

The Valuable Lesson Learned from Noach's Salvation in the Ark

Shabbas Kodesh Functions Like Noach's Ark

Saving Us from Drowning in the Deluge of the Work Week

This week's parsha, parshas Noach, begins as follows (Bereishis 6, 9): **“אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו את”** **“האלקים התהלך נח”**—these are the offspring of Noach; Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d. The commentaries note the redundant language employed by the passuk: **“נח נח”**. Seemingly, it would have sufficed to mention Noach's name only once. Additionally, it is worth explaining the allusion presented by the Ba'al HaTurim on this passuk: **The last letters of the words האלקים התהלך נח spell “הכח”—meaning “a wise man.”** We must endeavor to understand why the Torah alludes to the fact that this righteous, perfect man was also wise.

Let us begin by introducing a fascinating passage from the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108a): **“תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, אף על נח נחתך גזר דין, ונח מצא חן בעיני ה'—apparently, the decree to be punished and destroyed by the flood was issued against Noach as well; however, he was spared, since he found favor in the eyes of Hashem. The commentaries find this perplexing, seeing as the Torah attests to the fact that Noach was “a righteous man, perfect in his generations.” So, why was he supposed to be included in this cataclysmic decree? Furthermore, if the decree was issued against Noach, as well, due to some inherent character flaw, how did he find favor in the eyes of Hashem? Why was he spared? After all, the Torah explicitly describes Hashem as a G-d (Devarim 10, 17): **“אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח”**—Who does not show favor and does not take a bribe.**

Noach Merited Fulfilling Certain Mitzvos that Enabled Him to Find Favor in the Eyes of Hashem

We find a definitive answer to these two questions in the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (end of parshas Bereishis). While it is true that Noach was a perfect tzaddik; nevertheless, his righteousness was not enough to offset

HKB”H's regret, so to speak, at having created man; hence, His decision to destroy the world. Notwithstanding, Noach managed to fulfill several Mitzvos, which are known to help a person find favor in the eyes of Hashem. This is what saved Noach and his family from the fate of the rest of creation and allowed them the opportunity to build the world anew. Here are the words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh: **“כי הגם שהיה צדיק לא תצילנו צדקתו, אלא בחינת החן שהשיג מאמצעות בחינת המצוות. כי יש לך לדעת, כי יש מצוות שתועלתם היא להמשיך חן על האדם, או בבחינת ג' או ד' מצוות ידועות—he states that there are three or four well-known Mitzvos whose purpose is to bestow favor upon a person.**

In this light, we can interpret the continuation of the text (Bereishis 6, 5): **“וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ וכל יצר מחשבת לבו רק רע כל היום, וינחם ה' כי עשה את האדם בארץ ויתעצב אל לבו, ויאמר ה' אמוחה את האדם אשר בראתי מעל פני האדמה מאדם עד בהמה עד רמש ועד עוף השמים—Hashem saw that man's wickedness on earth was great, and that every inclination of his heart was only for evil all day long. And Hashem reconsidered having made man on earth, and it saddened His heart. And Hashem said, “I will eliminate man whom I created, from upon the face of the earth—from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them.”** HKB”H intended to destroy the entire world that He had created; the reason He did not do so: **“ונח מצא חן בעיני ה'”**. Noach performed certain Mitzvos that caused him to find favor in the eyes of Hashem. In that merit, HKB”H saved him from the “mabul,” and built a new world from him.

Now, it is incumbent upon us to do some investigating. For, the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh does not identify for us the Mitzvos that are especially beneficial for finding favor in the eyes of Hashem and which then motivate us to fulfill all of the Mitzvos. Nevertheless, we have learned an important principle in the Talmud Yerushalmi (R.H. 17a) based on an elucidation

of Shlomo HaMelech's words of praise regarding the holy Torah, which he refers to as "Eishes Chayil" (Mishlei 31, 14): "היתה כאנויות סוחר ממרחק תביא לחמה - דברי תורה עניים במקומן ועשירים במקום אחר"—sometimes words of Torah are sparse in their own location but are rich and more expansive elsewhere.

