

“Elokim Remembered Noach”

Noach Prayed that Yisrael Would Remember Him in Their Rosh HaShanah Prayers: “You also remembered Noach lovingly”

In this week’s parsha, parshas Noach, we read (Bereishis 6, 9): “אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדורותיו את האלקים התהלך נח—these are the offspring of Noach; Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with G-d. Regarding Noach, we have learned in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108a): “תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, אף על נח נחתך גזר דין, אלא שמצא חן בעיני ה’” —apparently, the decree to be punished and destroyed by the flood was issued against Noach as well; however, he was spared, since he found favor in the eyes of Hashem.

This statement requires further explanation: (a) the passuk above attests to the fact that Noach was a tzaddik and that he did not participate even one iota in the corrupt, disgraceful behaviors of his generation. If so, why was he included in the decree issued against them? (b) and if indeed it was decreed that he be punished along with the rest of his generation, for whatever reason, how did he find favor in Hashem’s eyes, resulting in his salvation? After all, the passuk in Devarim (10, 17) states explicitly: “אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שוחד”—that G-d does not show favor.

Let us begin to shed some light on our sages’ enigmatic statement by presenting a tremendous chiddush found in our parsha concerning Noach’s amazing prowess. We find that Noach was the first tzaddik who transformed the attribute of “din” into “rachamim” by means of his prayers. Nevertheless, he neglected to pray on behalf of his generation prior to the flood. Only after being incarcerated in the “teivah”—the ark—for an entire year, did he pray. At that time, he succeeded in transforming the attribute of “din” to “rachamim,” as it is written (Bereishis 8, 1):

“ויזכור אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה, ויעבר G-d remembered Noach and all—”

the beasts and all the animals that were with him in the “teivah”; and G-d caused a spirit to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. Rashi comments

“ויזכור אלקים, זה השם מדת הדין הוא ונהפכה למדת רחמים על ידי תפלת הצדיקים, ורשעתן של רשעים הופכת מדת רחמים למדת הדין, שנאמר (שם ו-ה) וירא ה’ כי רבה רעת האדם וגו’ ויאמר ה’ אמוחה, והוא שם מדת רחמים.”

This name (Elokim) connotes the attribute of “din”; and it was transformed into the attribute of “rachamim” through the prayer of tzaddikim; while the wickedness of the resham (wicked) transforms the attribute of “rachamim” into the attribute of “din.”

We learn from Rashi’s comments that in the generation of the “mabul”—the flood—two extremes existed. Initially, due to their corrupt ways, the people of that generation awakened the attribute of “din” emanating from the name **Elokim**. Ultimately, as their corruption continued and intensified, they even transformed the attribute of “rachamim,” emanating from the name **Havaya**, into “din.” This situation persisted until Noach began to pray inside the “teivah.” Not only was he able to invoke the attribute of “rachamim” associated with the name **Havaya**, but he also succeeded in transforming the attribute of “din” associated with the name **Elokim** into “rachamim”—as reflected by the passuk: “Elokim—”**ויזכור אלקים את נח” remembered Noach.**

The Prayers of Tzaddikim Transforms the Attribute of “Din” into “Rachamim”

I was struck by a wonderful idea concerning Rashi’s precise choice of words: “**And it was transformed into the attribute of ‘rachamim’ through the prayer of tzaddikim.**” Note that he does not say “**through the prayer of Noach.**” Apparently, Rashi is referring to the elucidation in the Gemara (Succah 14a)

concerning the passuk (Bereishis 25, 21): **“ויעתר יצחק לה' לנוכח: אשתו כי עקרה היא ויעתר לו ה' - למה נמשלה תפלתו של צדיקים כעתר, מה עתה זה מהפך את התבואה בגורן ממקום למקום, אף תפלתם של צדיקים מהפכת דעתו—של הקב"ה ממדת אכזריות למדת הרחמים”**—here Yitzchak’s prayers to Hashem are compared to a pitchfork; just as a pitchfork turns over the grain and moves it from place to place, so, too, the prayers of tzaddikim change HKB”H’s mindset from harsh judgment to mercy.

