

Parashat Noach 5782, 2021

Tamim B'Tzedek

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yechiel, Chana bat Shmuel, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, Tikvah bat Rivka Perel, Peretz ben Chaim, Chaya Sarah bat Reb Yechezkel Shraga, Shmuel Yosef ben Reuven, Shayndel bat Mordechai Yehudah, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof, Pittsburgh, and Jersey City, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Mordechai HaLevi ben Miriam Tovah, Moshe ben Itta Golda, Yocheved Dafneh bat Dinah Zehavah, Reuven Shmuel ben Leah, Chana bat Sarah, and the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

And the L-rd saw that the evil of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil all the time. And the L-rd regretted that He had made man upon the earth, and He became grieved in His heart. And the L-rd said, "I will blot out man, whom I created, from upon the face of the earth, from man to cattle to creeping thing, to the fowl of the heavens, for I regret that I made them." (*Sefer Bereishit* 6:5-7, this and all Tanach and Rashi translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*)

In these closing *pasukim* of Parashat Bereishit, Hashem's grand plan to populate the earth with all manner and variety of life comes to a screeching halt. Yet, like a great bolt of lightning in the darkest night, a sudden bright shining moment of hope bursts forth: "But Noach found favor in the eyes of the L-rd." (6:8) The very first verse of Parashat Noach tells us why: "...Noach was a righteous man, he was perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d." (6:9) Noach, therefore, was a *tzaddik* who reached the state of perfection of his time, and walked with the Almighty in that he followed all His commands. This notion is made manifest in the final *pasuk* of chapter six: "And Noach did; according to all that G-d had commanded him, so he did."

In his *Commentary on the Torah* on the phrase, "found favor in the eyes of the L-rd," the Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) elaborates upon why this was so:

The reason why Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem is because all of his actions before Him were pleasant and pleasing. So, too, do we find [in the case of Moshe where it states:] “And the L-rd said to Moshe: ‘Even this thing that you have spoken, I will do, for you have found favor in My eyes, and I have known you by name.’” (*Sefer Shemot* 33:17) [Noach, therefore, was similar to Yosef] about whom the Torah states: “The L-rd was with Joseph, and He extended charisma to him, and He gave him favor in the eyes of the warden of the prison.” (*Sefer Bereishit* 39:21) [In addition, Noach was like Esther] about whom it states: “...and Esther obtained favor in the eyes of all who beheld her.” (*Megillat Esther* 2:15). Noach having found “favor in the eyes of the L-rd” is mentioned in contrast to the actions of his generation, since all of their actions caused despondency before Him, may He be blessed. [In contrast,] it says regarding him [Noach] that his actions were favorable to Him. Afterwards, [the Torah explicitly states] why he [Noach] was considered good before Him — he was a completely righteous individual. (Translations my own)

According to the Ramban, Noach should be seen as someone akin to Moshe, Yosef, and Esther. As such, he was unquestionably a true hero of the spirit and model of righteousness:

The verse mentions that Noah was *zakkai v'shalame b'tzidko* (free of guilt and complete in his righteousness), to let us know that he deserved to be saved from the deluge because he did not deserve any punishment at all, for he was *tamim b'tzedek* (perfect in righteousness). The word “*tzaddik*” refers to someone who is righteous in judgment, the opposite of “*rasha*,” an evil individual... (Gloss on 6:9)

In sum, in the Ramban’s view, Noach emerges as a *tamim b'tzedek*, the ideal individual to continue humankind in the coming postdiluvian world. Perhaps, *Dovid HaMelech* had Noach in mind when he wrote:

A song of David; O L-rd, who will sojourn in Your tent, who will dwell upon Your holy mount? He who walks *tamim*, performs acts of *tzedek* and speaks *emet* in his heart. (*Sefer Tehillim* 15:1-2)

With the Almighty’s help and our fervent desire, may we ever strive to walk *tamim* with Hashem, and may our acts of *tzedek* and the *emet* we speak in our hearts enable us to find favor in His eyes. *V'chane yihi ratzon*.

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>

The email list, *b'chasdei Hashem*, has expanded to hundreds of people. I am always happy to add more members to the list. If you have family or friends you would like to have added, please do not hesitate to contact me via email <mailto:rdbe718@gmail.com>.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

*** I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik's English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav zatzal](#)