

Hashem spoke to Noach, saying: Go forth from the Ark. (8:16)

The Flood had subsided. The ground was dry. Noach removed the Ark's covering and saw a different world. The sun was shining and welcoming. What was he waiting for? Noach refused to leave the Ark until Hashem commanded him to leave. Hashem had instructed him to enter, he would wait for His instructions to leave. Why? What made Noach remain on the Ark? The only reason he was on the *teivah* was in order to be spared from the Flood. Clearly, one who is in the Ark for protection purposes should leave once the threat has subsided.

Horav Naftali Nebentzhal, zl (RM, Yeshivas Ponovez L'Tzeirim), quotes *Chazal* who teach (*Beitzah* 5A) that anything that a *minyana*, quorum, decides requires another *minyana* to overrule it. Thus, if *Chazal* issued a decree or erected a "fence" to protect the law, even though they had a specific reason for this ruling, we do not say that once the reason no longer exists, the decree is void. In order to abolish the rabbinic decree, it is necessary that another rabbinic effort overrule it. When *Chazal* gathered and issued a ruling, it required another rabbinic group to discuss and determine whether a reason exists to continue the ruling or not. Nonetheless, a single *rav* or any other individual carries no weight to put an end to the decree. *Chazal* derive this ruling from *Mattan Torah*.

Prior to the Giving of the Torah, the men were to leave their homes and not be with their wives for three days. Following the Giving of the Torah, Hashem issued a new decree: "Tell the men to return." Why was this necessary? The only reason they were to refrain from being with their wives was to maintain the highest level of purity – before they accepted the Torah. Now that Revelation had ended, they should be able to return – on their own – without a Heavenly ruling. We see from here that, if Hashem issues a mandate, it does just not end of its own accord. It requires Hashem's ruling to end it.

Thus, Noach would not leave the Ark until he heard directly from Hashem that he should leave. We live by Hashem's Word. His command guides us. Things do not end on their own. They must be "ended." Noach understood that Hashem's decrees are absolute and not given for human intervention to append. He understood that Hashem's instructions were paramount and must be followed precisely. Furthermore, Noach's actions reflect a profound sense of humility and patience. His actions highlight the virtue of waiting for Divine guidance and not acting based on human rationale alone.

In summation, whatever ruling is the result of a quorum or, in our case, issued by Hashem, it cannot be overridden by anything less than a similar or original ruling source. If so, we must attempt to reconcile this idea with the *Midrash Tanchuma*, who teaches that Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah refused to leave the fiery cauldron after they had been spared from death. They conjectured, "If Noach did not leave the Ark until Hashem instructed him to leave, neither will we

leave until Nevuchadnezer (who decreed that we should die) himself instructs us to leave.” (They were not prepared to have the evil king claim that they had escaped.) The question is obvious: How could they compare the evil king’s decree to the Heavenly decree that Noach enter the Ark? Only the Divine can overrule the Divine. It is not for man to decide. They, however, were subject to human decree, which is obviously quite different.

Horav Shlomo BenTzion Felman, zl, explains that, upon perusing the *Midrash*, we see that Noach’s reason for not leaving the Ark on his own was a sense of *ha’koras ha’tov*, gratitude, to Hashem for providing him with safe passage during the Flood’s travail. To just pick himself up and run out of the Ark would be gross *chutzpah*. This idea applies equally to Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah. Hashem spared them miraculously. To run out would diminish the miracle and minimize their sense of gratitude.