

# Toronto Torah

Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Noach

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## A Lesson in Life, on a Lifeboat

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

### A Twelve Month Semester

The Torah tells us that Noach entered the ark on the seventeenth day of the second month (Bereishit 7:11), and exited a full solar year later, on the twenty-seventh day of the next year's second month (ibid. 8:14; compare Rashi and Radak there). A midrash tells us that Noach asked frequently to be released earlier, but G-d's answer was, "It was decreed before Me that your twelve months must be completed, and as long as they have not been completed, you are not going out." (Tanchuma, Noach 17) What was the purpose of Noach's staying in the ark for a full year?

In a mishnah (Eduyot 2:10), Rabbi Akiva demonstrates that the trope of "twelve months" appears in other places as well. For example, Iyov's suffering lasted twelve months, and so did the plagues in Egypt, as does the punishment of the wicked in Gehennom. These examples represent two classes: punishment of the wicked [Egypt, Gehennom]; and suffering which is not a punishment, but a test and a lesson [Iyov]. In the same manner, it may be argued, the twelve months of the flood served a dual role: a time of punishment for the wicked outside of the ark, but also a time of trial for those within it. Indeed, Bereishit Rabbah (34:8) says: "[The verse] 'Hashem tests the righteous' applies to Noach, who stayed in the Ark until G-d said to him, 'Go forth from the Ark.'"

### The Curriculum

We find virtually nothing in the Torah itself about life in the Ark, but midrashim fill this gap. A quick survey yields a recurring theme: while Noach was helped by G-d, such as by protecting him from the snakes (Midrash Shochar Tov 91) and giving him a miraculous glowing stone to light the ark (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit 53), all actual care for the animals had to be done by Noach and his family.

A description of the hardships involved in this enterprise is found in the Talmud. (Sanhedrin 108b) It tells us that Eliezer (Abraham's servant) asked Shem (Noach's son) how they had handled all the different animals during the flood. Shem replied, "[In truth], we had much trouble in the ark. The animals which are usually fed by day we fed by day; and those normally fed by night we fed by night." He continued to recount the difficulties they had in finding the right food for each animal. Another midrash, quoted by Rashi (Bereishit 7:23), tells us that Noach was punished by the lion for not giving him food on time. In general, we are told, Noach was "coughing blood" from the effort to serve the animals. Why did Noach and his family have to suffer so much, for so long?

### Lesson Learned

Perhaps the answer to this question is hinted at in yet another midrash, regarding G-d's instruction, "Leave the Ark." This midrash says, "[G-d] may be compared to an administrator who departed for a certain destination,

putting someone in his place. On his return he said to the other, 'Leave your position.' But [Noach] was reluctant to exit, saying, 'Am I to go out and beget children for a curse?' Until G-d swore to him that He would not bring another flood upon the world." (Bereishit Rabbah 34:6)

As this midrash implies, inside the Ark Noach served as G-d's agent, taking care of all of His creatures. Feeding each one of the world's animals according to its unique needs, a task generally performed by G-d alone (Tehillim 145:15-16), was now handed to a human being. The result was a change in Noach's attitude; while he was initially willing to enter the Ark and let the world be destroyed, he now protested; his new responsibility turned him from a mere observer into an active agent.

The sin which brought about the flood was theft – the idea that each person serves himself, without any thought about the ramifications for others. Even Noach the righteous was an individualistic *tzaddik*. The year in the ark taught him – and us – that in order to keep the world afloat, we must assume responsibility.

[bwineintraub@torontotorah.com](mailto:bwineintraub@torontotorah.com)

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***Uvikashtem Misham*****Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik  
World Zionist Organization (1991)****Background of the Book:**

Many people are familiar with Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's popular work, *Halakhic Man*, which considers the religious experience of the typological "Halakhic Man". The companion of that essay has achieved markedly less renown. *Uvikashtem Misham*, or *And From There You Shall Seek*, as its English translation is titled, was drafted in the 1940's. It remained an unpublished and mysterious manuscript until 1978 when it was printed in Hadarom, the Hebrew language journal of the Rabbinical Council of America. The English translation was published in 2009.