Thus, we can deduce from Rashi’s choice of terminology that this is what he is teaching us. By means of his prayers, Noach succeeded in transforming the attribute of “din” into “rachamim.” For, his tefilos acted like “the prayers of tzaddikim,” which cause an upheaval of the attribute of “din”—transforming it into the attribute of “rachamim.” By the way, we have learned from Rashi a new interpretation of the Gemara’s statement. It states that the prayers of tzaddikim **“transform HKB”H’s mindset from the attribute of “harsh judgment” to the attribute of “mercy.”** Simply understood, we would explain that their prayers affect a change, as it were, in the way HKB”H manages the world; rather than ruling with “din,” He rules with “rachamim.”

Based on Rashi’s comments, however, we see that the prayers of tzaddikim actually transform the “din” itself; the “din” itself is made to coincide with the management based on the attribute of “rachamim.” Thus, the use of the terminology portraying upheaval and transformation: **“מהפכת דעתו”**—a radical upheaval occurs transforming the actual “din” into “rachamim.” This is illustrated by the passuk regarding Noach: **“Elokim (G-d acting in accordance with the attribute of “din”) remembered Noach.** It was Elokim specifically that acted mercifully. We find a similar instance regarding Rachel Imeinu: **“ויזכור אלקים את רחל—Elokim remembered Rachel.**

We can apply this idea very nicely to interpret the proclamation of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist, David HaMelech, (Tehillim 69, 14): **“ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון”**—**but as for me, my prayer is to You, Havaya, at an opportune time.** In other words, I pray to initiate an opportune moment emanating from the name of “rachamim,” **Havaya.** Yet, that does not suffice for me. Rather, my desire and intent is to also transform the “din” associated with the name **Elokim** into mercy, “rachamim.” Thus: **“אלקים ברב חסדך ענני באמת ישעך”** --- **Elokim, in the abundance of Your kindness, answer me with the truth of Your salvation**—the name **Elokim** itself, representing “din,” will answer me favorably, demonstrating His abundant kindness.

We can even suggest a very nice explanation as to why it was necessary for Noach to transform the “din” of **Elokim** into “rachamim,” and was not satisfied with merely transforming HKB”H’s management via the attribute of “din” associated with the name **Elokim** to management via the attribute of “rachamim” associated with the name **Havaya.** As Rashi demonstrated, the generation of the “mabul,” due to their wickedness, transformed the actual “rachamim” into “din.” Rashi cites the passuk: **“ויאמר ה'—אמחה את האדם—and Havaya said, I will wipe out mankind.** Here we see that the name **Havaya**, connoting mercy, was transformed into a role of “din.”

Therefore, it would have served no purpose to merely transform HKB”H’s management from one of “din” to one of “rachamim.” For, at that time, even the attribute of “rachamim” functioned as “din”—exacting judgment. Consequently, Noach cleverly employed his tefilah to transform the “din” itself into “rachamim.” As a result, there was no longer any “din” in operation but only total “rachamim.” Both the name **Havaya** and the name **Elokim** reflected “rachamim”—as we learned from the passuk: **“ויזכור אלקים את נח—Elokim remembered Noach.**

Noach’s Supplication in the Teivah: “Bring My Soul out of Confinement”

Continuing our journey, let us now clarify where it is that we find that Noach prayed to Hashem in the “teivah.” According to the great Imrei Emes of Gur, zy”a, the source is the Midrash (B.R. 34, 1). Elaborating on the passuk (Bereishis 8, 16), it states:

“וידבר אלקים אל נח לאמר צא מן התיבה. (תהלים קמב-ח) הוציאה ממסגר נפשי להודות את שמך, כי יכתירו צדיקים כי תגמול עלי. הוציאה ממסגר נפשי, זה נח שהיה סגור בתיבה י”ב חודש. להודות את שמך, לתת הודיה לשמך. בי יכתירו צדיקים, יתכללון בי צדיקיא. כי תגמול עלי, שגמלת עלי ואמרת לי צא מן התיבה.”

