

"In that very day entered Noach... with them into the ark." (7:13)

Rashi explains the *Torah's* emphasis on when Noach entered the ark. He explains that the people of that generation said, "If we see Noach entering the ark, we will break it and kill him." Hashem responded to them, "I shall bring him into the ark before everyone's eyes, in mid-day, so that we shall see whose words will prevail." Their threatened action is puzzling and seems inconsistent with their words, since they did not believe in the arrival of the flood. In any case, if Noach was credible, they should have listened to him and repented. If, to the contrary, he was wrong and there was no flood, then they should have simply ignored him, let him enter the ark, and wait to see what transpired. When the rains would not appear, Noach would then leave the ark in humiliation and disgrace. Why did they feel compelled to "break" the ark?

Horav Eliyahu M. Bloch z.l. derives from this *pasuk* that two contradictory sentiments exist within the non-believer. On the one hand, they exhibited open rebellion, deriding Noach's appeal with scorn and disdain. Simultaneously, deep down in their hearts, they knew that Noach was correct and there would be a flood. Hashem's retribution would arrive; the people would drown and Noach would be spared. What did these hypocrites do? How did they respond to their inner voice which implored them to accept the truth? They responded by attempting to destroy Noach's means of escape, so that he would die with them!

This is the result of a warped and twisted perception which regrettably prevails in the minds of many of the unfaithful. They said that they did not believe Noach, but, nonetheless, they battled with him as if they believed that he was right. The skeptic's constant challenge and the empiricist's incessant derision are indications of their own insecurity and vulnerability. We can only hope that one day they will succumb to the challenge of their own hearts and defer to the truth.