



A Fascinating Insight Based on the Zohar HaKadosh

Noach the Neshamah of Moshe Rabeinu Was Destined to Give the Torah in His Generation but Due to Their Corruption the Waters of the Torah Were Transformed into the Waters of the Mabul

This week's parsha is parshas Noach. It describes the events surrounding and including the terrible flood HKB"H brought to obliterate the generation of the mabul, who corrupted all of creation. Its waters inundated the entire surface of the earth. Here are the pertinent pesukim (Bereishis 7, 11):

”בשנת שש מאות שנה לחיי נח בחודש השני בשבעה עשר יום לחודש ביום הזה נבקעו כל מעינות תהום רבה וארובות השמים נפתחו, ויהי הגשם על הארץ ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה... כל אשר נשמת רוח חיים באפיו מכל אשר בחרבה מתו, וימח את כל היקום אשר על פני האדמה מאדם עד בהמה עד רמש ועד עוף השמים וימחו מן הארץ.”

In the six hundredth year of Noach's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day, all fountains of the great deep (abyss) burst forth; and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. . . All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of everything that was on dry land, died. He obliterated all existence on the face of the earth, from man to animals to creeping things and to the bird of the heavens; and they were blotted out from the earth.

Undoubtedly, HKB"H could have punished the generation of the mabul in a variety of ways. So, why did He specifically choose to wipe out all existence from the face of the earth by having the waters of the deep (and the waters of the heavens) inundate the entire surface of the earth? As it is written (ibid. 19):

”כל השמים—and the waters were extremely powerful over the earth, and they covered all the high mountains which were under the heavens.

HKB"H Restored the Waters of the Deep to Their State of Existence at the Time of Creation

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing an intriguing teaching from Chazal. They assert that HKB"H punished the generation of the mabul by restoring the waters of the deep to their situation at the beginning of creation, as per the passuk (ibid. 1, 1): ”בראשית: ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ, והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחושך על פני תהום ורוח אלקים מרחפת על פני המים.” In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth. The earth was chaos and desolate, and darkness covered the surface of the abyss; and the breath of G-d hovered above the surface of the water. Here is a passage from the Midrash (B.R. 5, 1) related to the passuk (ibid. 9): ”ויאמר אלקים יקוו המים מתחת: G-d said, “Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one place, and let the dry land be seen”:

From the beginning of the creation of the world, the praises of HKB"H would arise only from the water, as it is written (Tehillim 93, 4): “From the sounds of many waters, the mighty breakers of the sea.” What did they say (ibid.)? “Hashem alone is mighty on high.” HKB"H said, “If these (the waters) that have no mouth nor the ability to talk or

speak, and yet they laud Me, when I create man, all the more so (will he praise Me).” But the generation of the mabul arose and rebelled against Him; the generation of Enosh arose and rebelled against Him; the generation of the dispersion arose and rebelled against Him. HKB”H said: “Let these (mankind) be removed, and let those who dwelled here originally (the water) arise and come back.” That is what is written: “The rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights”

Notwithstanding, it should be clear to all of us that this Midrash deserves further scrutiny and clarification. What is meant by the statement: “From the beginning of the creation of the world, the praises of HKB”H would arise only from the water”? Indeed, the Midrash supports this assertion with a passuk from Tehillim, but it does not specify the nature of the praise. If it is referring to the song the waters sing to HKB”H, according to Perek Shirah, all creatures sing a song to HKB”H. So, what is so unique and special about the praise of HKB”H that arose from the waters?

Noach the Neshamah of Moshe Rabeinu Was Destined to Give the Torah in His Generation

We will begin with an incredible chiddush found in the Zohar hakadosh (Raiya Mehemna, Pinchas 216b): **Moshe was destined to receive the Torah in the generation of the mabul; however, because they were wicked, they were not deemed worthy to receive it. This is alluded to by that which is written** (Bereishis 6, 3): **”וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לֹא יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם: לַעֲוֹלָם בָּשָׂר הוּא וְהָיָה יָמִיו מָאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה”**—Hashem said, “My spirit will not continue to judge man forever, **because he is nothing but flesh**; his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.” The gematria of **בָּשָׂר** (345) equals **מֹשֶׁה**, who lived one hundred and twenty years.

The Zohar Chadash (Tikunim p. 121, column 3) also states that **בָּשָׂר** is a reference to **Moshe**, and that he was destined to give the Torah in the generation of the mabul; however, on account of their wickedness, HKB”H saved it for the tzaddikim.