Noach was confined within the “teivah” for twelve months. According to the Midrash, after that period of confinement, he beseeched Hashem: **“הוציאה ממסגר נפשי”—release my being from this confinement.** He beseeched HKB”H to take him out of the “teivah.” As we learned from the Midrash above, his tefilah effectively transformed the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim”—as reflected by the passuk: **“Elokim remembered Noach.”** **Elokim**, connoting “din,” acted mercifully. Similarly, the command to exit the “teivah” is expressed as follows: **“וידבר אלקים אל נח לאמר צא מן התיבה”**—once again, the name **Elokim** is employed.

Nevertheless, let us consider a statement in the Zohar hakadosh (Noach 67b). Noach is viewed as being flawed for not having prayed on behalf of the people of his generation—in an attempt to save their lives—as Moshe Rabeinu prayed for Yisrael in the aftermath of the “cheit ha’eigel.” As a consequence, the “mabul” is named after Noach, as we find in the words of the prophet (Yeshayah 54, 9): **“כי מי נח זאת לי אשר נשבעתי מעבור מי נח—עוד על הארץ—for the waters of Noach shall this be to Me as I swore that the waters of Noach would never again pass over the earth.** This being the case, it is bewildering. Seeing as Noach possessed the power of **“the prayers of the tzaddikim”**—the power to transform the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim”—as he demonstrated in the “teivah,” why didn’t it cross his mind to utilize his power of tefilah to save his entire generation?

Noach Was Punished by Being Confined in the Teivah for Twelve Months

It appears that we can resolve this issue satisfactorily based on a revelation from the Chasam Sofer (Noach 22b). He addresses the matter of why HKB”H chose to save Noach from the turbulent waters of the “mabul” by secluding him inside the “teivah,” full of animals and wild beasts, for an entire year. Surely, the Omnipotent could have saved him in numerous other ways—involving less discomfort and less confining. Yet, this method of salvation represented a punishment for Noach for his failure to pray for the people of his generation and for his failure to rebuke them. Here is what he writes:

“לפי ענינות דעתי הרבה רווח והצללה לפני הקב”ה, ולא היה צורך לסגור נח בתוך התיבה... על כן נראה לי כי נח ובניו וכל אשר אתו היו בעונש, מה שהיו אסורים בבית הכלא הזה בתיבה ונצטערו בה בלי ספק, והיה משפטים שנה תמימה ואחר כך הורשו לצאת לא קודם.”

“In my opinion, it is clear that the sojourn in the “teivah” represented a punishment for Noach and his family. It was certainly a form of incarceration and they undoubtedly suffered. The duration of the imposed decree was one complete year. Thereafter, they were allowed to exit the “teivah,” but not before serving the entire sentence.”

The Chasam Sofer is alluding to that which is explained in the Midrash Tanchuma (Noach 2): **“אמרו רבותינו, י”ב חודש בתיבה לא—ראה שינה לא ביום ולא בלילה, שהיה עוסק וזן הבריות שעמו—during the twelve months in the “teivah,” Noach did not sleep by day or by night; for, he was occupied with the care and feeding of the animals.**

This fact is also evident from the Midrash cited above which taught us that Noach beseeched Hashem: **“Release my being from this confinement.”** Noach pleaded with HKB”H to release him from the confinement of the “teivah.” Thus, it is clear that Noach’s incarceration in the “teivah” for twelve months constituted a severe form of punishment for him. Let us see exactly how unbearable this punishment was for Noach. We find the following description in the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 23):

“י”ב חודש עשו כל הבריות בתיבה, והיה נח עומד ומתפלל לפני הקב”ה ואומר, רבון כל העולמים הוציאני מן המסגר הזה, כי עייפה נפשי מריח אריות ודובים ונמרים, ויכתירו לך כל הצדיקים כתר מלכות שהוצאתני מן המסגר הזה, שנאמר הוציאה ממסגר נפשי, בי יכתירו צדיקים כי תגמול עלי.”