**Content of the Book**

*Uvikashtem Misham* paints, in broad strokes, the movements of human consciousness as it searches for G-d. Rabbi Soloveitchik describes two ways in which Man encounters G-d. The first is through natural means. Man searches for G-d by observing the world around him, and using his intellectual faculties. Rabbi Soloveitchik traces this

search through its permutations in the history of Western philosophy, particularly the various theological proofs for the existence of G-d. Ultimately, he concludes, this attempt fails. The only way for Man to meet G-d is for Him to reveal Himself. This is the second type of encounter, the revelational consciousness.

Rabbi Soloveitchik goes on to consider the interplay between these types of encounters. He describes the tension experienced between the intense longing and yearning for G-d that man experiences in his search through nature, and the terror and recoil that occur when G-d reveals Himself. In the course of the discussion Rabbi Soloveitchik considers how this tension plays out in the classical modes of Jewish religious expression including love, fear, awe, and *deveikut*. The result is a rich and strikingly insightful exposition of the core experiences that fuel religious life.

**Format and Style**

Whereas *Halakhic Man* is broken into two broad parts, *Uvikashtem Misham* contains 15 chapters, each dealing with nuances within the essay. This

makes the book somewhat more user-friendly in terms of references and grasping the structure of the work.

The style of *Uvikashtem* is also markedly different from that of *Halakhic Man*. Both essays begin with a discussion of dialectics. But while *Halakhic Man* launches straight into a discussion of various intellectual personality types and their respective cognitive goals, *Uvikashtem* opens with a staggeringly beautiful depiction of the lovers from Song of Songs chasing each other in a seemingly endless dance. [This first section is a worthwhile read in its own right, especially in the original Hebrew.] The emphasis on homiletic presentation, which nicely suits the subject matter, is maintained throughout the book.

**Conclusion**

The "Halakhic Man" is not a universal personality. Not everyone is a halachist who can come to see the world through his eyes. But every religious person seeks G-d and wants to make sense of the host of complex experiences involved in religious life. For this reason, *Uvikashtem Misham* is a very worthwhile read.

*afriedmann@torontotorah.com*

**Israel's Chief Rabbis: Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, Jerusalem****Yaron Perez****Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank****1873 Lithuania – 1960 Jerusalem****Chief Rabbi (Ashkenazi) of Jerusalem, 1936-1960**

Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank was born in Kovno, Lithuania, and he studied in the yeshivot of Slobodka and Telz. At the age of 20 he ascended to Israel, and he became a student of Yeshivat Eitz Chaim in Jerusalem.

In 1897, Rabbi Frank became the attendant of Rabbi Shemuel Salant, who was the Rosh Yeshiva as well as the Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Jerusalem. Five years later, he moved to Jaffa to focus on Torah study; while there, he became close with Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook.

Rabbi Frank served as a halachic authority in various communities, and in 1908 he published his first halachic work. At the age of 34, he was appointed to the Ashkenazi *beit din* (rabbinical court) of Jerusalem. At the conclusion of World War I, Rabbi Frank pressed for the establishment of a Chief Rabbinate for Jerusalem; he also pressed for the appointment of Rabbi Kook as the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. In 1935, after Rabbi Kook passed away, Rabbi Frank was named Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Frank was a paradigmatic halachic authority, and the halachic works he published address all areas of life. He saw himself as a guardian of halachah; despite his approach of drawing close every Jew, he did not compromise on halachah and he never agreed to alteration of his mentors' practices. He fought energetically against the drafting of women to the military and *Sherut Leumi* (national service). He also opposed drafting of yeshiva students. He acted to prevent violation of

Shabbat by communal institutions, as well as archaeological work in ancient graves. At the same time, he opposed establishment of separate, insular religious communities, seeing this as abandonment of the broader community. He opposed sectarianism; for example, he refused to approve establishment of unique Ashkenazi kosher certification for different communities, insisting instead on establishment of a single certification.