The commentaries find support for this claim in the Midrash (S.R. 30, 13) expounding a passuk in relation to the generation of the mabul (Mishlei 29, 4):

”מֶלֶךְ בְּמִשְׁפַּט יַעֲמִיד אֶרֶץ”—a king upholds the land with justice—this refers to Yisrael, as it states (Shemos 19, 6): “And you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim.” **וְאִישׁ תְּרוֹמוֹת יִהְרַסְנָה**—but a man of graft tears it down—this refers to the generation of the mabul, who did not uphold justice . . . Rabbi Acha said: HKB”H sought to give them four things—Torah, suffering, the service of korbanos, and tefilah—but they did not seek it, as it states (Iyov 21, 14): “They say to God, ‘Go away from us’”—this is the suffering. “We do not desire the knowledge of Your ways” (ibid.)—this is Torah. “Who is Shakkai that we should worship Him?” (ibid. 15)—these are the korbanos. “And what will we gain if we pray to Him?” (ibid.)—this is tefilah. HKB”H said to them, “What caused you to forfeit the evening of Olam HaZeh and the morning of the Olam Haba? It is because you did not accept the Torah.”

We can provide clarification for the assertion of the Zohar hakadosh by referring to what the Arizal teaches us in Likutei Torah (Ki Sisa):

Know that Noach was like Moshe, except that he failed to pray on behalf of his generation. Therefore, he (Moshe) **said** **”מֹחֲנִי נָא”** indicating that this was **”נִחַ”** (an anagram of **”מֹחֲנִי”**) **for me, because he** (Noach) **caused** the waters of the mabul. **Therefore, it is named after him. And even though he did not pray on their behalf, nevertheless, they were spared for 120 years in his merit, equivalent to the years of Moshe’s life. This is the significance of the passuk** (Bereishis 6, 3): **”Because he is flesh; besides, his days shall number one hundred and twenty years.” Moshe resumed praying on their behalf to make amends for his failure. Therefore, he said** **”מֹחֲנִי נָא”**, an expression of obliteration, like the waters of the mabul. **His entire life, he prayed constantly for the generation to make amends for what he had failed to do** (in his gilgul as Noach, and he prayed especially) **in those days, when they sinned with the eigel.**

Thus, we learn from the illustrious Arizal that Moshe Rabeinu was the tikun of Noach. Furthermore, Noach was flawed in that he neglected to pray on behalf of the people of his generation; hence, the mabul is named after him (Yeshayah 54, 9): **”מִי נֹחַ”**—**the waters of Noach**. Therefore, Moshe was obligated to make amends for this flaw by praying for Yisrael with regards to the “cheit ha’eigel.” In fact, he was

willing to sacrifice his life to save them. This is evident from his emotional plea to HKB”H (Shemos 32, 32): **“ויעתה אם תשא” חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת—but now, if You would but bear their sin; but if not, erase me from Your book that You have written.** He points out that Moshe’s plea employs the term **“מחני”**—an anagram of **“מ”י נ”ח”**—indicating that he was willing to sacrifice his life to make amends for his culpability regarding the **“waters of Noach.”**

We can now better understand the revelation of the Raiya Mehemna in the Zohar hakadosh. The Torah was already supposed to have been given in the generation of Noach, who possessed the neshamah of Moshe; however, they were so corrupt and were not deemed worthy. Therefore, the giving of the Torah to Yisrael was postponed until the generation of Moshe Rabeinu, who was a gilgul of Noach.

Moshe a Gilgul of Noach Rectified the Neshamos of the Generation of the Mabul Who Reincarnated in Mitzrayim

With immense pleasure, we will now explore the wonders of “hashgachah”—divine supervision. Specifically, we will discuss the tikun of Noach by reincarnating into Moshe. In Sha’ar HaPesukim (Shemos), our illustrious teacher, the Arizal, teaches that the people of the generation of the mabul were holy neshamos who went astray and became corrupt. Now, we have a principle that HKB”H desires the tikun of the world, as it is written (Shmuel II 14, 14): **“והשב מחשבות לבלתי ידח” ממונו נדח—and He ponders thoughts, so that no one will be banished from Him.** In keeping with this principle, HKB”H arranged for the neshamos of the generation of the mabul to reincarnate into the neshamos of Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim. Due to the suffering they endured there, their neshamos were refined in the so-called iron furnace (crucible) of Mitzrayim. Subsequently, they left Mitzrayim and received the Torah and her mitzvos. Thus, they rectified the damage incurred by their neshamos during the generation of the mabul.

