Kol Rina
*An Independent Minyan*
Parashat Noah
November 2, 2024 *** 1 Cheshvan, 5785

## Noach in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3155/jewish/Noach-in-a-Nutshell.htm

Noach in a NutshellThe Parshah is named "Noach" (Noah) after the protagonist of its major event: The Great Flood. It is found in Genesis 6:9.
G-d instructs Noah—the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption—to build a large wooden teivah ("ark"), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the water, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species (and 7 of the "pure" species).

Rain falls for 40 days and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat,
and Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of doves, "to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth." When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the teivah and repopulate the earth.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the rainbow as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah regarding the sacredness of life: murder is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the meat of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes drunk on its produce. Two of Noah's sons, Shem and Japheth, are blessed for covering up their father's nakedness, while his third son, Ham, is punished for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendants of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great tower to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their language so that "one does not comprehend the tongue of the other," causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into seventy nations.

The Parshah of Noach concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later Abraham), and the latter's journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the land of Canaan.

## Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Haftarah in a Nutshell: Isaiah 66:1-24

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3572702/jewish/Shabbat-Rosh-Chodesh-Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This *haftorah*, read whenever Shabbat coincides with Rosh Chodesh, mentions how in the messianic era, every Shabbat and every Rosh Chodesh everyone will come to the Temple to worship G-d.

In this prophecy Isaiah tells us how G-d (who is too great to be fully contained in physical space, even in the Temple) pays attention to the humble G-d-fearing person, and rejects a person who does (or even intends) evil.

The prophet continues to foretell the fortune that will come upon Jerusalem (and the Jewish nation) in the time to come, and how even non-Jews will come to recognize G-d and assist in restoring the Jewish people to their land and their Temple.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Individual and Collective Responsibility by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/noach/individual-and-collective-responsibility/

I once had the opportunity to ask the Catholic writer Paul Johnson what had struck him most about Judaism, during the long period he spent researching it for his masterly A History of the Jews? He replied in roughly these words: “There have been, in the course of history, societies that emphasised the individual – like the secular West today. And there have been others that placed weight on the collective – communist Russia or China, for example.”

Judaism, he continued, was the most successful example he knew of that managed the delicate balance between both – giving equal weight to individual and collective responsibility. Judaism was a religion of strong individuals and strong communities. This, he said, was very rare and difficult, and constituted one of our greatest achievements.

It was a wise and subtle observation. Without knowing it, he had in effect paraphrased Hillel’s aphorism: “If I am not for myself, who will be (individual responsibility)? But if I am only for myself, what am I (collective responsibility)?” This insight allows us to see the argument of Parshat Noach in a way that might not have been obvious otherwise.

The Parsha begins and ends with two great events, the Flood on the one hand, Babel and its tower 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. God saw the world, and it was corrupted. All flesh had perverted its way on the earth” (Gen. 6:11-12). Wickedness, violence, corruption, perversion: this is the language of systemic

moral failure.

Babel by contrast seems almost idyllic. “The entire earth had one language and a common speech” (Gen. 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 God scatters all the builders, and immediately thereafter He summons Abraham to begin an entirely new chapter in the religious story of humankind. There is no Flood – God had, in any case, sworn that He would never again punish humanity in such a way. As He said:

“Never again will I curse the soil because of man, for the inclination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. I will never again strike down all life as I have just done.” Gen 8:21

But it is clear that after Babel, God comes to the conclusion that there must be another and different way for humans to live.

Both the Flood and the Tower of Babel are rooted in actual historical events, even if the narrative is not couched in the language of descriptive history. Mesopotamia had many flood myths, all of which testify to the memory of disastrous inundations, especially on the flat lands of the Tigris-Euphrates valley (See Commentary of R. David Zvi Hoffman to Genesis 6) who suggests that the Flood may have been limited to centres of human habitation, rather than covering the whole earth). Excavations at Shurrupak, Kish, Uruk, and Ur – Abraham’s birthplace – reveal evidence of clay flood deposits. Likewise the Tower of Babel was a historical reality. Herodotus tells of the sacred enclosure of Babylon, at the centre of which was a ziggurat or tower of seven stories, 300 feet high. The remains of more than thirty such towers have been discovered, mainly in lower Mesopotamia, and many references have been found in the literature of the time that speak of such towers “reaching heaven”.

