soon as that time comes, the reshaim will be annihilated as they were in the time of Noach. The Yeshuah is waiting to happen.

**וַיָּ֣מָת הָרָ֔ן Haran died (11:28) – Rashi** explained that Haran died as a result of the fact that Terach turned his own son Avram in to Nimrod who cast him into the Kivshan HaEish. When he emerged unscathed, Haran accepted the same challenge. The Gemara (AZ 14b) notes that Avraham’s Meseches Avoda Zara was 400 perakim long. Why did he need 400 perakim? **Rav Naftoli Trup**  explained that Avraham understood that within his life he was to bring people around to the recognition and service of Hashem. In order to do so, Avraham needed to understand where they were coming from and how they were off target. Hence, his Avoda Zara text was quite extensive as the world population service of Avoda Zara was quite diverse.

**Haftara –**

**פִּצְחִ֨י רִנָּ֚ה וְצַֽהֲלִי֙ לֹא־חָ֔לָה Break out in glad song (Yeshayahu 54:1) - Rav Dovid Feinstein**  notes that when Moshiach will come, the Jewish nation will rejoice because the painful experience of Galus will have made the people stronger than its ancestors had been in good and tranquil times. When people need to overcome adversity, they become better.

**כִּי־יָמִ֥ין וּשְׂמֹ֖אול תִּפְרֹ֑צִי For you will burst out to the right and to the left (Yeshayahu 54:3) - Rav Dovid Feinstein** explained that because the population will grow so rapidly they will need a broadened tent alluding to the promise made that Bnei Yisrael will spread like the dust of the earth.

**כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֙חַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י For this is like the waters of Noach to me** – By referring to the Mabul as Mei Noach, it sounds as if the Navi blames Noach for a role in its coming**? HaRav Shimon Schwab**  explains that Noach was held somewhat culpable since he had the opportunity to Daven for the people of his generation and did not do so. Perhaps this is why some judge Noach derisively – for not seizing on the chance to Daven on behalf of his people.

**כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֙חַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י For this is the waters of Noach to me: Rav Daniel Z. Feldman** suggests that the mabul is sometimes identified as being part of Noach’s failures simply because he was too lax in utilizing his ability to stay off the destruction of the world. However, the children of Avraham note that in the same way that there are many different rays to the color of the rainbow, there is light after the storm that can illuminate darkness as long as there are those willing to light the way.

**כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֙חַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י For this is the waters of Noach to me (Yeshaya 54:9)** – Why is the flood referred to as Mei Noach? Wasn’t Noach the one who was saved by it? **Rav Schachter**  would often cite the Midrash that explains that Noach didn’t daven to negotiate with Hashem the way Avraham did. The Jewish people help everybody – we need to fulfill our mission and expect that in its merit Hashem will fulfill the rest of the Possuk that Asher Nishbatee Migor Bach.

**כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֙חַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י For this is the waters of Noach (Yeshayahu )** – Why is the Mabul referred to as the waters of Noach? The Zohar HaKadosh explains that when one has the chance to pray for his world and does not, the punishment is referred to as his. The difficulty is that Noach tried hard – anything that survived did so because of his efforts! Why then does he get saddled with the negativity of the Mabul? Moreover, even Avraham Aveinu stopped seeking assistance when it was clear that he was not going to be able to find 10 worthy people in Sodom. He did not plead for fewer. Yet, that plague is not called his? Why? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz**  explains that like with Iyov, who was punished for not speaking up to care for the Jewish nation with terrible pains, the same lesson applies here. Iyov was punished with Yissurin because he was silent. He wa to learn that he would cry out, even when the cries would make no difference. Because when there is a need facing a people, there is no time for calculations – one CANNOT be silent. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel**  added that this is the intent of the Talmud (Berachos 12b) that one who has the ability to seek Rachamim and does not is called a sinner and if s/he is a Chacham it is worse. This is because one needs to feel sick about injustice and make a difference even by feeling the pain.

**כִּי־מֵ֥י נֹ֙חַ֙ זֹ֣את לִ֔י  The waters of Noach (Yeshayahu 54:9**) – The mabul is identified with Noach since he should have davened for them and he did not (Zohar, Noach). The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni V’Zos HaBeracha) notes that Noach told Moshe that he was bigger than Moshe since he survived the Mabul. Moshe responded that he survived but didn’t save anyone, Moshe saved the entire Jewish nation. **Rav Shaul Yisraeli**  explained that a real Jewish Tzaddik does not suffice with worrying about himself. He needs to be a positive influence on the world around him. He needs to understand that his Tzidkus affects that world and it affects him too.

**וכל בניך לימודי ה' And all your children will be those who study Hashem (54:13)** – The Talmud tells us that we should not read it as Banayich – the children but rather Bonayich – the builders. **Rav Chaim of Volozhin** explains that every action has impact in building the world at large. **Rav Shalom Rosner**  referred to an **Aruch LaNer**  (end of Yevamos) who noted that this gemara appears 4 times and speaks to the different types of peace in the world: Berachos is between man and Hashem. Yevamos is between man and his brother Nazir between man and his wife and Kreisus between the body and the soul. The letters of the different Mesechtos spell Bonayich.