



Mishna Pirkei Avot – Ethics of the Fathers 5:3

Avraham our Patriarch was tested ten times , and he succeeded, withstanding them all...	עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָסָה אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם וְעַמְד בְּכֻלָּם...
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Genesis ch. 12:1-2

God said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s home to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”	א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם, לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ. ב וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ, לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל, וְאַבְרָכְךָ, וְאֶגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמִי; וְהָיָה, בְּרָכָה
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Threads from a Coat of Many Colors - Modern Midrash by Yakov Azriel 21st c. Israel

<p>Abraham's Mother Abraham's mother (let's call her <i>Binah</i>) – Was it she who taught Abraham To ask why and why not? In her lullabies, Rocking him in a simple cradle, Singing to him of little goats eating raisins and almonds, Did she also mock the idols, Whisper questions with no answers?</p> <p>Abraham's mother (let's call her <i>Eemunah</i>) – Was it she who first perceived Beyond the facade of wind and storm A greater power blows? Was it her insight that showed a little boy Not to bow to stars, But let his own soul Shine?</p> <p>Abraham's mother (let's call her <i>Tikvah</i>) – Did she smile behind her veil When the youth smashed his father's icons? Was it she who supplied the hammer and the ax?</p> <p>Abraham's mother (let's call her <i>Eema</i>) – Did she feel pride, or sadness, or triumph When her son, hearing God's voice and choosing the route to Jerusalem Packed his belongings and left home? Did she whisper, "God be with you"? Was this her vindication?</p> <p>Abraham's mother Is all we have Hers?</p>
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Genesis ch. 6:9 and 7:1

<p>⁹This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, a person of integrity in his generation, and he walked faithfully with God. And God said to Noah, Come – you and your family – into the תֵּבָה ark. Because I have seen</p>	<p>ט. אֱלֹהִים, תּוֹלְדֵת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה, בְּדֹרֹתָיו: אֶת- הָאֱלֹהִים, הִתְהַלָּךְ-נֹחַ. א. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְנֹחַ, בֹּא-אִתָּה וְכָל-בֵּיתְךָ אֵל- הַתֵּבָה: כִּי-אֶתְךָ רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק לְפָנַי, בְּדוֹר</p>
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that you are righteous in this generation.	הַזֶּה.
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Netivot Shalom Shalom Noah Berezovsky from Slonim 20th c. Parshat Noah

The story of the flood with all its details was written in the beginning of the Holy Torah, **not as an account of what was, rather as a path of contemporary and relevant life wisdom.**

The people of the generation of the flood destroyed themselves, and the world was destroyed by them. Idol worship, sexual greed, and robbery permeated society, to a point of no return.

The ark in all its details became a **haven** for Noah and his family. But just as there was an ark in which humanity was given a chance to escape and **regenerate** itself, **every individual person has an “ark”** which guards them and guides them so that corruption will not become widespread once again in the world.

Lubavitcher Rebbe (as quoted in a podcast on Parshat Noah) **Liutei sichot**

The unique **power of speech** is to bring some character trait from a place of potential to a place of actuality. Therefore when we praise a person's good quality, we certainly have a great influence on that person, and **give them the strength and clarity to make good choices for themselves.** This is why the Torah speaks Noah's praises, [just before he was instructed to do the most difficult thing of his life, to build an ark to save only his immediate family from the destruction of the entire world.]

הכוח הייחודי בדיבור הוא להוציא דבר מן
ההעלם אל הגילוי ולכם כאשר מדברים
אל אדם טוב או שבח יש לכך בוודאי
**השפעה טובה על האדם וממילא זה
נותן לו חיזוק וסיוע בעבודה....**
ולכן הדבר מגיע לנוח רק בפרשת נוח
ולא בסוף פרשת בראשית כדי לסייע
לנוח בעבודתו בבניית התבה...

Questions for Reflection:

1. In every chapter of his life, Avraham is forced to make a choice between two values he holds dear. Where the Torah records only his actions and not his deliberations, we can try to enter into his heart and speculate about the painful decisions he faced. What are the compelling alternatives or competing values to each of Avraham's choice of action in each event of this Torah portion?
2. When have I recently been tested, or forced to make a difficult choice between two competing values?
3. Who could benefit from my words of **חיזוק** – strength or encouragement? Whose words of **חיזוק** have benefitted me in making difficult choices?
4. As we mature, we must often rely on the good words we tell ourselves. In what area of struggle today could I give myself a good word? What would I say to myself? Say it.