However, the stories of the Flood and Babel are not merely historical, because the Torah is not history but “teaching, instruction.” They are there because they represent a profound moral-social-political-spiritual truth about the human situation as the Torah sees it. They represent, respectively, precisely the failures intimated by Paul Johnson. 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.

It was Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), the thinker who laid the foundations of modern politics in his classic Leviathan (1651), who – without referring to the Flood – gave it its best interpretation. Before there were political institutions, said Hobbes, human beings were in a “state of nature”. They were individuals, packs, bands. Lacking a stable ruler, an effective government and enforceable laws,

people would be in a state of permanent and violent chaos – "a war of every man against every man" – as they competed for scarce resources. There would be "continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Such situations exist today in a whole series of failed or failing states. That is precisely the Torah's description of life before the Flood. When there is no rule of law to constrain individuals, the world is filled with violence.

Babel is the opposite, and we now have important historical evidence as to exactly what was meant by the sentence, "The entire land had one language and a common speech." This may not refer to primal humanity before the division of languages. In fact, in the previous chapter the Torah has already stated, "From these the maritime peoples spread out into their lands in their clans within their nations, each with its own language" (Gen. 10:5). The Talmud Yerushalmi, Megillah 1:11, 71b, records a dispute between R. Eliezer and R. Johanan, one of whom holds that the division of humanity into seventy languages occurred before the Flood.

The reference seems to be to the imperial practice of the neo-Assyrians, of imposing their own language on the peoples they conquered. One inscription of the time records that Ashurbanipal II "made the totality of all peoples speak one speech." A cylinder inscription of Sargon II says, "Populations of the four quarters of the world with strange tongues and incompatible speech . . . whom I had taken as booty at the command of Ashur my lord by the might of my sceptre, I caused to accept a single voice." 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. On this reading, Babel is a critique of imperialism.

There is even a hint of this in the parallelism of language between the builders of Babel and the Egyptian Pharaoh who enslaved the Israelites. In Babel they said, "Come, [hava] let us build ourselves a city and a tower . . . lest [pen] we be scattered over the face of the earth" (Gen. 11:4). In Egypt Pharaoh said, "Come, [hava] let us deal wisely with them, lest [pen] they increase so much . . ." (Ex. 1:10). The repeated "Come, let us … lest" is too pronounced to be accidental. Babel, like Egypt, represents an empire that subjugates entire populations, riding roughshod over their identities and freedoms.

If this is so, we will have to re-read the entire Babel story in a way that makes it much more convincing. The sequence is this: Genesis 10 describes the division of humanity into seventy nations and seventy languages. Genesis 11 tells of how one imperial power conquered smaller nations and imposed its language and culture on them, thus directly contravening 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. He is in fact 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 Genesis 10. (A personal note: I had the privilege of addressing 2,000 leaders from all the world's faiths at the Millennium Peace Summit in the United Nations in August 2000. It turned out that there were exactly 70 traditions – each with their subdivisions and sects – represented. So it seems there still are seventy basic cultures). 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 unity in Heaven creates diversity on earth, and God 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 Parsha 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.

Paul Johnson's insight turns out to be both deep and true. After the two great failures of the Flood and Babel, Abraham 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.

Living With Difference by Naomi Kalish
https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/living-with-difference/

Is the story of the Tower of Babel about human unity, or about human diversity? At the critical point when the Torah transitions from the story of Noah and its universal themes to the particular family of Abraham, the Tower of Babel conveys ambivalence about both unity and diversity. In doing so, it provides us with a model for how we can navigate our own complex social dynamics, especially in times of crisis and trauma.