So, what in fact was the special mitzvah that Noach fulfilled that caused him to find favor in Hashem's eyes? Let us attempt to identify the mitzvah that enabled Noach to save himself and his entire household and ultimately to save the entire world from annihilation. Doing so, will enable us to save ourselves from the ominous, spiritual waters which threaten to wash away the universe. After searching through our holy sources diligently, and with Hashem's favor and assistance, we have managed to identify this unique mitzvah as the mitzvah of Shabbas. In the merit of observing the mitzvah of Shabbas, Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem, enabling him to save himself and the world from total destruction. With G-d's help, we will elaborate on this notion in this essay.

Noach Found Favor in G-d's Eyes in the Merit of Shabbas Observance

Let us begin to shed some light on the subject with an elucidation from the Zohar hakadosh regarding the name Noach—"נח". According to the Zohar, the name Noach is related to the observance of Shabbas Kodesh, on which man rests from all of his worldly labors and concerns. [Translator's note: The name "נח" is related to the word "מנוחה" which means rest.] It states in the Raiya Mehemna (Pinchas 256a): "נח לקבל" "יום השבת"—Noach corresponds to the day of Shabbas. We find similar statements in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 21, 54b): "נח דא" "נח דא" "עד דאתא נח דאיהו שבת"; and also (Tikun 70, 138b): "עד דאתא נח דאיהו שבת".

Now, it is true that one can claim that the Zohar only presented this elucidation as a mere allusion. Nevertheless, from the writings of our holy Rabbis, zy"ta, we learn that this elucidation regarding the name Noach was meant to convey a vital message. It was intended to teach us that Noach was saved from the mabul in the merit of observing the mitzvah of Shabbas. The name "נח" alludes to this mitzvah, the observance of the day of rest. Let us begin with the sacred words of the Sefas Emes (Noach 5638):

"איתא בזוהר הקדוש כי נח הוא בחינת השבת, כי בו שבת, שהוא שורש הבריאה שמתייחדין בשבת קודש להתדבק בשורש האחדות, רמז לדבר שדרשו חז"ל (סנהדרין נח): בן נח ששבת חייב דכתיב (בראשית ח-ב) [יום ולילה] לא ישבותו בו, מכלל שהצלת נח בתיבה היתה בחינת שבת כמובן".

It states in the Zohar hakadosh that Noach is like the Shabbas—the source of the creation; it is a day to unite and connect with the source of oneness and unity. . . This indicates that Noach's salvation in the ark resembles Shabbas.

We learn from the sacred words of the Sefas Emes that Noach was saved in the ark in the merit of his observance of Shabbas Kodesh. Now, it is true that we have learned in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 58b): "בן נח ששבת חייב מיתה"—**a son of Noach (an idolater) who observes the Shabbas deserves the death penalty.** The Gemara (ibid.) provides the following rationale: "For it is written: 'Day and night they shall not cease.'" Rashi explains (ibid.): **Here they are commanded not to cease work for an entire day; for they ceased to work for the entire duration of the mabul; because the constellations were inoperative, and they could not differentiate between day and night.** Apparently, he did rest from work prior to the mabul; so, he was certainly permitted to observe the mitzvah of Shabbas at that time. It was in that merit that he was saved from the mabul.

This noble idea appears again in the commentary of the Sefas Emes (5640) and again with further elaboration (5653). In the latter, he bases his explanation on the Mishnah (Avos 5, 1):

"בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, ומה תלמוד לומר, והלא במאמר אחד יכול להיבראות, אלא להיפרע מן הרשעים שמאבדין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות, וליתן שכר טוב לצדיקים שמקיימין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות".

-- the world was created by means of "ten utterances." It could have been created with a single utterance; but this way allows for retribution from the wicked—who destroy the world that was created with ten utterances--and reward for the righteous—who sustain the world that was created with ten utterances.

