

NO'ACH

2nd of 54 sedras,
2nd of 12 in B'reishit



Written on 230 lines, rank: 15

18 Parshiyot; 5 open, 13 closed; 12th

153 p'sukim - ranks 4th - Largest in
B'reishit - tied w/Vayishlach

1861 words - ranks 11 (6th in B'reishit)

6907 letters - ranks 13 (6th in B'rei)

Drop in ranking for words and letters
is due to No'ach's relatively very
short p'sukim. No'ach ranks 49th in
words per pasuk and 51st in letters
per pasuk in the Torah. No sedra in
B'reishit has shorter p'sukim.

MITZVOT

None of the TARYAG mitzvot are
counted from No'ach, yet there are
mitzvot in the sedra, specifically (but
not only) references to the Noahide
laws. So too is P'RU URVU repeated
to No'ach - it is counted as a mitzva
from B'reishit, when it was given to
Adam...

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate
start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y
is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the
parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in
the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the
Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND
Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI;
L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek &
pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya - 14 p'sukim - 6:9-22

The sedra of B'reishit begins with the
glorious account of Creation and
'goes downhill' from there: The exile
of Adam and Chava from Gan Eden,
Kayin and Hevel, the continuous
degeneration through successive
generations until G-d's 'regret' for
having created the world and his
'decision' to destroy it. You have to
cry for G-d (so to speak), Who begins
His Torah with B'REISHIT BARA and
in the penultimate pasuk of Parshat
B'reishit had to say "I will obliterate
humanity that I have created from the
face of the earth - man, livestock,
land animals, and birds of the sky. I
regret that I created them." How sad!

The only high note of this universal
downslide comes at the end of the
sedra: "But No'ach found favor in
G-d's eyes."

[P> 6:9 (4)] The sedra of No'ach
continues this thread and tells us that
No'ach was "completely righteous IN
HIS TIME".

SDT: Rashi presents the divergent
opinions as to whether "in his time" is
complimentary or derogatory. Was

No'ach great **EVEN** in his very wicked generation, or was he great only by comparison to the generation in which he lived. Although Rashi does not seem to favor one side over the other, it seems obvious that No'ach was not as great as Avraham Avinu. A look at the fifth chapter of Pirkei Avot will reveal a significant difference between No'ach and Avraham. Ten generations from Adam to No'ach and ten from No'ach to Avraham, both to teach us about G-d's long patience. Same. Yet when the first full run of ten generations was up, the Flood came. When the second one was up, the Mishna tells us, that Avraham's merit sustained the whole world. No'ach's merit seems to have been only enough to save his own family (and the animals on the Teiva with him). On the other hand, there was a significant difference between the generations of No'ach and Avraham that cannot be ignored, and makes comparisons a bit unfair.

The Torah essentially repeats that No'ach had three sons - Sheim, Cham, and Yefet, and that the world was totally corrupt.

[S> 6:13 (48)] Then No'ach is informed by G-d of His plans to destroy the world and is commanded to build an ark, bring into it two of every kind of animal and sufficient food for his family and the animals.

Commentaries point out that No'ach was given ample time (120 years!) to try to influence his generation to mend its ways. He either tried and didn't succeed or didn't try too hard. He did exactly as he was told (implying, and not more).

Think about this...

G-d could have destroyed the world and saved No'ach and family and the pairs of animals with a miraculous snap of His finger (so to speak). In no time. With no human involvement. He could have, but He didn't. He could have left No'ach on his own, to do the whole job of saving his family and sample pairs of all the animals. He didn't do that either. (It probably would have been humanly impossible for No'ach to have done the whole job on his own.)

What G-d did do is command No'ach to build an ark of a specific size, a three-tiered floating structure, and to gather all the food necessary to feed many, many animals and his family for a year. This, say some commentaries, cannot be done without a heavy dose of miracle, of suspension of the laws of nature. But it wasn't all supernatural. No'ach was part of it. And that is what G-d usually wants when it comes to miracles. We, as humans, relate so much better to that kind of miracle. We need to see some familiar nature inside a miracle, in order to relate

properly to it... and we also need to see the miracles inside nature.

And No'ach's generation needed to have time for possible repentance.

Levi - Second Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 7:1-16

G-d tells No'ach and his family to go into the Teiva (ark) and to take with him seven pairs of each kind of kosher animal and bird. Noa'ch is told that in seven more days it will rain for 40 days and nights during which time all life on earth will be wiped out. No'ach was 600 years old at the time of the Flood. And so it happened.

How many giraffes?

Seven pairs because the giraffe is a kosher animal, or only one pair because the giraffe is never brought as a Korban? [The giraffe is halachically a CHAYA T'HORA, it is not fit for the Mizbei'ach.] Since some say that the reason for the seven pairs was because of sacrifices, and others say it was to provide kosher food, what's the answer for giraffes? Similarly, how many chickens? Sacrifices? No. Food? Yes. So which was it?