“For twelve months the excrement of all of the creatures inhabiting the “teivah” accumulated. Noach prayed to HKB”H to release him from that confinement, because he could no longer tolerate the stench of the lions, bears and tigers.”

HKB”H Placed Noach in the “Teivah” so that He Would Rectify the Teivos of the Tefilah

We have learned that HKB”H saved Noach and his family by requiring them to enter the “teivah” as a form of punishment for Noach’s failure to pray on behalf of the people of his generation. I would like to propose an explanation as to why HKB”H chose to describe the place of Noach and his family’s salvation as a “teivah.” The passuk states (Bereishis 6, 14): **“עשה לך תיבה—make yourself a “teivah” of gopher wood; make the “teivah” with compartments.** Let us endeavor to explain why HKB”H chose to call this giant structure a “teivah” rather than a ship or a house.

Yet, based on what we have learned thus far, we can suggest that HKB”H wished to convey a vital message to Noach. The reason for Noach’s twelve month incarceration with animals was because he failed to utilize the words—“Teivos”—of prayer to save the people of his generation. He neglected to pour out his soul to Hashem utilizing the words—“Teivos”—of tefilah. His punishment was designed to teach him that he must correct this shortcoming by praying.

HKB”H conveyed this incredible message to Noach as follows (Bereishis 7, 1): **“ויאמר ה' לנח בא אתה וכל ביתך אל התיבה—then Hashem said to Noach, “Come to the “teivah,” you and your entire household, for**

it is you that I have seen to by righteous before Me in this generation. HKB”H’s directive could be understood in one of two ways. Understood simply, Hashem was telling them to enter the “teivah” in order to be saved from the waters of the “mabul.” There is, however, a second way to understand Hashem’s directive. Hashem was directing him to enter the “teivah” of tefilah before Hashem—to pray; **כִּי אוֹתָךְ רֵאִיתִי צַדִּיק** “כִּי אוֹתָךְ רֵאִיתִי צַדִּיק—because you are a tzaddik and your tefilos are capable of transforming the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim.”

How beautifully this helps us understand the words of the Baal Shem Tov, zy”a. Elucidating the words of the passuk (ibid. 6, 16): **“צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לְתִיבָה”**—**a light shall you make for the “teivah”**—he states that a person must illuminate the words—“Teivos”—of tefilah with proper concentration and intent—“kavanah.” In a similar vein, the Degel Machaneh Ephraim (Noach) writes in the name of his elder, the Baal Shem Tov: **“צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לְתִיבָה - שֶׁתִּרְאֶה לְהַאִיר הַתִּיבָה שֶׁתּוֹצִיא מִפִּיךָ”**—take care to illuminate the words that leave your mouth.

Based on what we have discussed, the message is clear. HKB”H placed Noach in the “teivah” hinting to him that he must make amends for not using his “Teivos” of tefilah to pray for the people of his generation. Therefore, the commands related to the building of the “teivah” contain many concealed allusions regarding the avodah of tefilah. Hence, in the sefer Baal Shem Tov (Noach 15 and on), many deep matters concerning tefilah are presented, which were revealed by the Baal Shem Tov by means of allusions inherent in the commands related to the construction of the “teivah.”

Next, let us introduce the incredible words of the Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Noach) regarding this same passuk: **“צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לְתִיבָה—you shall make a “tzohar” for the “teivah.”** There are three permutations of the word **צַהַר**—**צַהַר**, **צַהַר**, **צַהַר**—**צַהַר**. The word **צַהַר** suggests trouble and distress. The word **צַהַר** is related to goodwill—in our case, specifically divine goodwill. With the command: **“make a צַהַר for the ‘teivah,’”** HKB”H was hinting to Noach in no uncertain terms to transform the attribute of “din” to “rachamim” by transforming the word **צַהַר** to the permutation **צַהַר**. Thus, Noach understood that after he and his family had served a full year sentence in the “teivah”—the duration of the sentence for the wicked in Gehinom—he was now required to offer his prayers to Hashem in order to transform the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim.”

