



# דרכים בפרשה

נח



**ויבא נח ובניו ואשתו ונשי־בניו אתו אל־התבה מפני מי המבול**

*Noach, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the Flood.*

Rashi tells us: אף נח מקטני אמנה היה, מאמין ואינו מאמין שיבא המבול ולא נכנס לתיבה עד שדחקהו המים - even Noach was a man of little faith, who believed and yet did not believe that the Flood would come. He didn't enter the Teiva until the rising water forced him in.

Even if we explain that Noach would have been considered a “nobody” in Avrohom's generation, can we really suggest that he did not believe that it was coming? Considering 120 years' worth of labour, and all the time preparing the provisions for its occupants, how could Noach not have believed in the Flood? On a much greater level, this question leads us to ask what emunah really is and what its consequences are in our lives.

In the Sefer Shaarei Orah from Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman shlita, he explains as follows: The Gemara in Mesichta Bava Basra (75a) relates that: ושעריך לאבני אקדח כי הא דיתב רבי יוחנן וקא דריש עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להביא אבנים טובות ומרגליות שהם שלשים על שלשים וחוקק בהן עשר על עשרים ומעמידן בשערי ירושלים לגלג עליו אותו תלמיד השתא כביעתא דציצלא לא משכחינן כולי האי משכחינן

*Rav Yochanan was discussing the words of the Navi Yeshaya regarding the rebuilt walls and gates of Yerushalyim. Rav Yochanan explained that "le'asid lavoh- HaShem will bring precious stones and pearls to Yerushalayim 30x30 amos in size, carving into them doorways of 10x20, to be set up as gates for Yerushalyim. One of the talmidim*

*laughed and said that we never even find precious stones the size of small bird's eggs, let alone the size mentioned above.*

The Gemara continues: לימים הפליגה ספינתו בים חזא מלאכי השרת דיתבי וקא מינסרי אבנים טובות ומרגליות שהם שלשים על שלשים וחוקק בהן עשר ברום עשרים אמר להו הני למאן אמרו ליה שעתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להעמידן בשערי ירושלים אתא לקמיה דרבי יוחנן אמר ליה דרוש רבי לך נאה לדרוש כאשר אמרת כן ראיתי אמר לו ריקא אלמלא לא ראית לא האמנת מלגלג על דברי חכמים אתה נתן עיניו בו ונעשה גל של עצמות

*Some time later, this talmid was on a boat and he saw malachim sawing away at precious stones and pearls with these same dimensions. After inquiring, the malachim told him that they were for the gates. Upon his return to Rav Yochanan, he told him that he should "expound the Torah, for as you said, I have seen." Rav Yochanan replied "Empty one! Had you not seen you would have not believed? You are mocking Chazal's words. He "looked" at him, and the talmid turned into a pile of bones.*

Clearly this talmid must have been on a high level to be able to have a conversation with malachim. Furthermore, his objection seems reasonable, because in fact, no one has ever seen precious stones of such an enormous size.

On the surface, this objection has validity, but underneath, it demonstrates a lack of emunah unbefitting a talmid on that level. At the end

of the day, if the talmid would have never seen these malachim at work, he may not have believed the words of Rav Yochanan! Do the words of the Torah need a proof? For Rav Yochanan, if the Torah tells us, it is factual. Not only was Rav Yochanan not happy that his talmid found a proof to his words, but quite the contrary; it upset Rav Yochanan that his student needed this proof, displaying a lack of emunah. A “reasonable objection” to the word of the Torah, is nothing but a mockery.

Now we can understand why Noach is called “a man of little faith”. Certainly, when HaShem told him about the Flood, he believed, and subsequently built the Teiva. Yet, despite 120 years of labour and warnings to the people of the impending Flood, his emunah was not total and unshakable. Only after he actually saw the waters rising was the last bit of uncertainty that he had been lacking complete. For someone like Noach, whom the Torah calls *tamim*/perfect, this would earn him the title of *ketanei emana*/a man of little faith.

I would like to add another explanation to this gemara which my Rosh Hayeshiva, Rav Mordechai Gifter zt”l related in his gemara shiur. Rav Gifter wondered how it could be that Rav Yochanan’s student received a death penalty. As bad as mocking the words of the Torah is, it does seem harsh, even on their lofty level to *turn into a pile of bones* as a result of a “seeing is believing” attitude. “*It’s an avla, but we aren’t talking gimel chamuros here.*”

In the manner of *drush*, Rav Gifter explained that Rav Yochanan addressed him as ריקן- empty one! This Talmid believed because he saw. This means that his emunah is lacking, i.e. it is empty. The evidence of his own eyes

is more powerful than those of his rebbe. His rebbe is the conduit to connect to Hashem’s words given to us at Har Sinai. When we stand in front of our rebbe, we must believe that we are standing in front of someone that stood by his rebbe who in turn stood by his, all the way back to Har Sinai, now delivering to us directly the *dvar Hashem*. To Hashem’s words, nothing needs to be added. One does not need to see anything to what Hashem has told us explicitly. It is exactly the same before we see it and after we see it. But if the evidence of his own eyes carries more weight than the mesorah of rebbe to Talmud, than he is totally an empty person lacking substance; he is nothing more than a bag of bones. Rav Yochanan didn’t kill him. What he did was he showed him his eyes as if to say; look through the Torah perspective, all the way back to Har Sinai, instead of using your own “*fleishige oygen*” equating to a pile of bones.

It was well known that when discussing the heiliger ushpizin, there were many great tzaadikim that claimed that they were actually able to see them sitting right there next to them. When asked about this, the Kotzker Rebbe zt”l was quoted as saying “there are those that say that they see the ushpizin, but I say that I have complete emunah that the ushpizin are right here in my sukkah, and a complete and clear emunah is so much more than actually seeing.”

May we be zoche to be from the gedolei emunah!

**מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,**



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