Rabbi Frank espoused the view, "The strength of those who permit is greater," and he used his broad shoulders to issue significant halachic rulings. Rabbi Frank dealt in particular with halachic solutions for post-Holocaust instances of *agunah*. As a matter of communal policy, he did not accept new stringencies which could reflect poorly on earlier generations. He contended that each community should maintain the traditions of previous generations; he opposed establishment of a unified siddur, as well as unification of *shechitah* under Ashkenazi authority.

Rabbi Frank was among the first halachic authorities to permit powdered milk which was not *chalav yisrael*, based on the argument that it had not been included in the original rabbinic decree regarding *chalav yisrael*. He also permitted gelatin from non-kosher animals, in principle.

Rabbi Frank was known for his generosity; his home was open for all to enter, and even to sleep there. Sometimes, when he would determine that a pauper's chicken was not kosher despite a possible argument for leniency, he would pay for the chicken personally.

*yperez@torontotorah.com*

## Biography

### Don Isaac Abarbanel

Rabbi Yisroel M. Rosenzweig

Don Isaac Abarbanel was born in 1437 in Lisbon, Portugal. The Abarbanel family had lived on the Iberian Peninsula since the destruction of the Second Temple. There, they became an influential family in the Jewish community and amongst the Portuguese monarchy. Don Isaac Abarbanel's father, Yehudah, was a treasurer to King Alfonso V, a position that Don Isaac Abarbanel himself filled after his father's passing. He also became a close council to King Alfonso V; he wrote that the King relied upon his judgment.

Don Isaac Abarbanel's good fortune changed with the passing of King Alfonso V and the ascension of his son, John II, to the throne. Don Isaac Abarbanel was accused of taking part in a plot to usurp the new King's throne and had to flee Portugal for his life. He went to Toledo, Spain where he remained until 1492, the year of the Expulsion of Jews from Spain by order of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He went to great lengths in his diplomatic and financial attempts to prevent the Expulsion. However, he was ultimately unsuccessful. The rest of Don Isaac Abarbanel's life is defined by exile, moving from location to location. Eventually, his travels led him around the coastline of Italy, ending in Venice, where he passed away in 1508.

After fleeing from Portugal, Don Isaac Abarbanel began writing his commentaries to Tanach. His style of writing is unique in a number of ways. Unlike many other Rishonim, "the Abarbanel", as he is generally known, did not write in a terse manner, preferring instead to explain his ideas at length. Many of his works are organized in a very specific, clear manner: At the beginning of many of his works, the Abarbanel lists questions and difficulties that he has with the text at hand. These questions guide his commentary throughout. Whenever he has answered a question he makes note of this, allowing the reader to maintain context and clarity.

The Abarbanel sought a balance between clarifying the literal intent of the source material and tapping into the deeper lessons contained within. In a number of places, most notably his comments on the Passover Haggadah, one can find his life experiences woven into his comments.

[enrosenzweig@gmail.com](mailto:enrosenzweig@gmail.com)

## Torah and Translation

### A Not-So-Brave New World

Don Isaac Abarbanel to Bereishit 9:1

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

אין ספק שנה ובנינו בצאתם מן התיבה היו משתוממים ומתאבלים על העבר, יראים ופחדים מהעתיד, וזה מהדברים ד': הא' שהיו מתאבלים על מיתת קרוביהם ואוהביהם כל אנשי סודם... והב' שהיו יראים ופחדים מן החיות הטורפות שבהיותם בקבוץ מדיני כבראשונה כי תבא חיה כמו ארבעה מתקבצים אנשים רבים להרגה... והג' שיהיו מתבהלים באמרם מה נאכל כי אין לנו פרי עץ שנתן למאכל לאדם הראשון וגם לא פרי האדמה לאכול ממנו... והד' שהיו יראים פן יפול קטטה ומדנים בין אחים ויהרגו זה את זה כמו שעשה קין להבל...