The Dimensions of the Teivah Allude to the Flaw Related to Tefilah

Now, we shall see that even the dimensions of the “teivah” allude to the fact that Noach was supposed to make amends for neglecting to pray on behalf of his generation. The Avodat Yisrael presents an explanation in the name of his teacher, the great Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritsch, zy”a. The passuk states (ibid. 6, 16): **“וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָהּ, שְׁלוֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אֹרֶךְ הַתִּיבָה, חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה”**—**וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָהּ—this is how you should build it: three hundred cubits the length of the “teivah,” fifty cubits its width, and thirty cubits its height.**

His explanation is founded on a principle from the Sefer Yetzirah (1, 3) that the “bris halashon”—the covenant of the tongue—corresponds to the “bris kodosh”—the sacred “bris.” This teaches us that a person who guards his tongue, avoiding inappropriate use of his power of speech, merits sanctifying himself in matters related to the sanctity of the “bris,” as well. Therefore, HKB”H spared Noach the tzaddik by placing him in the “teivah”—whose dimensions allude to the sanctity of the “lashon,” speech.

Here is the allusion: **“שְׁלוֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אֹרֶךְ הַתִּיבָה”**—the numerical value three hundred is represented by the letter “shin”; **“חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רֵחֶבָה”**—fifty is represented by the letter “nun”; **“וְשְׁלוֹשִׁים אַמָּה קוֹמָתָהּ”**—thirty is represented by the letter “lamed.” Joining these three letters together, we obtain the word **לשׁן** (without the “vav”), meaning tongue. These dimensions allude to the fact that Noach merited entering the “teivah,” because he safeguarded the covenant of speech, “bris halashon.” This concludes his explanation.

In Chamra Tava, authored by the great Rabbi Avraham Simchah of Barniv, zy”a, he adds another nice allusion. In similar fashion, we can explain why HKB”H punished Noach’s generation with a “mabul,” spelled **מבול**. The word **מבול** is an abbreviation for the words of the passuk (Mishlei 18, 21): **“מִוְתַּת לְשׁוֹן—death and life are affected by the tongue.** If a person sanctifies himself through proper use of speech, he merits life. The word **מבול** alludes to the fact that the people of the generation of the “mabul” did not sanctify their “bris halashon” and, as a consequence, brought about their own deaths.

Like a servant following in his master’s footsteps, I would like to add a small allusion to the holy notion provided by the Maggid of Mezritsch, zy”a. HKB”H alluded to the **לשׁן** with the

dimensions of the “teivah”; however, the allusion is based on spelling the word without a “vav.” Throughout the Torah it appears in its complete form, with a “vav,” לשׁוׁוֹ. We learn from Rashi that when a word is spelled in an incomplete, deficient form, it suggests a deficiency in the subject under discussion. An example is provided by the following Rashi (Bereishis 23, 16): וישקול אברהם לעפרן חסר ויׁ, לפי שאמר ואפילו מעט לא עשה, שנטל: “ממנו שקלים גדולים—the name Ephron is spelled there with a “vav” missing. This deficiency alludes to the fact that he was less than honest and forthcoming in his dealings with Avraham.

Accordingly, we can suggest that this is why HKB”H commanded Noah to construct a “teivah” with dimensions represented by the word לשׁ spelled without a “vav.” He was teaching us a valuable lesson. On the one hand, Noah was spared from the “mabul,” in the merit of safeguarding his tongue; he avoided speech that was prohibited or improper. On the other hand, however, his sanctity of the “lashon” was flawed; for, he failed to be proactive and utilize his “lashon” to pray on behalf of the people of his generation. This is why he was punished and his salvation specifically took the form of incarceration in a “teivah” whose measurements were represented by the defective spelling of לשׁ—without a “vav.”

