

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Noach

4 Cheshvan, 5777 – November 5, 2016

Compiled from the works of
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Noach

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Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית ז', י"ב: וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה:
רש"י ד"ה ויהי הגשם על הארץ: ולהלן הוא אומר (פסוק י"ז) ויהי המבול, אלא כשהורידן, הורידן
ברחמים שאם יחזרו יהיו גשמי ברכה, וכשלא חזרו היו למבול:

Bereishis 7:12: And the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Rashi Heading – And the rain was upon the earth: And further¹ Scripture says “Now the Flood was ...” But when He brought the rains down, He brought them down with mercy, so that if they would repent, they would be rains of blessing. When they did not repent, they became a flood.

A Brief Synopsis

In this Torah portion, Bereishis, the Torah tells us of the great Flood which Hashem brought in order to destroy the world, which had sunken to the lowest levels of depravity. He commanded Noach to build an ark in order to save him, his wife, their three sons and daughters-in-law. He was also commanded to save (at least) two of each species of animal. Noach's family and the animals were saved on the ark, and they repopulated the earth.

The Torah tells us two seemingly contradictory things regarding how the rain fell upon the earth. First it tells us that² "the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights." Rain implies water which fell gently, with mercy. Several verses later, the Torah tells us that³ "the Flood was forty days upon the earth." The Flood, on the other hand, implies torrential, destructive rain. Which was it? Rashi explains that⁴ "when He

1. Bereishis 7:17.

2. Bereishis 7:12.

3. Bereishis 7:17.

4. See Rashi's commentary to Bereishis 7:12.

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brought the rains down, He brought them down with mercy, so that if they would repent, they would be rains of blessing. When they did not repent, they became a flood." Rashi seems to be saying that the Torah is referring to two different periods of rain. When the rain began falling, it fell gently. Once it became clear that the population was not returning to G-d, it became the Flood.

This can be understood from Rashi's explanation to the verse⁵ "For in another seven days, I will make it rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out all beings that I have made, off the face of the earth." Rashi comments there, that the forty days are "corresponding to the (time required for the) formation of the fetus, for they sinned by burdening the One Who formed them, causing Him to fashion the forms of children born of incestuous and forbidden unions." The formation of the fetus in forty days is one action. After that, throughout the nine months the fetus develops in the womb, there are many individual actions which are performed, i.e. the formation of each of the individual limbs. These are all separate actions.

In much the same way, the waters of the Flood which fell upon the earth were one thing; they were not forty days of individual punishment. The same is true of the forty days of rain, which would have remained "rain of blessing" had the people returned to G-d.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Noach, tells us of the flood which Hashem brought to destroy the world. He commanded Noach to build an ark, in order to save himself, his wife, his three sons and three daughters in law, and all of the animals. From these, the world was repopulated after the flood. We find an apparent contradiction. First the Torah tells us that "the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights." The implication being, that it was "rain of blessing," falling gently upon the earth. Then, several verses further, the Torah tells us that "the Flood was forty days upon the earth."

5. Bereishis 7:4.

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The flood, meaning destructive waters, meant to destroy the earth. The water came from above and below. The Midrash tells us that the water was boiling hot, not allowing the possibility for anything to survive. Which rain-water was upon the earth for forty days and nights? Was it the gentle waters of blessing, or the deadly flood waters?

Rashi answers this by telling us that "when He brought the rains down, He brought them down with mercy, so that if they would repent, they would be rains of blessing. When they did not repent, they became a flood." In other words, at first the waters fell, giving the people a chance to do Teshuvah. It could have been "rain of blessing." However, once it was obvious that the people had no intent of doing Teshuvah, the water was transformed into a flood.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Looking at Rashi superficially, both verses seem to be talking about different times. The first verse, "the rain was upon the earth," is discussing the very beginning of the rainfall. At that point there was still hope for the rain to be something good. Whereas the second verse, "the Flood was forty days upon the earth," is talking about the transformation of the pleasant water to a flood. This took place on the very first day. According to the Midrash cited above, from that point on people died immediately due to the boiling hot water. How is this possible? The verse states explicitly that "the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights." In other words, the Torah is telling us that for the entire forty days there was "water of blessing upon the earth." If the Torah would not mention the words "upon the earth," we would have an explanation. We might be able to explain that "rain of blessing" fell from the sky, but once it reached the earth, it was something quite different. However, we seem to be left with no explanation whatsoever.