According to the Sefas Emes, when the Mishnah says that "it could have been created with a single utterance," it is referring to Shabbas Kodesh—which represents unity and oneness, "אחד". This concept is explained in the Zohar hakadosh cited above: "רזא דשבת איהי שבת דאתאחדת ברזא דאחד" -- **the mystery of Shabbas is that on Shabbas everything is united in the mystery of one.** With this understanding, he explains that during the generation of the mabul, the wicked caused the destruction of the world by damaging the ten utterances—the "asarah ma'amaros." Noach, on the other hand, sustained the world with a single utterance—"במאמר אחד"—namely, by observing Shabbas.

In the Merit of Shabbas Kodesh Noach Revitalized Creation

After researching the matter, I found an explicit source for this idea—that Noach, the perfect tzaddik, was among the first tzaddikim who observed Shabbas Kodesh. It appears in the well-known commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Bereishis 2, 3). He explains that HKB”H only created the world to exist for a mere six days. This seems to be apparent from that which is written in the Aseret HaDibrot (Shemos 20, 11): **“כי ששת”** ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ. The passuk uses the word **“ששת”** rather than **“בששת”**; instead of stating that the world was created in six days, it states that the world was only created for six days. However, by observing Shabbas on a weekly basis, we renew the contract of creation for another six days. This procedure is repeated from Shabbas to Shabbas for the duration of time in this world.

Accordingly, the Ohr HaChaim teaches us that from the inception of the world, there has not been a single Shabbas that was not observed by at least one venerable tzaddik. For, as explained, had even one Shabbas passed without being observed by someone, the world would not have continued to exist; its six-day contract, so to speak, would not have been renewed. Here are his exact words:

“ולך לדעת כי מיום ברוא אלקים אדם, לא חסר העולם דבר המעמיד צדיק יסוד עולם שהוא שומר שבת, כי אדם שומר שבת היה ע”ה, ואחריו קם שת בנו, כי הוא היה צדיק גמור, ואחריו כמה צדיקים, וכשזה נופל כבר בא השמש שומר שבת, מתושלח וכו', נח, שם, אברהם וכו', ומשם לא פסקה שמירת שבת מישראל, ואפילו במצרים היו שומרי שבתות כמאמרם ז”ל.”

He writes that Adam observed the Shabbas, as did his son Sheis after him; Sheis was a total tzaddik. Several other tzaddikim followed them; when one shomer-Shabbas would pass, another would have already appeared to replace him. He lists Mesushelach, Noach, Shem and Avraham as examples. Thereafter, Shabbas-observance never ceased among the people of Yisrael. Even in Mitzrayim, there were those who observed Shabbas, as we are taught by our blessed sages.

Thus, we have an explicit source stating that Noach was among the tzaddikim who already observed Shabbas, even before Matan Torah. By doing so, they ensured the continued existence of the world--renewing the world on every Shabbas for another six days. According to what we have learned, this agrees beautifully with the Sefas Emes’s notion that the actions of the

wicked people in the generation of the mabul corrupted the ten utterances which sustain the six days of creation. Seeing as they rebelled against Hashem and did not observe the Shabbas, they were unable to renew and ensure the continued existence of creation. The righteous Noach, however, by observing Shabbas properly, merited extending the existence of the world anew from Shabbas to the following six weekdays. In this manner, on every Shabbas, he renewed creation for another six days.

He Made the Letter Tav King over Favor . . . and with Them He Formed the Day of Shabbas

Continuing onward with this line of thought, let us prove conclusively that Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem in the merit of fulfilling the mitzvah of Shabbas-observance. Let us refer to the teachings of the Sefas Emes in parshas Vayishlach (5646). There he explains that the world finds favor in G-d’s eyes in the merit of Shabbas Kodesh. We will elaborate on this notion based on the lessons of the Sefer Yetzirah (Chapter 4). It states that HKB”H created the seven days of the week with the seven letters **“בגד כפרת”**. According to this scheme, Shabbas, the seventh day, was created with the letter **“tav”**—ת.