With this understanding, the Arizal explains Pharaoh’s decree (Shemos 1, 22): **“כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו”**—every male child that will be born, you shall throw him into the river. Just as they were punished by water during the generation of the mabul; so, too, they were subjected to punishment by water in Mitzrayim. In Mitzrayim, however,

a significant percentage achieved tikun through their suffering and by subsequently receiving the Torah. This is his sacred insight.

Clearly, the remarks of the Arizal concur magnificently with the teaching of the Zohar hakadosh that Noach—who possessed the neshamah of Moshe—was supposed to deliver the Torah to the people of his generation. Since, however, they were thoroughly corrupt and unworthy to receive the Torah, HKB”H arranged for them to reincarnate and achieve their tikun during the galus in Mitzrayim. Even Noach, who is described as a tzaddik, reincarnated into Moshe Rabeinu. After achieving their tikun and departing Mitzrayim, Moshe Rabeinu, the gilgul of Noach, gave them the Torah. Thus, the teachings of the Zohar hakadosh and the illustrious Arizal go hand in hand beautifully.

“The rain was upon the earth forty days” Corresponding to the Forty Days of Matan Torah

Apropos this topic, we find marvelous insights from the great Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, zy”a, in Pri Tzaddik (Bereishis, Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan 16). Here is a translated excerpt of his sacred words:

The generation of the mabul were supposed to receive the Torah; for the neshamah of Moshe Rabeinu, a”h, was present then. The Gemara (Chullin 139a) points out that Moshe is alluded to in the Torah by the word נשג”ם whose gematria equals משה (345). However, they were reluctant to accept the Torah, which are the ways of HKB”H (as the Midrash above proves by citing a passuk from Iyov).

Regarding the mabul, it states that the fountains of the great abyss burst forth, and the windows of the heavens opened. The former alludes to the wisdom below of Torah she’b’al peh; the latter alludes to the gates of wisdom of Torah she’b’chsav. This implies that they were supposed to receive Torah she’b’chsav, which incorporated all of Torah she’b’al peh, just as it was received subsequently by Moshe Rabeinu at Har Sinai.

Rabbi Tzadok adds that initially HKB”H brought the rains with “rachamim,” so that if they repented, they would be rains of berachah. This concurs with the teaching in the Gemara (B.K. 17a) that **“there is no water other than Torah.”** Since

they did not repent and remained corrupt, the waters were transformed into treacherous, stormy waters, and they were washed away.

In Riseesei Laila (44), Rav Tzadok repeats the above but cites a teaching in the Gemara (Zevachim 116a) that at the time of Matan Torah, the kings of all the idolatrous nations of the world were in a state of panic and gathered together to seek counsel from the wicked Bilam. They were terrified by the incredible sounds of Matan Torah that were heard from one end of the world to the other; they feared that another mabul was coming to the world. He assured them that HKB”H promised not to bring another mabul to the world. He explained to them that the phenomenal sounds they were hearing indicated that HKB”H was giving His children a precious gift that had been kept in His treasure house from before the creation of the world, as it says (Tehillim 29, 11): **“Hashem will give His nation strength.”** They were relieved and all responded immediately (ibid.): **“Hashem will bless His nation with shalom.”**

The Holy Avos Dug Wells to Reveal the Hidden Waters of Torah

Continuing along this sublime path, we will now go back to the Midrash presented at the beginning of this essay. It states that HKB”H punished the generation of the mabul by allowing the waters of the deep abyss to rise and inundate the entire face of the earth just as they had at the beginning of creation. We will begin by focusing on the fact that the holy Avos invested much effort digging wells in the earth. Here is a pertinent part of the text in parshas Toldos (Bereishis 26, 15):

“וכל הבארות אשר חפרו עבדי אביו בימי אברהם אביו סתמום פלשתים וימלאום עפר... וישב יצחק ויחפור את בארות המים אשר חפרו בימי אברהם אביו ויסתמום פלשתים אחרי מות אברהם, ויקרא להן שמות כשמות אשר קרא להן אביו.”

All the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, the Pelishtim stopped up and filled them with dirt . . . And Yitzchak returned and he dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father and which the Pelishtim had stopped up after Avraham’s death; and he called them by the same names that his father had called them.

