

Fill Your Own Cup 5786

Fall Series – Session Two – Windows and Words

1) Genesis 6:9 – 17

- 9) This is the line of Noah.—Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age; Noah walked with God.—
- 10) Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
- 11) The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness.
- 12) When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth,
- 13) God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth.
- 14) Make yourself an ark of *gopher* wood; make it an ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.
- 15) This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.
- 16) Make a *Tzohar* (opening for daylight) in the ark, and terminate it within a cubit of the top. Put the entrance to the ark in its side; make it with bottom, second, and third decks.
- 17) "For My part, I am about to bring the Flood—waters upon the earth—to destroy all flesh under the sky in which there is breath of life; everything on earth shall perish.

בראשית ו:ט-יז

אֶלֶה תּוֹלְדָת נֶׁחָ נֵׁחָ אָישׁ צַדָּיק חָמֶים הָיָה בְּדְרֹתָיוּ אַת־הַאֵלֹהִים הָתִהלָדִּ־נְּחָ:

ניּוֹלֶד נְם שָׁלשָׁה בָנֵים אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יֵפֶת: וֹתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לֹפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהֵים וֹתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמֵס:

וּיֹאמֶר אֱלהִׁים לְנֹחַ קֵץ כָּל־בָּשֶׁרֹ בָּא לְכָּנִׁי כִּי־ מָלְאָה הָאָרֵץ חָמָס מִפְּנִיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מִשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־ הַאָּרֵץ:

עֲשֵׂה לְדְּ תַּבָת עֲצֵי־גُפֶר קנֵים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַתַּבָה וַכֵּפַרתַ אֹתָה מִבַּיִת וּמְחָוּץ בַּלְּפֶר:

וְזֶּה אֲשֶׁר תִּצְשֶׂה אֹתֶה שְׁלְשׁ מֵאֲוֹת אַמָּה אָרֶךּ הַמַּלָּה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רְחָבָּה וּשְׁלֹשִים אַמָּה קוֹמֵתָה:

צָּהַר ו מַּצְשֶׂה לַמַּבָּה וְאֶל־אַמָּה ֹתְּכֵלֶנָּה מִלְמֹעְלָה וּפֶתַח הַמָּבָה בְּצִדָּה תָּשִׁים מַחְתִּיֶם שִׁנֵּם וִשִׁלשִׁים מַּצַשֵּׁה:

וַאֲנִי הַנְנִי מֵבִּיא אֶת־הַמַּבְּוּל מַׂיִם עַל־הָאֶּׁרֶץ לְשַׁחַת כָּל־בָּשָּׁר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רָוּם חַיִּּים מִהַּחַת הַשַׁמֵיִם כָּל אֵשֶׁר־בַּאָרֵץ יָגוַע:

2) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 31:11

"A tzohar you shall make for the ark" (Genesis 6:16).

 Rabbi Ḥunya, Rabbi Pinḥas, Rabbi Ḥanin, and Rabbi Hoshaya did not disagree about this. Rabbi Abba bar Kahana and Rabbi Levi did disagree.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: It was a window.

Rabbi Levi said: It was a [luminous] precious stone.

Rabbi Pinḥas said in the name of Rabbi Levi: All twelve months that Noah was in the ark, he needed neither the light of the sun during the day nor the light of the moon at night; rather, he had a precious stone that he had suspended. When it was dim he knew that it was day, and when it shined brightly he knew that it was night. Rabbi Huna said: We were once fleeing from enemy troops in a cave in Tiberias, and we had lamps with us. When they were dim, we knew that it was day, and when they shined brightly, we knew that it was night.

בראשית רבה לא:יא

צֹהַר מַּעֲשֶׂה לַתַּבָה) בראשית ו, טז(רַבִּי חוּנְיָה וְרַבִּי פִּינְחָס רַבִּי חָנִין וְרַבִּי הוֹשַׁעְיָא לָא מְפָּרְשִׁין, רַבִּי אַבָּא בַּר כַּהָנָא וְרַבִּי לֵוִי מְפָּרְשִׁין. רַבִּי אַבָּא בַּר כַּהָנָא אָמַר, חַלוֹן. רַבִּי לֵוִי אַמַר, מַרְגַּלִיּוֹת.