And Noah Found Favor in the Eyes of Hashem —Who Foresaw that He Was Destined to Make Amends

Based on what we have learned, we have grounds to defend Noah’s status as a tzaddik. His failure to pray initially on behalf of his generation, and transform the attribute of “din” into “rachamim,” is because he did not yet comprehend the magnificent power of tefilah. He did not realize that it is even possible to pray on behalf of someone who has transgressed and has already been sentenced—transforming “din” into “rachamim.” Furthermore, he did not consider himself or his tefilos worthy of the status of “tefilas hatzaddikim.”

Notwithstanding, he was punished and confined to the “teivah.” This is consistent with the elucidation in the Gemara (Yevamos 121b) regarding the passuk (Tehillim 50, 3): וסביביו “and His surroundings are exceedingly turbulent” teaches us that HKB”H is exacting with those who surround Him, to the extent of a hairsbreadth. Noah was considered to be within the surroundings of HKB”H, as the passuk attests: את האלקים “Noah walked with G-d. Consequently, HKB”H

held him accountable for not having grasped that it was his responsibility to pray on behalf of the people of his generation.

Upon seeing that he was being punished by HKB”H—being incarcerated with animals and wild beasts in the “teivah” for twelve months, equivalent to the sentence served by the resham in Gehinom—he took stock of his life and deeds, as is the custom of tzaddikim. He sought to understand why HKB”H punished him in this manner. Ultimately, he realized that it was because he had failed to be proactive and to utilize his power of speech to pray on behalf of the people of his generation.

Additionally, he scrutinized the significance of HKB”H’s directive: “צַהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לְתִיבָה”-- you shall make a “tzohar” for the “teivah.” He recognized that HKB”H was sending him a message; it was his responsibility to transform the actual צַהַר into רַצׁה—to transform the negative into a positive, by transforming the “din” into “rachamim.” At that point, he approached Hashem with the supplication: “הוֹצִיָאָה מִמִּסְגַּר נַפְשִׁי”—release me from this confinement. Thus, he accomplished the desired transformation of the attribute of “din” into “rachamim,” as indicated by the passuk: “Elokim remembered Noah”—even Elokim was transformed into “rachamim.”

We have now shed some light on the thrust of the statement introduced at the beginning of our discussion from the Tanna D’Bei Rabbi Yishmael in the Gemara Sanhedrin: אַף עַל נַח נִחַתָּךְ “the decree was even issued against Noah”—“midah k’neged midah” for not praying on behalf of his generation to mitigate the severity and extent of the decree. Nonetheless, “אֵלֹהִים שִׂמְצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה’”—Noah found favor in the eyes of Havaya. Havaya, specifically, foresaw that Noah was destined to make amends for this shortcoming after enduring a twelve month sentence in the “teivah.” As a result of his prayers, he would ultimately transform the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim.” Thus, it became clear that his failure to pray initially was because he had yet to appreciate the power and impact of his tefilah. In the merit of his future prayers, Noah found favor in the eyes of Hashem--Who had mercy on him even before he actually offered his words of prayer.

Support for this notion—that “חן”, favor, in the eyes of Hashem is gained by means of teshuvah—can be found in the writings of the Zera Kodesh (Bereishis), authored by the great Rabbi of Rophshitz, zy”a. He explains that Noah found חן by elevating the letter “chet” to the letter “nun.” The letter “chet” symbolizes חַטָּא, sin, whereas the letter “nun” symbolizes

“binah” and the world of teshuvah, which is comprised of “nun” (50) gates of teshuvah. This is the allusion inherent in the word “חן”—the elevation of the ח to the נ.