Here is the passage from the Sefer Yetzirah (ibid., Mishnah 11): **“המליך אות ת’ בחן... וצר בהם צדק בעולם, יום שבת בשנה”**—**He made the letter “tav” king over favor . . . and with them He formed the day of Shabbas in time.** Thus, we find that both the Shabbas and the attribute of favor – **“חן”**—were created with the letter **“tav.”** The Sefas Emes explains the connection between the attribute of favor and Shabbas Kodesh, based on the Midrash (B.R. 9, 4) on the passuk (Bereishis 1, 31):

“וירא אלקים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד. משל למלך שבנה פלטין, ראה אותה וערבה לו, אמר פלטין פלטין הלואי תהא מעלת חן לפני בכל עת, כשם שהעלית חן לפני בשעה זו, כך אמר הקב”ה לעולמו, עולמי עולמי הלואי תהא מעלת חן לפני בכל עת, כשם שהעלית חן לפני בשעה זו.”

“And G-d saw all that He had made and behold it was very good.” This is analogous to a king who built a palace; he saw it, and it pleased him. He said: “O palace, O palace, would that you should find favor before me at all times just as you have found favor before me at this time.” Thus did HKB”H say to His world: “My world, My world, would that you should find favor before Me at all times just as you have found favor before Me at this time.”

The Sefas Emes interprets the Midrash as referring to the way HKB”H saw His world on the Shabbas that was observed

by Adam HaRishon, immediately after HKB”H finished creating it on the sixth day. In the merit of the kedushah of the Shabbas day, the world found favor in HKB”H’s eyes prompting Him to say to it: **“My world, My world, would that you should find favor before Me at all times just as you found favor before Me at this time.”** In other words, it was HKB”H’s wish that Yisrael would always observe Shabbas in Olam HaZeh, so that the world would always find favor in His eyes in that merit.

We can explain why the world pleases HKB”H on account of Shabbas based on the words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh cited above. He taught us that HKB”H only created the world for a duration of six days. Due to Yisrael’s observance of the Shabbas, the world continues to exist another six days on a weekly basis. This enlightens us as to why the world pleases Hashem because of the Shabbas. After all, it is solely in the merit of the Shabbas that HKB”H renews the world for another six days prompting Him to remark: **“My world, My world, would that you should find favor before Me at all times just as you found favor before Me at this time.”**

Now, when we combine this idea with the words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh—that Noach was one of the tzaddikim who observed the Shabbas in order to sustain the world—we have the conclusive proof we sought. Noach found favor in Hashem’s eyes, because he observed the Shabbas. As explained, observance of the Shabbas guarantees that the world will be found pleasing to Hashem, prompting Him to renew creation for another six days. In this merit, HKB”H rescued him from the mabul, so that he and his family would sustain the world.

שב"ת תב"ה Plus צה"ר

When I searched for other sources supporting this noble idea, I found that which I desired stated succinctly in the sacred comments of the Imrei Noam (Noach 5), regarding the passuk (Bereishis 6, 16):

“צהר תעשה לתבה. ידוע דנח מרמז על שבת, על דרך הכתוב (שמות כ-יא) וינח [ביום השביעי], וגם כי איתא בספר יצירה (פ"ד מי"א) המליך אות ת' בחן וברא בו שבת, והוא בחינת ונח מצא חן, וזהו יש לרמז צהר תעשה לתבה, כי צה"ר עם תב"ה עולה שב"ת.”

“A light (window) shall you make for the ark.” It is known that Noach alludes to Shabbas, as we find in the passuk (Shemos 20, 11): “He rested on the seventh day.” (The word “וינח” means “He rested,” and is interpreted as an allusion to the name “ינח.”) Also it states in Sefer Yetzirah (4, 11): **“He made**

the letter “tav” king over favor (“חן”) and created Shabbas with it.” This relates to the passuk: “And Noach found favor (“חן”). Thus, we can suggest the following allusion in the words: “A light (צה"ר) shall you make for the ark (תב"ה): “The numerical value of צה"ר (295) plus the numerical value of תב"ה (407) equals שב"ת (702). [Translator’s note: Both “נח” and “חן” are formed with the same letters and thus both possess the same numerical value.]

