

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

A G-DLY LIGHT

by Tzipah Wertheimer

The Teyvah was a phenomenal structure. It took 120 years for Noach to complete the project.

Hashem commanded Noach to make a Tzohar (6:16). What's a Tzohar? Rashi explains that Tzohar was a light; either a window or a special stone.

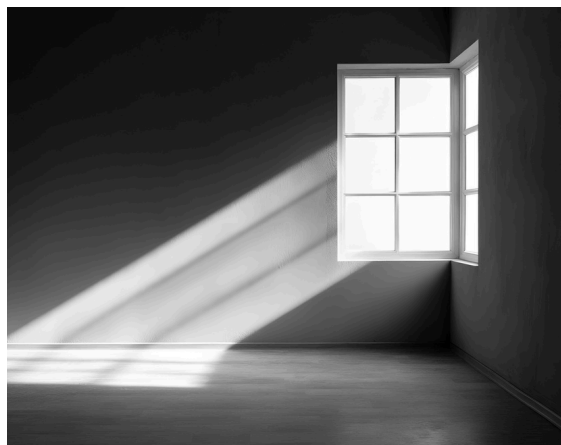
The Rebbe posed a few questions on Rashi's explanation, including:

1. One window could not have illuminated a three-story structure;
2. A window could not bring in sunlight since it was dark during the flood;
3. The Torah says that the Tzohar should be crafted and a stone is not something that can be crafted.

Hashem did not necessarily specify each detail. For example, there is no verse in the Torah commanding Noach to build a door, yet we know that the Teyvah had a door. Basically anything which was self understood was not stated directly in the Torah. The need for proper lighting was certainly something that Noach could have figured out on his own.

Therefore we must conclude that the radiance of the Tzohar was in addition to lamps or any light that Noach would have naturally prepared on his own.

The light of the Tzohar was a G-dly, spiritual light. It was clearly not a basic, practical, detail. The Tzohar had a much greater purpose.



There is a lesson in every single detail of the Torah. In fact, Rashi's two possible explanations contradict one another! A window brings in light from the outside and the stone shines from within. Either the Tzohar was shining an exterior light OR it was emanating an internal glow.

A person's life journey may echo this duality.

There are different times in our lives. There are times when we are meant to stay within the ark – within our comfort zone – and work on self development and our inner essence. There are also times when we are meant to leave the ark and venture into the real world as stronger, healthier and more determined individuals ready to make a positive impact.

Sometimes a person must go outside of their "ark" [safe sheltered haven] in order to uncover G-dliness in the world. Other times a person might need to gain strength from within.

A business person might actually have a greater sense of G-d than a full-time scholar who never leaves the study hall, because the business person is forced to develop and test their belief as they navigate daily challenges.

Ultimately if you strengthen yourself through engaging with other people and the world, you will begin to shine from within. ☯

Just Me שו"ת A Question

Q: The Parsha stresses the fact that only Noach was righteous in his generation. If that's true, why was his family saved along with him?

The Torah contrasts Noah's righteousness with those around him, but that doesn't mean that he was literally the only righteous person. Hashem did not bring the flood with intention to wipe out everything. Rather, Hashem wanted to purify the world with the waters of the flood, then have a "fresh start." If the world would continue, then Noach needed a wife (and the animals needed mates).

Q: Did HaShem instruct the world against idolatry before the time of Noach?

A: Hashem instructed against idolatry before Noach. It was one of 6 commandments given to Adam, the first man. A seventh commandment forbidding eating of a limb from a live animal was added for Noah. These are the Noahide Laws.

Q: What do you do if you forget ya'ale ve'yavo?

A: If you forgot ya'aleh v'yavo in benching, you do not need to repeat.

If you forgot it in shemone esrei, then you need to repeat at shacharis and mincha (unless you have not finished shemone esrei yet, in which case you go back to "retzei" and continue from there).

Also, if you have not yet finished benching (and have not started the bracha of "hatov v'hameitiv), then the siddur has a sentence you can insert. ☯

Word.

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Hashem commanded Noah to build an ark to protect himself from the flood. The Torah is eternal and contains eternal life messages for us. What is the relevance today in 2025 of this command to Noah to build an ark?

The Baal Shem Tov teaches that the Hebrew word for ark – *teivah* – also means 'word'. So entering the *teivah* / ark alludes to entering the words of Torah and prayer.

In other words, when we invest ourselves into the words of Torah and prayer, we are protected from the flood of challenges from within and without.

It's a beautiful idea, but a problem arises later in the parsha, when Hashem tells Noah to leave the ark. According to the Baal Shem Tov's explanation, how could it be that Hashem is telling us to leave the words of Torah and prayer?

The answer is that this is the seder (order). Hashem created the world to have a dwelling place here. In order for us to create this holy dwelling, we need to leave our seclusion within the words of Torah and prayer. We cannot remain cut off from the world.

But in order to be successful at this task, we need the preparation of entering the ark, entering the words of Torah & Tefillah.

First and foremost, we must devote ourselves to entering the ark of Torah and prayer. When we remain there for a full year (the duration of the flood), we experience and are strengthened by the tumultuous sea of life. Then, permeated with Torah and prayer, we have the strength to leave the ark and transform the world to holiness. 



Chassidic Story

Near the town of Berditchev, just days before Yom Kippur, a Jewish family was thrown into a dungeon. This was during the feudal period and they could not pay rent to the landlord, known as the Poritz.

Under the leadership of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the town leaders sought to raise the funds to release this family. Everyone was poor, and despite collecting from the entire community they were 400 rubles short.

One chossid took it upon himself to solve this problem. There was a tavern where a few wealthy business men went to drink and make merry. He approached a table, since some of the men were Jewish, he hoped to arouse their sympathy towards this poor imprisoned family. He related the story.

One man offered 100 rubels IF he would drink an entire glass of a very strong alcohol that was 96% זעקס און ניינציק

He hesitated; an entire glass would make his head spin and ruin the upcoming holy day of Yom Kippur. Then he thought to himself, how can I be concerned about myself when I have a chance to raise a ton of money for this family.

He took a deep breath, drank the glass and collected the cash. He approached another table and they made the same offer, his hesitations were greater but the thought of raising 50% of the much-needed funds in such a short time motivated him and he took the drink.

The third group of men made the same offer. By the time he reached the fourth table he could hardly make sense of anything so he told them that he'd drink the alcohol but he'd need them to promise to go to the poritz and free the family as he'd be totally incapable.

He drank, and asked that they just dump him in shul. As the townspeople filed into shul wearing white, ready to approach the holiest day of the year, they could not believe their eyes. A respected man in the community was passed out like a total drunk in the back of the shul.

R' Levi Yitzchak told them not to judge. During Kol Nidrei the ark was opened in order to reveal the Torah scrolls. Our inebriated friend noticed the Torahs and thought that it must be Simchat Torah, so in the middle of the somber prayers he got up and began singing and dancing. The congregation was furious.

Days later, R' Levi Yitzchak explained the holidays in Tishrei of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and finally Simchat Torah are like steps on a ladder.

It begins with introspection and concludes with a palpable joy that's expressed through the unity of dancing.

This chossid had acted with so much self-sacrifice and Ahavat Yisrael [love of a fellow Jew] that he spiritually surpassed Yom Kippur and all of Sukkot and was already on the level of Simchat Torah. His dancing was actually most appropriate.

This week is one of the first Shabbosim of the New Year. We are still being tasked with unpacking all of the amazing spirituality and holiness of the high holidays. 

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