וכאשר ראה ית' שהיו משתוממים לעבר, נבהלים לעתיד, על פי הד' דברים האלה דבר על לבם וברך אותם בדברים מיוחסים לכל אחד מהמחשבות אשר היו בלבותם.

וכנגד הא' שהוא מהעדר הקרובים והאוהבים שמתו להם במבול אמר להם "פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ," כלומר אתם תעשו קרובים ואוהבים מהיוצאים מחלצכם, שהם יהיו יותר נאמנים באהבה מהאנשים הזרים, וכאלו אמר "אני אתן לכם כח רב בכריה ורביה באופן שתמלא הארץ מזרעכם מהרה."

וכנגד המחשבה הב' מפחדם מהחיות הטורפות אמר "ומוראכם וחתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ ועל כל עוף השמים," כי הצורה האנושית יש לה בטבע ממשלה ושולטנות על כל מיני החיים... ואמר "בידכם נתנו" להגיד שכבר קנו מן התיבה קנין ההכנעה והכבוש לפנייהם ויתמידו תמיד עליה.

וכנגד המחשבה הג' מהעדר המזונות אמר "כל רמש אשר הוא חי לכם יהיה לאכלה," כאומר אם אין לכם פרי לאכול קחו מהבעלי חיים למזונותיכם...

וכנגד המחשבה הד' שהיו יראים מעצמם אם יהרגו אלו לאלו אמר "ואך את דמכם לנפשותיכם אדרוש."

Without a doubt, as Noach and his children left the boat they were desolate, grieving for the past, and fearful, frightened of the future. This was for four reasons:

1. They mourned the death of their relatives and friends, all of their intimates...
2. They were fearful, frightened of the predatory beasts. When they had been in a political body before, then when a beast came, as in an ambush, many people gathered to kill it...
3. They were anxious, saying, "What shall we eat? We lack the tree fruit which were given as food for Adam, and we lack fruit of the land from which to eat..."
4. They feared lest strife and quarrels befall brothers, and lest they kill each other as Kayin had killed Hevel...

And when G-d saw that they were desolate for the past and anxious for the future, He addressed their hearts regarding each of these four matters, and He blessed them in ways that matched each of the thoughts in their hearts [in Bereishit 9:1-7].

For the first [thought], the lack of relatives and friends who had died in the flood, He told them, "Bear fruit and multiply and fill the land." Meaning: You shall generate relatives and friends from your progeny, and they will be more lovingly loyal than strangers. It is as though He had said, "I will give you great procreative capacity, so that the land will quickly fill up with your children."

For the second thought, their fear of predatory beasts, He said, "And your fear and terror will be upon all of the beasts of the land, and all of the birds of the heavens." For the human form has a natural domination and authority over all living creatures... "In your hand they have been placed," meaning to say that [the animals] had acquired humility and domestication before human beings on the boat, and this would remain.

For the third thought, the lack of food, He said, "All crawling creatures that live are for you to eat," as if to say, "If you lack fruit to eat, take your food from the living..."

And for the fourth thought, their fear of themselves lest they kill each other, He said, "But only, your blood for your lives I will demand."

*Kilayim* is the Torah’s term for mixed or joined species, whether from the animal kingdom or plant kingdom. According to Ramban (Vayikra 19:19), that G-d implanted various forces in the world’s plant and animal kingdoms at Creation, and mixing those forces would be dangerous. Therefore, the Torah prohibits creating or using certain *kilayim* mixtures. Ultimately, though, these are laws for which we have been given no rational explanation.