Thus, we have another explicit source stating that Noach found favor in Hashem’s eyes in the merit of his observing Shabbas Kodesh. He cites the Mishnah in Sefer Yetzirah associating Shabbas with the letter “tav” and the attribute of “חן”; and he adds the numerical allusion to Shabbas. He does not, however, explain the association between Shabbas and the attribute of “חן”. Nevertheless, we can explain the association by referring to the words of the Sefas Emes. In the merit of Shabbas, the world found “חן” (favor) in the eyes of HKB”H, prompting Him to renew the world due to the observance of Noach and his sons.

This allows us a very nice interpretation of the passuk: **“אלה” תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו**. We mentioned above that the commentaries note the apparent redundancy in the passuk: **“נח נח”**. Let us refer to what the Ahavat Shalom writes. According to the Zohar hakadosh, the name **“Noach”** alludes to Shabbas Kodesh, which is a day of rest. (We mentioned above that the name **“נח”** is related to the word **“מנוחה”**, which means rest.) **“The generations of Noach”**—**“תולדות נח”**—allude to the six weekdays which are generated by Noach, seeing as they owe their continued existence to Shabbas Kodesh, referred to as Noach. In the words of the Zohar hakadosh (Yisro 88a): **“כל” ברכאן דלעילא ותתא ביומא שביעאה תליין” all heavenly and earthly blessings depend on the seventh day.**

Based on this understanding, we can suggest an explanation regarding the juxtaposition of the pesukim from the previous parsha (Bereishis 6, 5): **“וירא ה' כי רבה רעת האדם בארץ, וכל יצר מחשבת לבו רק רע כל היום, וינחם ה' כי עשה את האדם בארץ ויתעצב אל”** **Hashem saw that man’s wickedness on earth was great, and that every inclination of his heart was only for evil all day long. And Hashem reconsidered having made man on earth, and it saddened His heart.** Due to their wickedness, they destroyed the world that was created with ten utterances. Therefore: **Hashem said, “I will eliminate man whom I created, from upon the face of the earth—from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them.”**

Nevertheless, the Torah proceeds to add the following: **“But Noah found favor in the eyes of Hashem”**—by observing the day of Shabbas, which was created with favor (“יחין”). As a result, the world also found favor in the eyes of Hashem, pleasing Him to the point that He decided to sustain it and continue its existence. Then the Torah goes on to explain how and in what merit the world was sustained: **“אלה תולדות נח”**—**“These are the generations of Noah”**—HKB”H drew new life from Shabbas and extended it to the following six days of the week, which represent the **“generations of Noah.”** He did so in the merit of **“Noach, a righteous, flawless man in his generations”**; for, he observed Shabbas, prompting HKB”H to save him from the mabul and build a new world from him.

Based on what we have learned, we now have a very nice explanation for the allusion presented by the Ba’al HaTurim regarding this passuk: **The last letters of the words האלקים spell the word “חכם”**. We have learned in the Gemara (Tamid 32a): **“איזהו חכם הרואה את הנולד”-- a truly wise person (“חכם”) foresees the consequences of his actions.** As explained, Noah found favor in G-d’s eyes, because he observed Shabbas. He was truly a **“חכם”**, because he foresaw the consequences of his actions; he understood that the six days of the following week were generated by the Shabbas and were in a sense **“the generations of Noah”**--**“תולדות נח”**. This then is the interpretation of the passuk: **“אלה תולדות נח”**—the reason the six weekdays represent **“the generations of Noah”** is because **נח איש צדיק תמים היה** **“נח בדורותיו”**—he was a tzaddik who observed Shabbas. Therefore, the Torah alludes to the fact that he was wise and foresaw future consequences; he understood that the existence of the six days to come was solely in the merit of Shabbas observance.