Parashat Noah provides a genealogy of the descendants of Noah's sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—who were born after the Flood (Gen 10:1). In addition to the family lines, the text includes detailed information about their "clans (mishpehotam), languages (leshonotam), lands (artzotam), and nations (goyeihem)" (10:5, 10:20, and 10:31. Verse 10:5, describing the offspring of Japheth, omits a reference to "lands," perhaps because so many of his descendants are described as being maritime peoples.) Chapter 10 concludes that "from these the nations branched out over the earth after the Flood" (10:32). But the very next sentence, the first of the next chapter, states: "Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words" / וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים

אֲחָדִים׃ (Gen. 11:1). How could it be that everyone had the same language, when we have just concluded a chapter that lists numerous different nations and their various languages?!

The next eight verses tell us how this came to be and how God responded. The conventional reading is that the people wanted to come together to build a tower higher than any of them could have built as individuals, and that God prevented the power of human unity by confusing their speech. However, the idea that God would improve the world by preventing people from understanding one another seems nonsensical. It would eliminate the problem of extreme collaboration and prompt God's desired outcome of dispersing the people throughout the world, but it would surely create other, even more severe problems. A close reading of the text, however, provides a more sophisticated understanding about how people can navigate the reality of difference and diversity of languages (literal and figurative) and in doing so experience healing and foster peace.

Commentators have debated whether or not the builders of the Tower committed a sin and, if a sin was committed, what it was. Four aspects of the story could be considered mistakes or sins on behalf of the Tower's builders: (1) they spoke one language instead of many according to their clan and location, (2) they wanted to "make a name" for themselves, (3) they wanted to make "a tower that reaches to the heavens," and (4) they desired to not be "scattered over the face of the whole earth" despite God's command to Adam and later to Noah to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 9:1).

The Netziv (Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 19th c. Lithuania) believed that having one language was not a sin in and of itself but it "caused the first sin": because they could all communicate, "they agreed to stop in one single place. And this is against the will of God that said to 'fill the land and replenish it'—that is, to walk to all its places, since the land was created to be settled." He further explains that the reference in 11:1 to devarim ahadim, "the same words" spoken by all of humanity, does not spell out what these words were "to teach us that it wasn't because of the content of the words themselves that the Holy One of Blessing was distressed." God was alarmed not by what they were saying, but by the fact that they "all thought the same thing, and this came to be the problem of the settlement."

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks sees in the Netziv's interpretation of the building of the Tower of Babel as "the first totalitarianism:" "It is a supreme act of hubris, committed time and again in history . . . . It is the attempt to impose an artificial unity onto divinely created diversity" (The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations, 52).

The problem was not all of humanity speaking the same language, rather what it

would lead to.  God's response to the construction of the Tower did not suggest that having multiple languages was inherently better; this was simply the mechanism that God chose to get the builders to halt their work on the Tower. However, the result of this mechanism was the emergence of a world riddled with miscommunications and limits in understanding. Surely, this would bring about conflict.

In his book To Heal a Fractured World, Sacks explores two Jewish conceptions of peace as ways to navigate difference. First, he identifies universalist prophetic visions of peace including Isaiah's "They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, Their spears into pursuing hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:4) or Micah's "They shall sit, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, And none shall make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of the Hosts has spoken" (Mic. 4:4).

Sacks suggests, however, that rabbinic tradition presented a contrasting model for how to navigate differences peacefully; it can be found in the rabbinic concept and instructions regarding darkhei shalom, the ways of peace, often understood as practices for maintaining peaceful community relations. One statement of these principles is found in Tosefta Gittin:.

> A city that has Jews and non-Jews—the charity collectors collect from the Jews and the non-Jews, in the interests of peace, and they provide for the needs of Jewish and non-Jewish poor, in the interests of peace. One eulogizes and buries non-Jewish dead, in the interests of peace. One comforts non-Jewish mourners, in the interests of peace. (Tosefta, Gittin [Lieberman edition] 3:13-14)

Sacks characterizes darkhei shalom as "a programme for peace in an unredeemed world." The rabbis who articulated this program know that "in this not-yet-fully-redeemed world, peace means living with difference—with those who have another faith and other texts. That is the fundamental distinction between the prophetic peace of religious unity and the rabbinic peace of religious diversity, with all the compromise, restraint, and mutual respect that coexistence requires."

