



Parshas Noach 2018, our concrete values

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Ben Edward, may his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.

Our Parsha introduces Noach, a man who remained faithful to G-d while the rest of society descended into chaos and anarchy. G-d told Noach that a Mabul (flood) would soon destroy all of civilization. Only he and his family would survive in a Teviah, an ark he was to build. He was given the ark's dimensions and commanded to bring 7 of every kosher animal and a pair of every non-kosher animal.

Noach slowly built the ark to give people a chance to repent and stop the flood, but he was unsuccessful. The rain began on the 11th of Cheshvan as Noach entered the ark with his entire family and every animal. The downpour lasted 40 days and nights, killing all humans and animals not in the ark. The waters continued to stir and boil for 150 days until G-d commanded it to subside.

Noach sent out a raven to determine the extent of the water's retreat; however, the raven did not fly far before returning to the Teivah. Noach waited and then sent out a dove three separate times. The first time the dove left, it returned empty-handed.

But, It returned with an olive leaf in its beak the second time, indicating that new growth had sprouted. The dove did not return the final time, signaling to Noach that the land had dried. On the 27th of Cheshvan, Noach and his family exited the Teivah to reinhabit the world exactly one year after entering.

However, a question comes to mind: why did the Torah go out of its way to say he was a *Tzaddik - a righteous man*, and a *Tomim - a pure and sincere person*, which

are rare and unique terms, used only to describe the holiest of people, and in fact it is the only time, that the word Tzaddik is used to describe a person in the Torah?

Furthermore, it says that *"he was righteous in his generation"*, Rashi points out that, according to one opinion, if he were in another generation, he would not have been considered an extra special righteous person. Why did the Torah use these special terms when describing Noach?

To answer this question, we to understand the circumstances that he was in, Noach's generation was evil, completely unethical, immoral, and dishonest, but Noach was virtuous, principled, and honorable, as it says at the end of last week's Torah portion, *"Noach found favor in the eyes of the Lord"*.

Noach retained his morals and values, despite the degradation of behavior by the rest of his generation, he did not succumb to the belief that values and morals are subjective and can be changed through rationalization. Rather he held that the principles that were given to him by G-d are fundamental and intrinsic to life, perpetual and unchangeable, as is the rest of the Torah.

We see the same idea by Yosef, whom we call Tzaddik for the same reason, that he held strong to his values even though he was in the most impure civilization on Earth.

We, the Jewish people, need to hold on to our standards, morals, and values, today, more than ever before, the deterioration of standards by our society rivals that of Noach's generation. We need to realize that our virtue is not subjective but rather objective. they are not changeable, no matter what the rationalization might be. because they are the word of G-d, therefore eternal and everlasting.

"A lie does not become truth, wrong does not become right, & evil does not become good, just because it is accepted by the majority"

Have a great Shabbos!
Rabbi Sholom Yemini