Rabbi Zev Leff explained that B'nei No'ach are permitted to offer sacrifices from ANY kosher animal or bird; No'ach was not restricted to cow, goat, sheep, and two types of doves - the only acceptable Korbanot

for Bnei Yisrael. Hence, for either reason, it would seem that there were seven pairs of kudu, giraffe, okapi, gnu, yak, bison, chicken, sparrow, pheasant, quail, et al.

Just look at the top of the PhiloTorah webpage. There is a photo of No'ach with some of the animals and it is clear that there were 14 giraffes. Al, you say? Would you believe an actual, unedited photo?

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 22 p'sukim - 7:17-8:14

The rains fell and the waters of the deep surged for 40 days and nights, but the Flood remained at its highest level for a total of 150 days. G-d 'remembered' No'ach and all with him in the ark, and the waters began to recede. The ark settled on Mt. Ararat and 40 days later (Remember the first 40 days which represent death of all living things? This time the 40 represents the rebirth of those who survived the Mabul), No'ach opened the "window" of the ark and sent out a raven. Then he sent out a dove, and again, and finally after a full (365-day) year, the earth was ready to receive its new inhabitants.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 8:15-9:7

[S> 8:15 (15)] G-d tells No'ach to leave the ark with his wife, his sons and

their wives, and all the animals and birds. No'ach builds an altar and sacrifices upon it from all the kosher species. G-d's "reaction" to No'ach's offerings is that in spite of the basic evil inclination of human nature, He will not destroy in the "wholesale fashion" of the Flood (but rather punish on a more restricted and specific basis).

The laws of nature are "adjusted" to provide the world with a never-ceasing cycle of seasons and climatic conditions.

HERE'S A THOUGHT

We can see in the account of the Flood and its aftermath, a continuation of Creation. It is as if stage 1 of Creation was recorded in B'reishit and here we have stage 2. In other words, the world came into existence during B'reishit and the 6 days of creation AND during the Flood which took place 10 generations later. Sort of like a rough draft and a further revision. And we, by the way, constantly affect the continuous further dynamic revisions.

G-d blessed and commanded No'ach and his family (and all of mankind) to "be fruitful and multiply".

(Let the point in the use of the two verbs not go by without notice: The ability to have children and raise a family is a mitzva and a wonderful blessing as well.)

No'ach got permission to eat meat (this was denied to the previous generations), but he was warned not to eat from a living animal. This is the universal prohibition of EIVER MIN HACHAI - one of SHEVA MITZVOT B'NEI NO'ACH. Murder and the other Noahide Laws are referred to and/or inferred, at this point. Again, No'ach and family are told to be fruitful and repopulate the world.

CLARIFICATION: No'ach was given permission to kill an animal for food. Previously, only 'road kill' or its equivalent was permitted.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 9:8-17

[S> 9:8 (10)] G-d makes a promise to mankind that He will never again destroy the world as He did with the Flood. The rainbow will serve as sign and reminder of this promise.

We acknowledge the significance of a rainbow by reciting a bracha when we see one - "...He Who remembers the Covenant, is faithful to it, and keeps His word." Of the 10 items mentioned in Avot as having been created at the instant between the Six Days of Creation and the first Shabbat, all but the rainbow are supernatural. The rainbow, by virtue of its inclusion on this special list, can be seen as a bridge between the natural and the supernatural. Put differently, we should see G-d's handiwork in all the

elements of nature, not just in obvious miracles. "The mouth of the Earth" was a one-time creation to dispose of Korach and his gang. But regular rocks and hills, crags and clefts are no less part of G-d's handiwork.

Some say that a rainbow is a sign that G-d is angry with the world and would want to destroy it - except He promised not to. On the other hand, Yechezkel describes the Heavenly Throne as being like a rainbow, and the radiance of the Kohen Gadol upon leaving the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur is also likened to a rainbow in the sky. And a rainbow is beautiful, too!

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 44 p'sukim - 9:18-10:32

Second longest Shishi in the Torah

[P> 9:18 (12)] Some time after leaving the ark, No'ach becomes a tiller of the soil and a grape grower. He produces wine and becomes drunk. One of his sons, Cham, behaves immorally with his father in his drunken state; Shem and Yefet behave admirably in the situation, protecting their father's honor and modesty. When No'ach realizes what has happened, he curses Cham and Cham's son Canaan, and blesses Shem and Yafet.

No'ach lives 350 years after the Flood, and dies at the age of 950.

The arithmetic of No'ach's years (600 before + 350 after = 950) seems not to take into account the year of the Flood. There is a good case to be made for not considering the duration of the Flood in calculations of the chronology of the world. We might look at the Flood as a period of "suspended animation" - laws of nature were not in effect; perhaps time as we know it cannot apply to that interval either. The animals in the ark did not function in their normal ways. No'ach had no sleep during the whole period (if we take statements made as literal). It clearly was not a natural time.

