



“Facing difficulty: Lessons from Noah”

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Israel is a remarkable place. Despite being in the middle of a relentless war and facing constant terror attacks, the Jewish nation presses forward.

How does one find their bearings in such times of difficulty and uncertainty?

The Torah describes Noah in glowing terms, as a "*tzadik tamim*" - righteous and pure. Of all the people in his generation, only Noah is singled out for being a good, upright person who walked in the ways of God. The rest of society had become horribly corrupt. Evil beyond salvation.

No doubt Noah was universally despised. People don't like a "goody-goody" who shuns their way of life. Everywhere Noah went he was viewed as an outsider, a non-conformist. A pure person in a world that did not share his values.

How did Noah find the inner strength to cope? How did he remain righteous and pure?

One answer is suggested in the opening verse of this week's Torah portion (Parshat Noach): "*Et HaElokim Hit'halech Noach.*" - Noah walked with God. Noah stayed focused on his relationship with his Creator.

Noah was NOT seeking popularity. He remained focused on the eternal. This enabled him to transcend the evil of everyday life in his society.

Another verse states similarly that "Noah found favor in the eyes of God". Interestingly, the name "*Noach*" is a Hebrew word meaning "calm" and "serene".

Perhaps the verse can be understood as follows: One who is calm & serene finds favor in the eyes of God. The way to preserve inner strength is to maintain a spiritual equilibrium, **a deep inner calm**, that is not shaken by external events or words.

Noah had extraordinary strength of character, and when faced with adversity, we need to do the same.



To quote **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l**:

“To be a Jew is to feel the pain and yet carry on. To know fear and to refuse to be intimidated. To be surrounded by hate and yet to have the courage not to answer it with hatred in return. These are among the supreme achievements of the human spirit, and it is to them that we are being summoned now by every syllable of our history.”

Jews living in Israel are strong. We are in a place where we see constant miracles. We are focused on our goal of living peacefully in our homeland and seeing the safe return of our captives. Am Yisrael Chai!!!