Noach Prayed that He Would Be Mentioned by Yisrael in Their Prayers on Every Rosh HaShanah

Continuing onward and upward along this exalted path, let us address an amazing chiddush presented by Rashi regarding the Midrash quoted previously. We learned from the Midrash that Noach offered the following words of prayer in the “teivah”: “הוציאה ממסגר נפשי להודות את שמך, בי יכתירו צדיקים, יתכללון בי צדיקיא. כי תגמול עלי, שגמלת עלי ואמרת לי צא מן התיבה” — “בי יכתירו צדיקים, יתכללון בי צדיקיא” — **because of me they will crown the righteous.**

Rashi, however, in his commentary on the Midrash provides us with an explanation. Noach, the tzaddik, poured out his soul before of Hashem with the supplication: “בי יכתירו צדיקים, יתכללון בי צדיקיא”—he pleaded that on every Rosh HaShanah, Yisrael would mention him in their prayers. Indeed, his request was granted as we see in the formula instituted by Rav in the tefilah: “אתה זוכר מעשה עולם” —among the pesukim of Zichronot recited in the Mussaf service on Rosh HaShanah. As the Yerushalmi (A.Z. 3a) teaches, Rav instituted the following tefilah:

“וגם את נח באהבה זכרת, ותפקדהו בדבר ישועה ורחמים... על כן זכרונו בא לפניך ה' אלקינו, להרבות זרעו כעפרות תבל וצאצאיו כחול הים, ככתוב בתורתך ויזכור אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה, ויעבר אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה, ויעבר אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה, ויעבר אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתיבה.”

“And Noach also, You remembered with love, and You came to him with words of salvation, compassion . . . and so let his memory come to You, Hashem our G-d, that You multiply his children like the dust of the earth, his descendants like sand of the sea, as it is written in Your Torah: ‘Elokim remembered Noach and all the animals, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and Elokim made a wind blow across the earth, and the waters grew calm.’”

Let us add a thought concerning our blessed sages’ decision to institute the recitation of this passuk on Rosh HaShanah: “ויזכור אלקים את נח”—Elokim remembered Noach. As we

know, Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment; HKB”H sits on His throne of judgment and all of creation passes before him with contrition, hoping for a benevolent decree. In his infinite mercy and kindness, HKB”H gave us the mitzvah of shofar, as it is written (Bamidbar 29, 1): “יום תרועה יהיה לכם”—**it shall be a day of shofar-blowing for you.** The shofar-blowing is intended to transform the attribute of “din” into the attribute of “rachamim,” as the Midrash explains (V.R. 29, 3):

“יהודה ברבי נחמן פתח (תהלים מז-ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה ה' בקול שופר, בשעה שהקב"ה יושב ועולה על כסא דין בדין הוא עולה. מאי טעם, עלה אלקים בתרועה [אלקים הוא מדת הדין], ובשעה שישראל נוטלין את שופריהן ותוקעין לפני הקב"ה, עומד מכסא הדין ויושב בכסא רחמים, דכתיב ה' בקול שופר [ה' הוא מדת הרחמים], ומתמלא עליהם רחמים ומרחם עליהם, והופך עליהם מדת הדין לרחמים.”

Initially HKB”H occupies the throne of “din”; however, when Yisrael grasp their shofars and sound them before HKB”H, He vacates the throne of “din” and occupies the throne of “rachamim.”

The Bnei Yissaschar (Tishrei 3, 1) addresses the redundant language found at the end of the Midrash: “ומתמלא עליהם רחמים” — “ומרחם עליהם, והופך עליהם מדת הדין לרחמים”. Two separate issues are mentioned here: (1) HKB”H stands up, so to speak, vacating the throne of “din,” and sits down instead on the throne of “rachamim. (2) Not only does He judge them mercifully, but He actually transforms the attribute of “din” for them into “rachamim.”

We can now appreciate why our blessed sages instituted the mention of this passuk on Rosh HaShanah: **“Elokim remembered Noach.** We learned from this passuk that Noach was the first tzaddik in the history of the world to accomplish the transformation of the attribute of “din” itself into the attribute of “rachamim” by means of his tefilah. His tefilah was so effective that even the name **Elokim** itself, representing “din,” remembered him favorably. Therefore, we mention this passuk in our prayers in the hope that we, too, will be able to successfully accomplish this magnificent feat on the Day of Judgment, Rosh HaShanah—the transformation of the attribute of “din” into “rachamim.”

Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb
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