

חסידות

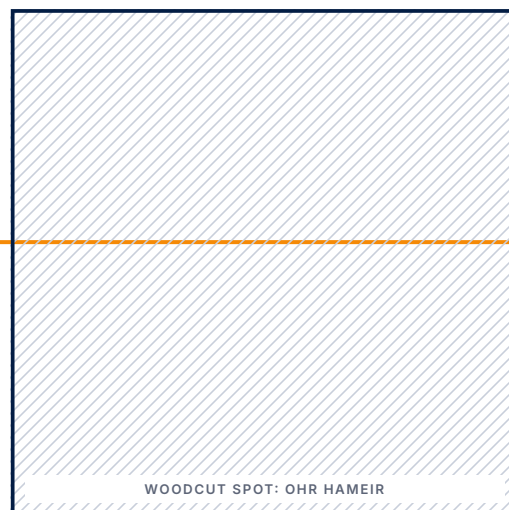
From the Chassidic Courts

ZHITOMIR · OHR HAMEIR, NOACH

Why did Noach gather food before entering the ark?

Ohr HaMeir

The command to Noach to "take for yourself from every food that is eaten" hints at the deeper service of tefillah (prayer): the tzaddik (righteous one) of each generation, through "ve'atah," is called to bind his heart to every creature and creation, recognizing the chochmah (wisdom) and Divine sparks hidden within all things, and through this awareness to perform yichudim (unifications) in the upper worlds. By uniting the end of action with the preceding thought in awe and love, one draws down sustenance and blessing to himself and to all creation, and every Jew, according to his capacity to perceive the Divine within creation, can likewise elevate the letters embedded in all things back to their source. AI SUMMARY



On the verse "And take for yourself from every food that is eaten, and gather it to yourself, and it shall be for you and for them to eat" (Genesis 6:21), and "Noach did according to all that God commanded him, so he did" — Rashi explains this refers to the building of the Ark. Further on, regarding the verse "And Noach did according to all that the Lord commanded him" (Genesis 7:5), Rashi explains this refers to his entering the Ark. It is worthwhile to set one's heart upon these holy verses to understand them, especially in light of the principle we hold that the Torah is eternal — applying to past, future, and present alike. If so, what is it teaching us now regarding the building of the Ark?

It seems correct to me that here is hinted the matter of tefillah (prayer) and the manner of arousing a person's heart toward this service — namely, prayer. For it is stated in the sefarim (books) that one who wishes to approach the inner service, to utter speech before God in prayer, must bind

himself, at the time he stands in prayer, to all created beings, including even the inanimate ones, etc.

The intent is this: it is written, "You made everything with chochmah (wisdom)" — meaning that nothing in the world is in vain, God forbid; rather, everything testifies to the act of the Wise One, who made His work with deliberate knowledge, all for the sake of His praise — so that all people should know, through their deeds, to take for themselves the "remez dechochmata" (hint of wisdom) contained within it.

When a person of understanding applies his mind to this — to grasp the aspect that is clothed within every single thing in the world, among the creatures, the plants, the inanimate objects, and every mode that has come into existence — and he arouses his heart within him and kindles himself, together with this wisdom, to speak words before Him, blessed be He, with dechilu u'rechimu (awe

and love), then he fulfills the will of his Creator, for whose sake He created the earth and its fullness. Thus he binds the end of the act to the beginning of the thought, and the benefit of this is great.

For when a person's conduct is thus, at the time he stands for Torah study and prayer, nothing can hinder him with extraneous thoughts to disturb his attachment (deveikut). For in truth, whatever comes into his mind — of creatures, animals, birds, or anything in the world that is seized upon in thought — he should know with certainty that this too is not in vain, and this too must be raised up to its place, to the "tent" where it originally dwelt, its place of origin in the upper worlds, and he should know for what purpose the Holy One, blessed be He, created such a thing in His world.

Certainly it is all for the sake of His praise, and presumably there is here some aspect of service to the Creator. This is the ultimate purpose of what the sefarim make known — that a person must bind himself with all created beings, in the manner explained — and then he draws down sustenance, blessing, and illumination to all creatures and beings, and to everything into which he has brought the Divine wisdom.

In light of these words, one may find a hint in the verse where the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Noach: "And you, take for yourself from every food that is eaten," etc. Here He hinted to him the manner of arousal toward this service — namely, prayer.

Now Noach is the tzaddik (righteous one) of his generation, and so too in every generation there is a tzaddik, the foundation of the world, to whom the Holy One, blessed be He, says: "And you" — this is the

aspect of tefillah, as indicated by the word "ve'atah." For the letter vav indicates continuation [hamshachah], and the letters alef-tav of "ve'atah" represent the entirety of the alphabet, from alef to tav, while the heh of "ve'atah" indicates the five motzaot hapeh (points of articulation of the mouth), as explained elsewhere — and there is no room here to elaborate.

"Take for yourself" — this is the aspect of arousal, to perform yichudim (unifications) in the upper worlds, for it is known that the term "ma'achal" (food) relates to the language of union, as in "she eats and wipes her mouth" (Proverbs 30:20). This is the meaning of "from every food that is eaten" — namely, from everything in the world that can bring about unifications in the upper worlds. This is "that is eaten," and the action [required] is that by doing so, "it shall be for you and for them to eat" — meaning that through your luminous thought you will cause the drawing down of sustenance for yourself, and that sustenance and blessing will also reach them, through what your heart was aroused to take — namely, the "remez dechochmata" (hint of wisdom) from this.

From this flows a measure of delight, in binding the end of the deed to the thought that preceded it, and this is the aspect of yichud (unification). The general principle that emerges is this: each and every one of Israel, according to the strength of his recognition and grasp of the Divine garbed within the creatures, can likewise perform unifications above and raise up the letters contained in all creatures — which were created together with the letters of the Torah. Such is the hint to be found in this verse.

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

