

א ביסל תורה!

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ל תשרי תשפ"ה · נח

Trusting and Believing in G-d

By Ethan Ravid '27

Olympians train for 3 ½ years to compete in a competition that spans 16 days. They work hard, train, and do many things to prepare for their 16 days of fame. Imagine if an olympian trained their whole life and once it was their turn to compete they got up and said "I'm done", or "I don't feel like competing anymore". Everyone would be shocked wondering why they weren't finishing what they had started and worked hard for. We see this in this week's Parsha when נח leaves the תיבה. He cared for and kept the 7 sets of each kosher animal, and sets of every non-kosher animal alive for an entire year without complaining or getting frustrated with all the work. But once they leave the תיבה the פסוק says "וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקַּח מִכָּל הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה וּמִכָּל הָעוֹף הַטְּהוֹר וַיַּעַל עֹלֹת בְּמִזְבְּחוֹ" "then נח built an altar to ה' and, taking one of every pure animal and of every pure bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar" (8:20). After caring for all these animals for a year, he sacrifices one of each of the kosher animals to Hashem. Why would נח do this? Why would he destroy something he was working for years to achieve?

נח answers this by saying that Hashem ordered נח to take in seven pairs of these animals only so that he might offer a sacrifice with them. However, if נח was supposed to sacrifice them to Hashem, why didn't he spread out when he gave the קרבן? Why not sacrifice them throughout his time on the תיבה and then some after? Why should נח save them, to begin with, if he is going to sacrifice some of them afterward?

חזקוני offers a different opinion. "He offered burnt offerings." He acted similar to the sailors in the story of יונה. They, after having been saved from a great storm and returned to dry land, immediately offered קרבנות to Hashem for their deliverance (2:16). We learn from here that anyone who has been miraculously saved from dangers beyond his control is expected to offer tangible thanksgiving קרבנות.

From this, we see that נח brought קרבנות to thank Hashem for saving him from this once in history event. He brought this קרבן not to spit on his work but to finish the task he was meant to do. By thanking Hashem for saving him it created a ברית, a covenant, with Hashem to never destroy the human race ever again. If נח had brought these קרבנות during the actual flood it would have taken away from the impact we now get from his actions. This is why נח was willing to sacrifice all his hard work for Hashem because, in the end, Hashem had bigger goals in mind for נח and the rest of humanity. If נח had kept all the animals alive and not brought a קרבן all his work would have been in vain. He wouldn't have made peace with Hashem, and there would have been no purpose for these animals he spent so much time keeping alive. While nowadays we can't bring קרבנות I think it's important we do the next best thing in our power, תפילה. If we can maintain this good relationship with Hashem, then hopefully we can reach a higher spiritual level and have a stronger connection with Hashem, and through this, we will merit to receive the 3rd Temple and be able to bring קרבנות from the animals נח saved.

The Reason for the Flood

By Eitan Orkaby '27

The reason ה' brought the מבול on the world was because "כִּי־הִשְׁחָתוּ כָּל־בְּשָׂר אֶת־דְּרָכָהּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ" "for all fresh had corrupted its ways on the land." (בראשית ו:12) The מבול's job was to wipe from the world all corruption and evil. It's strange, however, the language that the תורה uses; "כָּל־בְּשָׂר" "all flesh." If in fact ה' wanted to wipe out the humans, because they were corrupt, why did the תורה not say "כָּל־אִישׁ?"

רש"י answers in the name of the בראשית רבה. He says that the animals were also included in the corruption. This, therefore, explains the פסוק as talking about all living things, and not just humans.

The גמרא in סנהדרין נז. gives a very different answer. It says that every time the תורה says the word השחחה, or any version of that word, it refers to forbidden relations and idolatry. The גמרא then suggests another answer, that השחחה refers to murder. All of these are part of the three cardinal sins. The גמרא continues by saying that there were other sins the generation of the מבול committed. One of those sins is theft. Another is the prohibition of eating meat from a live animal, from the words "כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר" "all flesh," we learn that they ate from the flesh of live animals violating the prohibition of eating meat taken from live animals. Notice how all of these מצוות are part of the seven commandments given to all mankind. This is the source for the שבע מצוות בני נח.

רמב"ן notes that the next פסוק seems contradictory to the explanation of רש"י, that the מבול occurred because of all living things. In that פסוק it says, "כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם" "for the earth is filled with theft from them." (בראשית ו:12) The רמב"ן jumps on the word "מִפְּנֵיהֶם" "from them," as an extra word. This is extra because the previous time the תורה mentions the reason for the מבול, it only says "וּתְמַלֵּא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס" "and the land was filled with theft". רמב"ן learns from this extra word that the only ones who stole were humans, therefore, the מבול only was brought because of human actions, and not also because of the animals. רמב"ן admits

though, that the extra word could be referring to humans and non-kosher animals, but certainly not all animals. Furthermore, in other places when talking about "כָּל־בְּשָׂר" "all flesh" it is talking about only humans. For example, in "יבוא כל־בשר להשתחות לפני אמר ה'" it says, "all mankind will come to bow before me," ה' says. This פסוק must talk about humans coming to bow before ה', as animals can't.

It is clear from the story of the מבול that we must be careful about how we act. Our actions can cause ripple effects which can affect all of humanity. When the תורה refers to all of mankind doing sins, one might wonder how mankind ever got to such a point. The answer is that it all started from something small; חוה eating a fruit from the עץ הדעת. While this seems like a small action, it caused major problems, as אדם and חוה were then kicked out of גן עדן, then הבל killed קין, introducing murder, then other people began to learn to kill, and then it became worse and worse until ה' had to wipe out mankind with a מבול. How, then, can we go back to the beginning and return to גן עדן with משיח? The answer is found in ישעיהו's speech at the end of days, משיח. He says that our redemption will come when "לֹא יִשְׁמַע עוֹד חֲמָס בְּאֶרֶץ" "theft will no longer be heard in your land." (ישעיהו ס"ז:17) If you look back at the way the תורה describes the terrible deeds that mankind has done, it says, "וּתְמַלֵּא הָאָרֶץ חֲמָס" "and the land filled with theft." this same word appears in the פסוק just quoted in ישעיהו, showing us that if we want to bring משיח we must trace our steps backward to correct mankind's mistakes before the מבול. The word חמס is translated by אונקלוס as "חֲטוּפִין" "captives" in both נח and ישעיהו. Unfortunately, this is the situation right now. Our people have been taken captive but this is our opportunity to right our wrongs and bring the "חֲטוּפִין" "captives" home again, with משיח בקרוב!



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