As part of the *kilayim* laws, Vayikra 19:19 prohibits crossbreeding animal species, planting seeds of different species too close together, and grafting a branch of one species to a tree of a different species. Sefer haChinuch counts these as the Torah’s 244<sup>th</sup> and 245<sup>th</sup> mitzvot. In addition, Devarim 22:9-10 prohibits planting certain combinations of species within a vineyard, using the results of such planting, and plowing with an ox-donkey tandem.

Sefer haChinuch lists these as the Torah’s 548<sup>th</sup>, 549<sup>th</sup> and 550<sup>th</sup> mitzvot. [We expect to discuss another mitzvah involving mixed species, that of wearing *shaatnez*, in the next column.]

As explained in Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 295-297, the prohibitions involving animal species apply both in Israel and beyond, as do the prohibitions against grafting tree species. The prohibition against planting certain combinations of species in a vineyard applies biblically in Israel, and rabbinically outside of Israel. The prohibition against planting seeds of different species close together applies only in Israel.

One complication regarding planting *kilayim* is the question of how to define “species” – is it based on the plant’s family, its structure, or its appearance? Chazon Ish discusses this issue in *Kilayim* 3:4-8.

*torczyner@torontotorah.com*

**Weekly Highlights: Nov 5 – 11 / 5 Cheshvan – 11 Cheshvan**

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>שבת Nov. 5</b>				
<b>After hashkamah</b>	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
<b>After minchah</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	<b>Not this week</b>
<b>Sun. Nov. 6</b>				
<b>8:45 AM</b>	<b>R’ Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Medical Halachah: Vaccination</b>	<b>BAYT [Simcha Suite]</b>	<b>CME Accredited; Open to laypeople</b>
<b>8:45 AM</b>	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	R’ Shalom Krell	Book of Shemuel	Associated North	<b>Hebrew</b>
<b>Mon. Nov. 7</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	Mrs. Elliezra Perez	Tefillah: Connecting to G-d	Ulpanat Orot	<b>University Women</b>
<b>7:45 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Gemara: Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	
<b>8:30 PM</b>	<b>R’ Mordechai Torczyner</b>	<b>Avodah Zarah 1 of 6: Learning Idolatry?</b>	<b>Shomrai Shabbos</b>	<b>Third floor, Men</b>
<b>Tue. Nov. 8</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	Mrs. Ora Ziring	Chullin / Hilchot Kashrut	Ulpanat Orot	<b>University Women</b>
<b>12:30 PM</b>	<b>R’ Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Giving Tzedakah to One Who Could Work</b>	<b>Miller Bernstein 1801-5000 Yonge St.</b>	<b>Lunch served; RSVP to <a href="mailto:cchoi@millerbernstein.com">cchoi@millerbernstein.com</a></b>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Ezra: Introduction	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Wed. Nov. 9</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	Mrs. Ora Ziring	Tanach	Ulpanat Orot	<b>University Women</b>
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>R’ Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>Arguing with G-d 1 of 6: Abraham’s Challenge</b>	<b>Beth Emeth</b>	<b>There is a fee; see <a href="http://torontotorah.com/arguing">torontotorah.com/arguing</a></b>
<b>12:30 PM</b>	<b>R’ Jonathan Ziring</b>	<b>May a Jew profit from selling non-kosher food?</b>	<b>Zeifmans LLP 201 Bridgeland Ave</b>	<b>Lunch served; RSVP to <a href="mailto:rk@zeifmans.ca">rk@zeifmans.ca</a></b>
<b>8:00 PM</b>	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that? Origins of Everyday Practice	Shaarei Tefillah	<b>New series!</b>
<b>Thu. Nov. 10</b>				
<b>9:30 AM-Noon</b>	Mrs. Elliezra Perez	Netivot Shalom on Parshah	Ulpanat Orot	<b>University Women</b>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Gidon’s Revolt	49 Michael Ct.	<b>Women</b>
<b>Fri. Nov. 11</b>				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Laws of Onaah	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>Advanced</b>