Shabbas Kodesh Functions Like Noah’s Ark

Now, based on what we have learned, we have opened a window into the ark, through which we can peek into the inner chambers of Noah’s vessel. The reason HKB”H chose to save Noah and his household and all the living creatures that joined them from drowning in the treacherous waters of the mabul by means of the ark, was because Noah’s ark alludes to the day of Shabbas. Recall the allusion presented by the Imrei Noam: **“The numerical value of צה”ר (295) plus the numerical value of תכ”ה (407) equals שכ”ת (702).** As explained, in the merit of observing the mitzvah of Shabbas, Noah was able to save the entire world from extermination. Therefore, the instrument of his salvation was the ark, which alludes to Shabbas.

Now, we have an accepted principle that the entire Torah is eternal. It is applicable and pertinent everywhere, at all times, to each and every Jew. Thus, it is imperative that we understand that Shabbas Kodesh serves the same function as Noah’s ark. Every Jew who wants to be spared from drowning in the turbulent waters that flood the world throughout the six days of the week, should enter this ark. He should embrace the kedushah of Shabbas, which floats above those turbulent waters. This will enable him to extend its kedushah to all of the six weekdays, so that he can maintain his level of kedushah and not drown or be washed away by those raging waters.

Let us explain. While occupied during the work week making a livelihood to support one’s family, a person is likely to drown and get swept away by the stormy waters of nature. Therefore, HKB”H gave us a precious gift—Shabbas Kodesh. On this special day, we are supposed to divorce ourselves from all matters pertaining to this world and sanctify ourselves with the kedushah of Shabbas—as it is written (Shemos 20, 8): **“זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, ששת ימים תעבוד ועשית כל מלאכתך, ויום השביעי שבת לה’ וגו’”** **Remember the Shabbas day to sanctify it. Six days shall you work and accomplish all your work; but the seventh day is Shabbas to Hashem, your G-d; you shall not do any work . . .** In this manner, we extend the kedushah of Shabbas to all of the six days of the week, so that we do not drown in the stormy, perilous waters of nature.

I learned this noble idea from the sacred words of the Sefas Emes in this week’s parsha (5633). Here are his sacred words:

“ושבת קודש כמו תיבת נח, שבימות החול טרוד כל אחד בעסקי עולם הזה, ובשבת קודש יש מקום לבני ישראל לברוח ולהניח כל זה, להסתופף תחת צל כנפי השכינה, והיא פריסת סוכת שלום, כמו שהיה נסתר נח בתיבה, והוא הביטול לשורש החיות, שכל העולם חרב, והיה צריך לקבל חיות חדש משורש החיים, וכן בכל שבת קודש”.

“Shabbas Kodesh resembles Noah’s ark. On weekdays, everyone is busy with matters related to Olam HaZeh. On Shabbas Kodesh, there is an opportunity for a Jew to escape and place all of this aside—to find shelter beneath the wings of the Shechinah, the spreading out of the succah of shalom, just like Noah was concealed inside the ark. This means submitting to the source of life. The entire world was destroyed and he had to receive a new life from the source of life. Similarly, this occurs on every Shabbas Kodesh.”

We can explain this matter in greater depth by referring to the words of David HaMelech, Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (Tehillim

124, 3): “לולי ה' שהיה לנו בקום עלינו אדם, אזי חיים בלעונו בחרות אפם בנו; (3, 124) **Had not Hashem been with us when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their anger flared up against us. Then the waters would have inundated us; the current would have surged across our soul. Then they would have surged across our soul—the treacherous waters.** He teaches us that all of the ordeals we experience in Olam HaZeh represent “מים הזידונים”—the treacherous waters that a Jew is liable to drown in if he does not know how to swim and keep his head above water.

