

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, NOACH

Why did Noach hesitate to believe the flood would come

Ohev Yisrael

Noach's hesitation was not a lack of faith in Hashem's word, but the opposite: understanding that emunah (faith) has the power to actually draw forth and bring about the very thing believed in, Noach feared that if he believed with total wholeness that the flood would come, his very faith would become the cause that brought it about. Thus "he believed and did not believe" means he fully trusted the Holy One, blessed be He, yet withheld complete belief specifically about the flood's coming, out of concern for being the agent that drew it into the world, until the rising waters themselves compelled him to enter the ark. AI SUMMARY



In the name of the Rav, Rabbi M. Y"m M"m of Zlotchov: "And Noach came, etc., because of the waters of the flood." And Rashi, of blessed memory, explained: "Even Noach was among those of little faith (mikatnei amanah) — he believed and did not believe that the flood would come, until the waters forced him in." End of quote.

Now this is a great wonder — to suspect Noach the tzaddik (righteous one) of being among those of little faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, God forbid! And it seems to me that the word emunah (faith) has two interpretations. One, according to its plain sense, is the belief that a thing will certainly be so.

But one may also say that emunah is related to the word in "and he was an omein (nurturer) to Hadassah" — a term denoting drawing-forth and growth. For there is a power within emunah such that through faith, the thing itself is drawn forth from its source and comes to be. That is to say: through a person's believing in and trusting the Holy

One, blessed be He, with complete faith regarding some matter, that very matter is thereby drawn forth and comes about in its fullness.

Now Noach the tzaddik certainly believed with wholeness, with all his heart and all his soul, in everything that the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke to him, with simplicity (temimut), according to his good way from of old. But regarding this particular matter, he was afraid to believe with complete faith, with all his heart, lest he himself become the cause of bringing the flood — that is, that through the very completeness of his faith, the coming of the flood would certainly be drawn forth and brought about. And he did not know how to counsel himself as to what to do.

And this is what Rashi, of blessed memory, meant by "among those of little faith" — he believed and did not believe. That is to say: in truth he believed, only he was afraid to believe with wholeness that the Holy One, blessed be He, would bring the flood, lest he himself be the cause of it, as above — "until the waters forced him." Understand this well.

And this is correct, true and clear. So far, in the name of the Rav, of blessed memory.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