Significantly, the Tosefta's instructions include practices of caregiving.

Another debate among commentators is who was living at the time of the building of the Tower of Babel (as well as who was involved in its building). Seder Olam Rabbah, a second-century CE Hebrew text that provides a chronology of biblical events from Adam to Alexander the Great's conquests, states that due to long lifespans Noah was both present at the time of the building of the Tower and the dispersion. David Kimchi writes that "Noah, Shem, Eber, and Japheth were also there."

Genesis Rabbah imagines Shem and Eber establishing a yeshiva to which numerous subsequent ancestors studied. My teacher, Rabbi Morton Leifman, of blessed memory, used to emphasize the special power of the classic midrash that suggests that after the akedah, Isaac went to this yeshiva to study with his ancestors (Genesis Rabbah 56:11). Rabbi Leifman suggested that Isaac went there following his experience of trauma, to grapple with existential questions and to seek healing. If we imagine that Noah and his children were present at the building of the Tower of Babel, and that their children were born to parents who survived the flood, we can understand that they were all grappling with intergenerational trauma. In this created, broken, and unredeemed world in which people are different and struggle to understand one another, practices of caring for one another seem exactly what is needed to establish a sense of shared humanity while doing justice to the variety of human experience. Sitting with people during crisis, listening to them with compassion and empathy, and bearing witness to their subjective and affective experience pave the way toward healing and peace.

*(Naomi Kalish is the Harold and Carole Wolfe Director of the Center for Pastoral Education and Assistant Professor of Pastoral Education at JTS)*

Opportunities for Healthy Rebbots Are Built into the Universe by Rabbi Ed Stafman
https://truah.org/resources/ed-stafman-noach-moraltorah_2024_/

Parshat Noach is best known for the twin stories that bookend it: the flood (mabul) and the Tower of Babel (babel). When considered together, these two stories reveal a deep teaching.

In the story of the flood, when the world had spun out of control because overwhelming violence, robbery, and cruelty had run amok, and unbridled individualism meant that humans had no regard for one another, God presses the reboot button, and much of the world is destroyed, reverting back to a much earlier time. (Genesis 6:9-9:17)

Then, in the story of Babel, when man becomes arrogant and builds a tower to the heavens, representing an acute concentration of power, God says, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.” (Genesis 11:6) Human conduct had once again spun out of control, and God once again presses the reboot button, topples the tower, scatters the people, confounds their languages, and upends the lack of diversity and concentration of power that had set in.

Both the flood (mabul) and the tower (babel) contain the Hebrew letter combination of bet-lamed. Bet-lamed is associated with gross human misconduct and the resulting reboot button in other places in Torah. For example, Cain, who declares that he’s not his brother’s keeper, kills his brother Abel (havel, containing bet-lamed), and the legacy of Eden that might have flowed from Abel is short-circuited.

(Genesis 4:9) That legacy then starts anew with Seth, who the Torah says was born specifically to replace Abel. While Seth's line will survive through Noah, Cain's lineage, some of whose names contain the bet-lamed combination — such as Jabal, Jubal, and Tuval-Cain — ends with the flood.

As Torah moves forward, rather than allow the world to run amok as it did in the times of the flood and the tower, periodic smaller reboots are built into the system to avoid these major destructions. Indeed, every day is a potential reboot with the pure soul we receive each morning, as we acknowledge in our morning prayers. Shabbat is another reboot, as is Yom Kippur, and the sabbatical year. But the big reboot is the jubilee year every 50 years, where debts are forgiven, land returns to its original owner, and families return to one another. The jubilee (yovel) also features the bet-lamed letter combination. These reboots seek to relieve the pressure in the system to reduce the risk of human conduct causing the world to move too rapidly and spin out of control. It's like the controlled movements of tectonic plates which help avoid major earthquakes.

By and large, we no longer observe most of the practices of the jubilee year. And in our fast-moving world, it can sometimes feel like the world is running amok with no backstop. Indeed, a recent poll says that 83% of Americans believe that America is spinning out of control. Many believe that the issues of Noah's world — violence, crime, uncontrolled individualism, and the breakdown of the family and community — are the cause. Some believe that the issues of the tower — the concentration of power inherent in authoritarianism, the haughtiness and arrogance that deny the laws of science built into the universe, and the challenges to diversity that threaten women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ people — are the cause.

Regardless of whether we see the world as approaching Noach times, tower times, or both, many believe that the wrong outcome of this election will put us over the top, inviting the kind of destruction we read about in this week's parshah. Perhaps we read Parshat Noach near Election Day to remind us how much is at stake. And while catastrophe is possible, our cycle of elections also offers us the opportunity for periodic reboots with peaceful transitions that modestly adjust our paths, rather than radical shifts. In the end, just as human choices brought about the flood and built the tower, our choices in the election will determine where we go from here. And though the possibility of the bet-lamed of destruction is surely out there, so too is its opposite, lamed-bet (lev) — heart. In all of the anxiety, we can bring love to bear on the choices before us. (*Rabbi Ed Stafman is rabbi emeritus at Congregation Beth Shalom in Bozeman, MT, and is about to begin his third term in the Montana House of Representatives, the only rabbi serving in a state legislature.)*

Noach: The Crowded Ark: Table for Five
Edited by Salvador Litvak, the Accidental Talmudist
https://www.accidentaltalmudist.org/table-for-five/2020/10/21/the-crowded-ark-noach/

And I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives. And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female. Gen 6:18-19

Lt Yoni Troy, IDF Officer

G-d's instruction to Noah to preserve each animal species two by two, then repopulate, makes me wonder, why rely on Noah, when G-d can do it all?

G-d is sending a message: by giving us Free Will, we are active partners in this world. We can succeed – or we can wreck the world. If G-d reset everything every time things went wrong, we humans would fail to appreciate our responsibility.

Too many people are passive – complaining that if they had what others had, they, too, would succeed. Such grumblers don't appreciate their abilities – and great potential.

Attitude is the great x-factor in life. G-d gives us certain abilities but being proactive and staying positive usually determines whether we succeed or fail.

When I made Aliyah I set a goal to become a great Hebrew speaker. It took years of practice, many mistakes, and even laughing off occasional ridicule. Today, I am a fluent enough speaker that people are surprised when I tell them I was born abroad.

When some read the word "Covenant," they think that G-d feels badly about the flood and now promises to take care of us in the future. But they miss the fact that essentially, the flood changed nothing on a fundamental level. By preserving all the animals and plants, G-d was saying, the world doesn't need a reset, we humans need an attitude shift.

The Covenant is mutual, and thus empowering as well as harrowing because G-d is giving us responsibility: true Free Will.

Kylie Ora Lobell, Contributing Writer, Jewish Journal

Noach spent 120 years building his ark. It took that long because all the wicked people were supposed to see what Noach was doing, ask him about it and be inspired to repent. They did not, and Noach didn't do his part to get them to repent, either. Instead, he was constructing his ark to protect his family and himself. Though he was righteous, he failed in one major way: unlike Avraham, who begged G-d to spare the wicked Sodom, Noach didn't care to make a plea for others. He was like Jonah, another Biblical figure who ran away from the responsibility of trying to save the wicked in Nineveh.

The Torah is telling us is that we are all responsible for each other. If you see someone who is suffering, you cannot sit idly by. G-d does not want to punish his creations. It pains Him. He'd much rather see us turn ourselves around and

become better people. Right now, I see so many people in pain because of the pandemic. A lot of friends and members of my community are suffering from anxiety and depression. Even though we're all in our own arks – our homes – we cannot isolate ourselves like Noach did. We need to reach out, even if it's a quick text or a phone call, and look out for each other. Only when we are "our brother's keeper" will we survive these rough waters and make it onto the other side, stronger and holier than ever.

Rabbi Aryeh Markman, Executive Director, Aish LA

The Story of Noah's Ark seems improbable. How did all those animals fit in the boat?! But does its impossibility undermine the story? No! Rather, it gives us an insight into how we are to accomplish our own miraculous aspirations.

Admittedly it took a miracle to pack in all those animals and their food. A chaotic snorting, roaring, buzzing, slithering crammed multitude. Best guestimate is that the Ark was somewhere between 50 -75% the size of the Titanic. It was built solely by Noah over a span of 120 years.

Side bar: The world devolved into decadence after ten generations since the first human being, through sexual immortality beyond one's imagination, idol worship and the deciding factor, wholesale robbery. God was resetting the world and warning of its impending water pandemic by having Noah singlehandedly build the Ark over a 120 year period. The generation dismissed the warning.

The Ark, unique in its day, had to be big enough to lessen the magnitude of the miracle of its cargo – every land-based organism known to man.

The Ramban writes that this is the standard of all miracles that the Torah and Prophets speak of. Mankind is expected to do whatever is possible and leave the rest, that which is beyond human ability, to be completed by Divine Intervention.

The moral to the story of Noah's Ark: Set your sights high, strive for the near impossible and believe that God will partner in your achievement once you exhaust all other means.

Rabbi Rebecca Schatz, Assistant Rabbi, Temple Beth Am

God will establish a covenant with Noah. But first, a sample of every living thing must be brought into the Teiva. A source of every kind of earthbound life must come aboard. The Teiva, Ark, is a God-ordered flood-worthy vessel. But in the story of Moshe, the teiva is a tiny basket in which the baby is swaddled and floated to safety on Nile waters, away from the slaughtering of Hebrew baby boys. Noah's teiva and Moshe's teiva are not just conveyances, but connectors between safe harbors, over the waters, lifelines joining humanity to God.

God tells Noah whom to bring: his children, spouses and all other living things male and female, were to crowd into this life vessel to seed the future. According to Bereshit Rabbah, our rabbis thought even spirits were asked in, but only if

partnered. There is something profound in this requirement. To what or whom are we partnered?

For seven months we've been living in a teiva. Some with partners at home, some alone and partnering through Zoom or by phone. How will we prepare ourselves to leave this teiva? If we are going to exit this teiva ready to improve our world, we need to recognize and exist in partnership. A teiva is a home and time of change, of creating life and of finding spiritual guidance and connection. Will we be ready to move forward anew? Only in partnership.

Ilan Reiner, Architect & Author of "Israel History Maps"

The "covenant" is introduced here for the first time. To understand what it means in other places throughout the Torah, we should clarify what it signifies in this case. What kind of commitment was involved? Was this a conditional covenant? If so, what were the conditions? The verses imply that God commanded Noah to go into the ark with his family and animals. Was that what Noah needed to do to fulfill his side of the covenant?

Many commentaries explain that this covenant was a divine commitment to keep Noah, and everyone with him, alive. Therefore, Noah's commitment was to stay alive, inside the ark with all the animals, while a flood is raging outside. A divine covenant isn't like a contract. In a contract, there's compromise and each side tries to get the most out of the situation. This covenant sets the precedent of a mutual vision, where each side is invested and fully committed. A vision that would come true only with faith and willingness to make every effort.

A later divine covenant involves the Land of Israel as a home for the Jewish people. From Noah's first covenant, we learn that this covenant too, is one of trust and faith. A covenant that means to never despair and keep seeking the good. A mutual commitment to live by the ways of the Torah and God's values, as we live and prosper in the land of Israel.

## Yahrtzeits

Elaine Berkenwald remembers her father Israel Berkenwald on Sat Nov. 2

Treasure and Rich Cohen remember their grandson Andrew Morris Levy on Wed Nov. 6

Mike Schatzberg remembers his father Joseph Schatzberg on Mon Nov 8