רַבִּי פִּינְחָס מְשׁוּם רַבִּי לֵוִי אָמַר כָּל שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ שָׁהָיָה נֹחַ בַּתַּבָה, לֹא צָרִידְּ לֹא לְאוֹר הַחַמָּה בַּיּוֹם וְלֹא לְאוֹר הַלְּבָנָה בַּלַּיְלָה, אֶלָּא מַרְגָּלִית הָיָה יוֹדֵע שֶׁהוּא תוֹלֶה אוֹתָה, וּבְשָׁעָה שֶׁהִיא כֵּהָה הָיָה יוֹדֵע שֶׁהוּא יוֹם, וּבְשַׁעָה שֶׁהָיְתָה מַבְהָקֶת הָיָה יוֹדֵע שֶׁהוּא לִיְלָה. אָמֵר רַבִּי הוּנָא עֲרִיקִין הְנִינָן מִן קוֹמֵי גוּנְדָא בַּהְדָא בּוּטִיטָה דְּטְבֶּרְיָה וְהָיָה בְּיָדִינוּ נֵרוֹת, בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהִיוּ כַּהִים הָיִינוּ יוֹדְעִים שֶׁהוּא יוֹם, וּבְשָׁעָה שֶׁהָיוּ מַבְהִיקִים הָיִינוּ יוֹדְעִים שֶׁהוּא לִיְלָה.

3) Babylonian Talmud Tracate Sanhedrin 108b

With regard to the verse: "A *tzohar* you shall make for the ark" (Genesis 6:16), Rabbi Yoḥanan says that the Holy Blessed One said to Noah: Set precious stones and jewels in the ark so that they will shine for you as the afternoon [*tzohorayim*] sun.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין קח:

צוהר תעשה לתיבה א"ר יוחנן אמר לו הקב"ה לנח קבע בה אבנים טובות ומרגליות כדי שיהיו מאירות לכם כצהרים



4) Chizkuni, Genesis 6:16 (13th C France)

A *tzohar* you shall make for the ark - this is a reference to the window that Noach used later on to dispatch the raven and the dove. During the period that this "window" was kept closed he suspended in that area a jewel which sparkled and provided interior lighting. When we understand this in this manner, our sages, some of whom spoke only of the jewel and others only of the "window," are both correct, because it is really unclear. The text explicitly states there was a window.

On the simple textual level *tzohar* is related to *yitzhar* — "olive oil"; i.e. the ark was illuminated with an oil lamp. A window would have provided no light since the celestial bodies did not shine throughout the year of the flood.

חזקוני, בראשית וי:ט״ז

צהר תעשה לתבה. הוא החלון שפתח נח כששלח את העורב והיונה ובעוד שהיה סתום נתן שם אבן טובה להאיר להם בפנים ונמצאו דברי רבותינו מכוונים, כי יש אומרים חלון היה, וי"א אבן טובה, כי לפי הנראה ספק, ועדות הכתוב שם היה החלון. ולפי פשוטו צהר תעשה לתבה לשון יצהר פי' שמן תעשה לצורך התיבה להאיר בה. ואין לפרש חלון להאיר בה ולהכניס בה אורה שהרי לא שמשו המזלות להדיא כל ימי המבול

5) Genesis 8:1-8

- 1) God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided.
- 2) The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were stopped up, and the rain from the sky was held back;
- 3) the waters then receded steadily from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters diminished,
- 4) so that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.
- 5) The waters went on diminishing until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.
- 6) At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made
- 7) and sent out the raven; it went to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.
- 8) Then he sent out the dove to see whether the waters had decreased from the surface of the ground.

