

The question in our midrash

1. Bereishit 6:14

(יד) עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גֹפֶר קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַתֵּבָה וְכַפַּרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּיתָ וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר:

<sup>14</sup>Make for yourself a boat of gopher wood, nests you shall make [upon] the boat, and you shall line it, inside and outside, with pitch.

2. Shemot 2:3

וַתִּקַּח־לָהּ תֵּבַת גֹּמָא וַתְּחַמְרָהּ בַּחֹמֶר וּבְזֹפֶת וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת־הַיִּלָּד וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל־שֵׁפֶת הַיָּאָר

And she took a reed box for him, and she lined it with clay and tar... and she put it in the reeds by the river.

3. Rashi to Bereishit 6:14

בכפר - זפת בלשון ארמי.

"With *kofer*" – *zefet* in Aramaic.

4. The Ancient Wood of the Acqualadrone Rostrum: A Materials History Through GC-MS and Sulfur X-ray Absorption Spectroscopy, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3353731/>

In 2008 the rostrum from an ancient warship was recovered from the Mediterranean near Acqualadrone, Sicily. To establish its provenance and condition, samples of black and brown rostrum wood were examined using sulfur K-edge x-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) and GC-MS. GC-MS of pyrolytic volatiles yielded only guaiacyl derivatives, indicating construction from pinewood. A derivatized extract of black wood yielded forms of abietic acid and sandaracopimaric acid consistent with pine pitch waterproofing... In summary, the rostrum was manufactured of pine wood and subsequently waterproofed with pine pitch.

5. כופר = כפרה = כופר Pitch / Atonement / Heretic

6. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 31:10

וכפרת אותה מבית ומחוץ בכופר

• הכא את אמר "וכפרת אותה וגו'", ולהלן את אמר "ותחמרה בחמר ובזפת"?

• אלא להלן על ידי שהיו המים תשים, "ותחמרה בחמר ובזפת", בחמר מפני הריח, ובזפת מפני המים.

"And you shall line it, inside and outside, with pitch"

- Here you say, "And you shall line it, etc." and there you say, "And she lined it with clay and tar"?
- But there the water was weak, "And she lined it with clay and tar," clay for the smell and tar for the water.

7. Bereishit 37:25

...וַהֲיָה אַרְחַת יִשְׁמַעֲאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּגְמֻלֵיהֶם נִשְׂאִים נֹכָאת וְצָרִי וְלֹט...

...behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites approached from Gilad, and their camels bore spicery and balm and ladanum...

8. Talmud, Zevachim 113b

והאמר רב חסדא: אנשי דור המבול ברותחין קלקלו וברותחין נידונו! ולטעמך, תיבה היכי סגיא! ועוד, עוג מלך הבשן היכא קאי? אלא נס נעשה להם, שנצטננו בצידי התיבה.

[The preceding segment talked about a particular creature surviving the Flood while tethered to the boat.] But didn't Rav Chisda say, "The generation of the flood sinned in heat and were judged with heat"! Well within your view, how did the boat manage? And further, where was Og, King of Bashan? Miraculously, the sides of the boat were chilled.

Summary

Message: G-d has Noach use one material, and Yocheved uses two, for a reason

Methods: The basic logic of the story

Moral: Value comfort, but value survival more