



Noach: A Proud Passenger

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

It must have been an overwhelming task. Noach had to build a *teyva* (ark) capable of housing his family, multiple species of animals, and enough food and supplies, all without knowing how long the flood would last and what this new world would look like. The great commentator, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) notes that with all the details the Torah provides regarding the ark, there is no mention of a rudder. Every ship has a mechanism to direct or steer it in a particular direction. When it comes to the ark, we are told the number of floors it would have and its exact dimensions and yet, no mention of a steering mechanism. Rav Hirsch explains that herein lies the profundity of the ark. Entering into the ark represented the act of placing yourself in Hashem's hands – you will go, wherever He wants you to go. You walk in, close the door, and leave the rest to Hashem. Entry into the *teyva* was the ultimate act of *emunah* (belief) in the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. He and only He steered the ship. The greatest accomplishment of Noach was not building or entering the *teyva*; it was the willingness to close the door and leave the rest to Hashem. The story of the *teyva* is a paradigm for how to live life. I must put in my *hishtadlus* (effort) as represented by the construction of the ark, and then I must give myself over to the will of Hashem, as represented by entry into the ark with no steering mechanism. I do my part and then must leave the rest to Hashem.

In these challenging days for Am Yisroel, we must embrace this model. We must put in our effort to help our people. There are so many ways to contribute to our soldiers and brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisroel. We must give of ourselves through Tefillah, Torah, and Tzedaka. We must build the ark of love and unity for our people. But we must also place ourselves in Hashem's hands. At the end of the day, He and He alone directs the ship of our national destiny. He and He alone determines where we have to go and how we get there. At times, it can be hard sit in the passenger seat, but when I know that Hashem is the driver, I feel at ease knowing that I, that we, will reach our intended and holy destination.