בראשית ח:א-ח

נִיּזְכָּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֵּס וְאֵת כָּל־הַסַיָּה וְאֶת־כָּל־ הבְּהַלָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתָּוֹ בַּתַּבָה נַיַּעֲבֵּר אֱלֹהָים רוּסֹ עַל־הָאֶרֵץ נַיָּשָׂכוּ הַמֵּיִם:

וּיִּפֶּכְרוּ מַעְיָנָת תְּהוֹם וְאֲרֻבָּת הַשָּׁמֻיִם וַיִּכָּלֵא הגֵשֶׁם מִן־הַשָּׁמֵיִם:

וַיָּשֻׁבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הָלְוֹדְ וָשֵׁוֹב וַיַּחְסְרָוּ הַמִּׁיִם מִקְצֵּה חָמִשִּׁים וּמָאַת יִוֹם:

וַתָּנַח הַתַּכָה בַּחָדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִּׁי בְּשִׁבְעָה־עָעָיר יֻוֹם לַחָדָשׁ עַל הָרֶי אֲרָרֶט:

וְהַפֹּיִם הָיוֹּ הָלְוֹדְ וְחָסוֹר עַד הַחְׁדֶשׁ הֵעֲשִׂירֵי בֵּעֲשִׁירִי בְּאֶחָד לַחְדֶשׁ נִרְאוּ רָאשׁיֵ הָהָרִים: נִיָּהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יֵוֹם נִיּ**ְבְּהַח** נֹ**ֹם אַת־חַלְּוֹך**

הַתָּבָה אֲשֵׁר עַשֵּׂה:

וִישַׁלָּח אֶת־הֶעֹרֶב וַיִּצֵא יָצוֹא וָשׁוֹב עַד־יִּבְשֶׁת הַמַּיִם מַעַל הָאָרֵץ:

וִיְשַׁלֵּח אֶת־הּיוֹנָה מֵאּתֵּוֹ לְרְאוֹתֹ הָקַלוּ הַפֵּׁיִם מַאַל פָּנֵי הָאַדָמָה:

6) Sefer Baal Shem Tov Noach

Comment 17

"Make an opening (tzohar) in the ark (teivah)" (Genesis 6:16) - My grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov, may he rest in Eden, illuminated this passage. He said that teivah actually means 'word', and the meaning of making an opening for the word is that you should be careful to bring light into the words that come from your lips.

Comment 19

I heard in the name of the Baal Shem Tov of blessed memory, that he explained the verse (Genesis 16:6) "Make an opening for the ark (*teivah*)" - one should turn the words (*teivah*) of Torah and of prayer into an illuminated opening, to look and see from the beginning of the world until its end.

ספר בעל שם טוב – נח

<u>'ז</u>

צהר תעשה לתבה וגו'. האיר אדוני אבי זקיני [הבעל שם טוב] נ"ע, תבה מרומז על מלה, שהוא נקרא תיבה, וזהו מה שאמר צוהר תעשה לתבה, ואמר הוא ז"ל שתראה להאיר התבה היוצא מפיך וכו'

רט

____ שמעתי בשם הבעל שם טוב זללה"ה שפירש, צוהר תעשה לתבה, לעשות צוהר מן התבה של תורה ותפלה, לראות ולהסתכל עמה מראש העולם ועד סופו:



7) Rachel Anisfeld ("The Story of Noah, the Story of Our Hearts", Lilith.org 10/23/2023)

God tells Noah to include in the ark a *tzohar*, which the gemara understands as a precious jewel to be set in the ark so that it shined *katzharayim*, as brightly "as the afternoon sun" (Sandhedrin 108b). The ark was to be aglow with light. Maybe you can imagine yourself this way, as a vessel of light, like the ark, a shining lantern, floating along on a wild dark sea. The raging waters threaten to overwhelm you, but you hold on to the light of love inside you with all your might, unwavering in your commitment. In the face of darkness, you are light. In the face of hatred, you are love, fierce unshakable love.

Amidst the concreteness of the images of violence and destruction that we see, this love may seem like a mirage. That's ok. It does have an ephemeral quality to it, like the otherworldly light that shined through the prism of the precious gem. This light is a dream, a hope, an imagining. It comes to us from another plane and speaks another language. It is not *of* the storm, but is the boat that floats through the storm. If we lose ourselves in the storm, there is only storm. So now, especially in this moment, even if we are also by necessity in some way involved in the storm, we can still always hold fast to the light of love and kindness and hope, still cultivate it, treasure it, preserve it like a precious stone inside us. It may be otherworldly and ephemeral, but it is our essence. This is God in us.