

## **Good Struggles**

(formerly “102 Noach Good Struggles”)

This week’s Parsha, Noach, talks about the great Flood, the powerful waters that destroyed all living things on the earth.

What positive lesson can we take from the Flood? Why is this read right after the first holidays of the year, the “Days of Awe”?

In *Song of Songs*, we read, “Many waters cannot extinguish the love, and rivers cannot flood it.”<sup>1</sup> This is talking about the love we have for Hashem, the hidden essential love deep inside every Jew, the ‘Pintele Yid.’

This love is compared to the fire hidden inside coal, as the previous verse says, “her coals are coals of fire of a great flame.”<sup>2</sup> When you look at a coal, you don’t see a flame, but *inside* the coal, the fire burns strong. It is also compared to a flint, which can be submerged underwater for years, but when struck, out comes fire.

What are these “many waters” that fail to extinguish this inner fire? And what are these “rivers” that fail to flood it?

One explanation is that “many waters” refers to the worries and hardships that we incur trying to make a living,<sup>3</sup> which is simply part of this world we live in. And the “rivers” are when these worries, thoughts and pressures don’t let up, like the strong current of a river.

Though these worries and hardships are constant, nevertheless, they can’t extinguish the hidden love found in the depths of our souls. Why not?

To understand this, we must take a deeper look at ourselves and the reason we are in this world of constant worries.

Our souls, before they entered this physical world, were in a pristine, holy state. What gain is there for the soul to come down here and be involved in this lowly, troublesome place? We must conclude that by making the descent into this world, the Neshama can attain higher levels of holiness and G-dly revelation, upon its return to its Heavenly abode. It is a descent for the purpose of a greater ascent.

This is similar to taking a short-term loss for a long-term gain. Many understand the value of living with discomfort for a while, as they build themselves up financially. They do it with joy, because they realize that this is the path to their goal.

The struggles we contend with are there to help us attain the purpose of our descent into this world. When we realize that, we start looking at our struggles differently, we begin to see them in a positive light.

Knowing this, you realize that since the “many waters” are here for our benefit, they could never extinguish the love we have for Hashem, because that is the opposite of their purpose.

By coming down to this world, the Neshama fulfills Hashem’s will, which causes a great elevation in the soul.

Prior to its descent into this world, the soul is like a Tzaddik<sup>4</sup> (righteous person); however, by descending into this turbulent world and doing Hashem’s will, it attains the status of a Baal Teshuva (returnee to Hashem), of whom our sages say, “in the place where Baal Teshuvah stand, complete Tzaddikim are not able to stand,”<sup>5</sup> since, through their struggles, they attain a level of holiness far greater than that of a Tzaddik – so great that the Tzaddik isn’t even able to stand there.

With this in mind, we start to take our struggles in stride. We begin to see them as the path to our

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shir HaShirim*, 8:7.

<sup>2</sup> *Shir HaShirim*, 8:6.

<sup>3</sup> *Torah Ohr*, beginning of Parshas Noach; *Toras Chaim*, Noach, par. 4. See also *Maamar “Mayim Rabim”* 5636.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Likutei Torah*, Balak, 83a.

<sup>5</sup> Talmud, Brachos, 34b.

goals, and not as the enemy. It is the struggles that make us stronger and refine us. It is the struggles that bring us closer to Hashem. He put us here specifically to contend with this world, and this world is a world of struggles. But when you understand that it is all from Hashem and it is all purposeful, it is no longer as much of a struggle. You will embrace it with joy and with a spring in your step, knowing that on the other side of this struggle is the goal you were created to achieve.

Now we can appreciate why the story of the Flood is read right after the Days of Awe. The holidays are like Heaven, as we celebrate with Hashem and enjoy the holiness of the time. Now, with the holidays behind us, we re-enter the world of struggles. It is now that we need a reminder that the turbulent waters of making a living and dealing with the struggles of life are not there to hurt us, but rather to help us accomplish our purpose.<sup>6</sup>

May our efforts to do Hashem's will be successful. May His will be realized and usher in the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Maamar "Mayim Rabim"* 5738, Torahs Menachem, *Sefer Hamaamarim Meluket*, vol. 1, pp. 246-249.