The Ma’or Einayim (Vayeitzei), explains in the name of the holy Ba’al Shem Tov, zy”a, the practical significance of this painstaking activity performed by the Avos. By digging through the physical surface of the earth, they intended to unearth and reveal the wellsprings of Torah concealed within. Here is a summarized translation of what he writes:

The Avos wished to reveal the waters of Torah even in the lowliest places, represented by “dust” (“a’far”). Each of the Avos approached this vital task from his own unique perspective, by perfecting his own “midah”—personal attribute. They aimed to prevent the element of “a’far” from concealing the “waters of life.”

After Avraham departed from this world, his revelations were stopped up by the Pelishtim who covered up the “water” he had uncovered with “dust.” The Pelishtim represent the “klipos”—the negative forces of evil—that returned to power after Avraham passed away. Nevertheless, Yitzchak was persistent and restored the wells for the benefit of future generations. If not for the arduous efforts of the Avos, it would be impossible to attain any insights related to the Torah or to get close to the Blessed One.

HKB”H Concealed the Torah within the Mundane

We should note that the Sefas Emes (Toldos 5647) presents this same incredible idea in the name of his elder, the great author of the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a. He begins by interpreting a passuk in the narrative of the creation (ibid. 1, 9): **“ויאמר אלקים יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל מקום אחד ותראה היבשה”—G-d said, “Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one area, and let the dry land appear.”** And it was so. This teaches us that at the beginning of creation, the entire world was filled with water, as it is written (ibid. 2): **“ורוח אלקים מרחפת על פני המים”—and the spirit of G-d hovered upon the surface of the waters.**

The Sefas Emes explains this phenomenon based on the Midrash (B.R. 1, 1) that states that HKB”H created the world by peering in the Torah. Now, since the world was created with the Torah, which is compared to water, therefore the entire world was inundated with water. Thus, **“The spirit**

of G-d hovered upon the surface of the waters.” In other words, the light of Torah filled the world without obstruction or concealment, just as it fills the heavens.

Creation, however, was designed such that the light of Hashem would be concealed down on earth. Only in this manner, does man have the freedom to choose between good and, chas v’shalom, the opposite. Therefore, G-d commanded: **“Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one area and let the dry land appear.”** In other words, the water of Torah was to remain concealed and covered up within the earth. Outwardly, only the dust of the earth, which covers the water, is apparent. That is until man comes along and digs through the material, earthly layers to reveal the light of the Torah—the divine spark, concealed within.

This then is the significance of the holy Avos digging up the physical earth. They wished to reveal the **“באר מים חיים”**—**the well of fresh water** (the waters of life)—the divine light of Hashem concealed within the depths of the earth. The Pelishtim, however, representing the forces of tumah, filled them up with dirt, attempting to prevent the divine light from shining through. Ultimately, the persistent efforts of the Avos bore fruit. They found a **“be’er mayim chaim”** and paved the way for all of Yisrael to continue to do so throughout all future generations. Whenever a Jew exerts himself to dig through the superficial, material layers of existence in this world, he will succeed in revealing the **“באר מים חיים”**—the divine spark

concealed within. This is the implication of the teaching (Megillah 6b): **“יגעת ומצאתי תאמן”**—**if someone tells you, “I have labored, and I have succeeded,” you may believe him.** This is the gist of the Sefas Emes’s explanation.

Now, this illuminates for us the meaning of the Midrash regarding the reason HKB”H brought the waters of the abyss up to inundate the entire surface of the earth to create the mabul: **“From the beginning of the creation of the world, the praises of HKB”H would arise only from the water.”** We have learned from the Zohar hakadosh and the Midrash that HKB”H intended to give the Torah to the generation of Noach, who was a tzaddik and possessed the neshamah of Moshe Rabeinu. This would motivate them to dig into the earth to reveal the wellspring that is the holy Torah. However, because they did not want to receive the Torah, the waters of the deep rose and covered the entire surface of the earth just as they had at the time of creation—before HKB”H concealed the waters of Torah beneath the dry land. Instead of invigorating them and giving them life, the waters of Torah were transformed into a death potion that drowned them. Nevertheless, they subsequently reincarnated into the neshamos of Yisrael in Mitzrayim and were purified in the iron crucible. Then when they left Mitzrayim, they were privileged to receive the Torah by means of Moshe Rabeinu, the gilgul of Noach. The difficult and sacred journey of the generation of the mabul ended at Har Sinai.



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