

חסידות

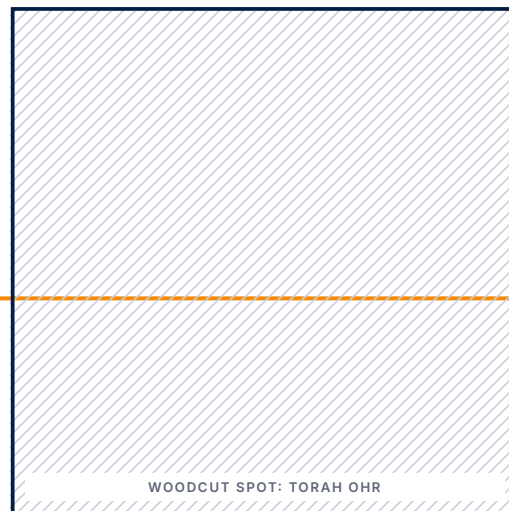
From the Chassidic Courts

CHABAD · TORAH OHR, NOACH

Why daily work can't extinguish the soul's hidden love

Torah Ohr

The hidden love embedded in every Jewish soul—rooted in its origin as a flame ascending to its Divine source—cannot be extinguished by the "many waters" of worldly livelihood and material distraction; rather, engagement with these very burdens, called "the waters of Noach," serves to purify and elevate the soul, much as the Flood purified the earth and as subjugation to toil (which Avraham Avinu chose over Gehinnom) enables a person to rise to ever loftier levels, higher than before their descent into this world. AI SUMMARY



Many waters cannot extinguish the love, and rivers cannot flood it; if a man gave all the wealth of his house for love, they would utterly despise him. Behold, "many waters" refers to all the distractions of earning a livelihood and the thoughts concerning the affairs of this world, etc.; yet despite all this, they cannot extinguish the love, which is the aspect of the hidden love present in every Jewish soul by nature, from the aspect of the Divine soul whose nature is to ascend and become constantly absorbed above, like a flame that rises of itself, as it is written just before this verse, "its flashes are flashes of fire, a flame of G-d" (shalhevet Yah) — which is the aspect of the flame that comes from above, namely the Divine soul, which, before its being clothed in the physical body, used to delight in the radiance of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) and was united in the ultimate union with the Ein Sof (Infinite One), blessed be He.

Therefore, even after its [the soul's] clothing itself in a physical body, to occupy itself with material matters—which are called "many waters"—

nevertheless, these cannot extinguish it from being always in a state of wondrous love and yearning to ascend and become unified above. On the contrary, through its clothing itself in these aforementioned "many waters," it can attain a loftier level than it possessed before it descended to this world, as will be explained.

And behold, the aspect of "many waters" mentioned above is called "the waters of Noach (Noah)," as it is written (Isaiah 54): "As I have sworn that the waters of Noach would no more pass over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you" (see the book Ir Gibborim).

For behold, "Noach" is nyecha d'rucha (a settling/rest of the spirit), which is the aspect of cessation, like a person who ceases from his labor. As it is written, "and He rested on the seventh day," translated as "v'nach b'yoma shevi'a" (and He rested on the seventh day), etc. And the fact that it says "Noach, Noach" twice refers to nyecha d'ila'ei and nyecha d'tata'ei (the rest of the higher realms and the

rest of the lower realms), which is the aspect of the lower Shabbos and the higher Shabbos that will be in the future, called "the day that is entirely Shabbos" — whereas the lower Shabbos is not entirely Shabbos, as will be explained.

For at first glance the matter of the Flood is not understood: if it was only to remove and destroy the sinning people, why was such a great upheaval necessary? Could not Hashem (G-d) have removed them in a single instant, even without the Flood?

But in truth, the Flood came to purify the earth, as it is said, "for the earth was filled with chamas (violence)" and had become very corrupted, and purification was necessary. For this reason the Flood came specifically in the aspect of water, in order to purify the impure — similar to the mikveh (ritual bath) of forty se'ah, which purifies the impure. Likewise, the Flood came in order to purify the entire earth, as it is written (Ezekiel 36): "And I will

sprinkle upon you pure waters, and you shall be purified," etc. For this reason they are called "the waters of Noach," for from this there came about a *nyecha d'rucha* (settling of the spirit), etc.

And behold, the burden of earning a livelihood is also called "the waters of Noach," as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said that Avraham Avinu (our father Abraham) chose for himself subjugation [to toil] rather than Gehinnom (Hell). For just as it is impossible for the soul to enter Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden) to enjoy the radiance of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) until it first descends into Gehinnom — as they said regarding Acher, "it is better that he be judged [there] and come into the World to Come" — and also to immerse in the *Nehar Dinur* (River of Fire), as has been explained elsewhere — so too, through subjugation [to toil], one is able to ascend higher and higher, to the loftiest level.

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