The Explanation

The explanation of the above is as follows. It can be understood from Rashi's explanation to the verse "For in another seven days, I will make it rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out all beings that I have made, off the face of the earth." Rashi comments there, that the forty days are "corresponding to the

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(time required for the) formation of the fetus, for they sinned by burdening the One Who formed them, causing Him to fashion the forms of children born of incestuous and forbidden unions." The formation of the fetus in forty days is one action. The fetus, which is formed in forty days, contains no individual limbs in actuality. However, it contains the potential for the entire body. After that, throughout the nine months the fetus develops in the womb, there are many individual actions which are performed, i.e. the formation of each of the individual limbs. These are all all separate actions performed by G-d.

In much the same way, the waters of the Flood which fell upon the earth were one thing; they were not forty separate days of punishment. Rather, it was one punishment which lasted for forty days. Very first second that it fell, it included the entire punishment,

The same is true of the forty days of "rains of blessing." It would have remained a blessing had the people returned to G-d. The very first second it in which the rain began, it included all of the beneficial, gentle good rain.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

The deeper, mystical meaning of the Flood was⁶ that it came "to purify the earth ... for the earth was filled with robbery, and it became extremely decadent. It required extreme purification. This was the reason for the Flood. This is comparable to a Mikveh⁷ which contains forty *se'ah*⁸ of water, and purifies one who has become ritually impure." That is the reason that the flood is referred to in Scripture as⁹ "the restful waters."

Based on this we can explain that "the rain (rain of blessing) was *upon the earth* for forty days and forty nights." This does in no way contradict the fact that "the Flood

6. See Torah Ohr at the beginning of our Parshah.

7. A Mikveh is a ritual bath, which may not contain drawn water. It spiritually cleanses one who has become ritually impure.

8. A *se'ah* is an ancient liquid measure. The minimum measure for a Mikveh is forty *se'ah*. The forty *se'ah* of the Mikveh correspond to the forty days of the flood which purified the earth.

9. Yeshaya 54:9.

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was forty days upon the earth." Both are true. It was a flood, and it wreaked havoc in the world. At the same time, it brought about the purification of which the world was in such dire need.

(Adapted from talks given on Shabbos Noach, 5743)

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mr. Sholom Dovid ben Reb Yitzchak Hacoheh ע"ה Mankes**
Passed away on 11 Teves, 5776
May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mr. Yoel ben Reb Sholom Dovid Hacoheh ע"ה Mankes**
Passed away on 28 Nissan, 5776
May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

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**IN HONOR OF
Shimshon ben Chassibah שי'
Yosef Yitzchok ben Sarah שי'
and Shoshana Devorah Hodya bas Tovah Sarah שת'
For a complete and speedy recovery**

*

**DEDICATED BY
Mr. and Mrs. Yonatan Itsik Hacoheh and Shaindel Miriam שיחיו Mankes**

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
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Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar שי' Mars**

*

MAY HE MERIT TO BE A CHOSSID, A YEREI SHOMAYIM AND A LAMDON

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' שלום דוד בן ר' יצחק הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום י"א טבת ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' יואל בן ר' שלום דוד הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום כ"ח ניסן ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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לזכות

ר' שמשון בן חסיבה שי'

ר' יוסף יצחק בן שרה שי'

ושושנה דבורה הודי' בת טובה שרה שתחי'

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

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נדפס ע"י משפחתם

ר' יונתן איציק הכהן

וזוגתו מרת שיינדל מרים שיחיו מנקס

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' חיים יצחק בן ר' יחיאל משה ע"ה האנטווערקער

נפטר ביום כ"ה אדר שני, ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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נדפס ע"י בנו וכלתו

ר' יואב וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו האנטווערקער

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נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

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יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן