

Reading Noah the Tzadik

Parshas Noah

אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים הָיָה בְּדוֹרָתוֹ אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ

“These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, wholehearted in his generations; Noah walked with G-d.”

בראשית ו', ט'

אור החיים

בראשית ו', ט'

Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar
Morocco and Yerushalayim,
1700s

Noah, Alone

אלה

WHY DOES THE PASUK SAY “these are the generations of Noah” and then repeat “Noah”? One of Ohr HaChaim’s readings goes through a Midrash in Devarim Rabbah (11:3). Noah tells Moshe, “I am greater than you — I was saved from the Flood.” Moshe answers, “You saved yourself, but you could not save your generation.”

Read that way, the pasuk says *Noach*, and only Noah: his merit helped only himself. And “in his generations” means he could not bring them back to the good — only himself, and his sons, who are a branch of him.

כלי יקר

בראשית ו', ט'

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim
Luntschitz
Prague, 1500s–1600s

Three Fences

צדיק · תמים · התהלך

Kli Yakar says the Dor HaMabul ruined the world in three ways, all mentioned in the parsha: avodah zarah, arayos, and gezel. So the Torah begins by telling us that Noah was fenced off from all three.

Ish tzadik — he took nothing that was not his. *Tamim* — he was fenced off from arayos, because, Kli Yakar says, he was born circumcised. *Es haElokim hithalech* — he never turned to other gods. The Dor HaMabul broke through all three fences.

מלבי"ם

בראשית ו', ט'

Rabbi Meir Leibush Weiser
Eastern Europe, 1800s

No Payoff

תמים

Malbim says *tzadik* means good conduct between people. *Tamim* is about motive: doing all one’s deeds with no outside reason — not for honor, not for profit — only out of love for the right thing itself, for Hashem alone.

Someone who is a *tzadik* for the payoff is like a merchant: if the honor or profit does not come, his *tzidkus* collapses. A *tamim* does it for its own sake.

FOR THE TABLE

This week, do one right thing without seeking honor or personal gain — and one that helps someone else do right too.

WORTH ASKING

Ohr HaChaim says Noah’s merit helped only himself and his sons. Is being a *tzadik* enough — or do we owe something to the people around us?