For this reason, we refer to the day-to-day order of Olam HaZeh as “הטבע”—“mother nature.” The term “הטבע” comes from the root of “טובע”, meaning to drown. This comes to teach us that if a person is not careful, chas v’shalom, he is liable to drown and sink in the natural order of Olam HaZeh. Along these lines, Rabeinu Bachayei writes (Introduction to parshas Masei): “כי לכך נקרא הטבע בשם הזה, כי יטבע האדם ביון מצולתו וירד” **for this reason, nature is referred to by this name; because a person will drown in the mire of his abyss and will descend to the depths of despair if he is not wary of it—like a person who falls into the depths of the sea and doesn’t know how to swim and drowns.** We find this notion expressed by the Shem MiShmuel, as well (Vayeira 5672): “רבי העניך [מאלכסנדר, כי הטבע הוא מלשון טובע כמו הטובע בנהר, לולא החבל שהמעתי מכ”ק אדמו”ר זצ”ל]: “שהשיט לו הקברניט אין לו חיים—**I heard from the holy Admor ztz”l of Alexander that the term “הטבע” comes from the root of “טובע”; it is like someone who drowns in a river; if not for the rope the captain extends him, he will not survive.**

This provides us with a very nice explanation of the following Gemara (Kiddushin 29a): “האב חייב בבנו למולו ולפרדותו וללמדו תורה: **a father is obligated to do the following for his son: to circumcise him, to redeem him, to teach him Torah, to find him a wife and to teach him a profession; some say, even to teach him to swim.** Rashi provides the following clarification: “אף **for he might go out in a ship, and it will sink, and his life will be in danger if he does not know how to swim.** Based on what we have discussed, we can view the latter as a father’s obligation

to teach his son how to deal with whatever life has in store for him—so that he does not drown in the treacherous waters of mother nature. As we have learned, Shabbas is analogous to Noah’s ark; it saves a person from drowning in the stormy waters that surround him during the other days of the week.

Upon closer scrutiny, we find that all the specifics of the “teivah”—the ark—allude amazingly to Shabbas Kodesh. Let us mention a few (Bereishis 6, 14): “**וכפרת אותה מבית ומחוץ בכופר— and caulk it inside and outside with tar.** These words allude to the fact that Shabbas observance is especially beneficial for atoning for a person’s transgressions; the word “וכפרת” means to caulk and also means to atone. The word “מבית” alludes to internal transgressions of the mind and heart; “ומחוץ” refers to external transgressions in actual deed. The Gemara expresses this fact as follows (Shabbas 118b): “**כל המשמר שבת כהלכתו אפילו עובד עבודה זרה— whoever observes Shabbas properly, even if he worships idols like the generation of Enosh, is forgiven.** Elsewhere, the Gemara states (ibid. 119b): “**כל המתפלל בערב שבת ואומר ויכולו, שני מלאכי השרת המלוין לו לאדם מניחין ידיהן על ראשו ואומרים— anyone who prays on erev Shabbas and utters “ויכולו”, the two ministering angels who escort him place their hands on his head and say to him: “And your iniquity will vanish and your sin will be atoned for.”**

“צוהר תעשה לתיבה” alludes to the fact that a person must make a window to allow the light to enter and illuminate the “teivah,” which is Shabbas, with the light of Torah. The Tur presents the following in the name of the Midrash (O.C. 290): “**אמרה תורה לפני הקב”ה, רבוננו של עולם כשיכנסו ישראל לארץ, זה רץ לכרמו וזה רץ לשדהו, ואני מזה תהא עלי, אמר לה, יש לי זוג שאני מזווג לך ושבת שמו, שהם בטלים ממלאכתם— Here the Torah voices its concerns before HKB”H that when Yisrael enter the land and are busy with their fields and vineyards, she will be overlooked. HKB”H replies that Shabbas will be its mate. For, on Shabbas, Yisrael neglect their work and are free to engage in Torah study. He makes it quite clear that it is our obligation to illuminate the Shabbas with the light of the Torah. Then the passuk concludes: **תחתיים שניים—construct it with three compartments.** This alludes to the mitzvah to prepare three meals on Shabbas—“shalosh seudos.” Hopefully, we will have occasion to explain the relationship of other aspects of the “teivah” to Shabbas Kodesh at another time!**

Donated by Family Madeb for the Refuah Shelimah of Lea bat Virgini

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com