[P> 10:1 (14)] The Torah next outlines the generations that followed No'ach and the nations that came from Sheim, Cham and Yefet.

These are the descendants of No'ach (numbers in brackets count the 70 nations of the world - based on the Living Torah by R' Aryeh Kaplan z"l). We'll call NO'ACH the zero generation. That makes SHEIM, CHAM, and YEFET, the first generation after No'ach.

The counting of the 70 nation-progenitors begin with the children of Sheim, Cham, and Yefet.

The Torah starts the genealogy with Yefet. Generation 2 from Yefet are:

[1] Gomer

[2] Magog

[3] Madai

[4] Yavan

[5] Tuval

[6] Meshech and

[7] Tiras (who Rashi says is **Paras**, which partners him nicely with brother Madai **[3]**).

Third generation from No'ach via Yefet's children (from only two of them; no descendants are named from the other five children):

From Gomer:

[8] Ashkenaz

[9] Rifat, and

[10] Togarma.

From Yavan:

[11] Elisha

[12] Tarshish

[13] Kitim, and

[14] Dodanim.

2nd generation from No'ach via Cham:

[15] Kush

[16] Mitzrayim

[17] Put, and

[18] K'na'an.

3rd generation via Cham's children:

From Kush:

[19] S'va

[20] Chavila

[21] Savta

[22] Ra'ma

[23] Savt'cha

Ra'ma had

[24] Sh'va and

[25] D'dan (both 4th generation)

Kush also fathered Nimrod, not numbered among the 70.

From Mitzrayim:

[26] Ludim

[27] Anamim

[28] L'havim

[29] Naftuchim

[30] Patrusim

[31] Kasluchim

(from either 30 or 31 came

[32] P'lishtim - according to Rashi, Patrusim and Kasluchim swapped wives a lot and the P'lishtim came from both of them),

[33] Kaftorim

(who might also have come from either Patrusim or Kasluchim or from Mitzrayim - disputed by commentaries).

No one mentioned from Put.

[S> 10:15 (6)] From K'na'an:

[34] Tzidon

[35] Cheit

[36] the Yevusi

[37] the Emori

[38] the Girgashi

[39] the Chivi

[40] the Arki

[41] the Sini

[42] the Arvadi

[43] the Tz'mari and

[44] the Chamati.

So far, **25** from Yefet

19 from Cham

[S> 10:21 (12)] From Sheim:

[45] **Eilam**

[46] **Ashur**

[47] **Arpachshad**

[48] **Lud**

[49] **Aram**

From Aram:

[50] **Utz**

[51] **Chul**

[52] **Geter**

[53] **Mash**

From Arpachshad came

[54] **Shelach** and from him came

[55] **Eiver**.

Eiver is 4th generation. He had

[56] **Peleg** and

[57] **Yaktan** (5th generation).

From Yaktan:

[58] **Almodad**

[59] **Shelef**

[60] **Chatzarmavet**

[61] **Yerach**

[62] **Hadoram**

[63] **Uzal**

[64] **Dikla**

[65] **Oval**

[66] **Avima'el**

[67] **Sh'va** (same name as 24)

[68] **Ofir**

[69] **Chavila** (same name as 20), and

[70] **Yovav**.

That's **26** from Sheim. **Total 70**.

It should not be lost on us that the birth of the world population is describe as the 70 nations, and the

birth of Israel begins (later) with the "70 souls" who went down to Egypt.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 32 p'sukim - 11:1-32

Longest Sh'VII in the Torah

[P> 11:1 (9)] The Torah tells us of the attempt to build the "Tower of Babel", the symbol of rebellion against G-d. G-d thwarted the plans, confused the languages of mankind and scattered the people far and wide.

SDT: Commentaries contrast the two sinful generations in this sedra. Dor HaMabul was destroyed because their sins included the destruction of society by total disregard of a person for his fellow. Dor HaPlaga sinned against G-d alone, not against each other. Such a society (albeit warped) can survive; G-d can permit it to continue under these circumstances.

[P> 11:10 (2)] The sedra returns to the lineage of **No'ach**, this time tracing only through Sheim. We find for each generation, the name of the "main" person, his age when his main, named son was born, how many years he lived after his "main" son was born, and the fact that other sons and daughters were born.

Sheim was 100 when he had **Arpachshad** (2 yrs after the Flood). He lived a further 500 years (600).

[P> 11:12 (2)] Arpachshad had **Shelach** at 35. Lived 403 more years (438).

[P> 11:14 (2)] Shelach was 30 when he had **Eiver**. Then another 403 years (same as his father). (Total: 433).

[P> 11:16 (2)] Eiver was 34 when **Peleg** was born. He lived another 430 years (464).

[P> 11:18 (2)] Peleg was 30 when **R'u** was born. He lived another 209 (total, 239).

[P> 11:20 (2)] R'u was 32 when **S'rug** was born. Plus another 207 years (239).

[P> 11:22 (2)] S'rug was 30 when he had **Nachor**. He lived another 200 years (230).

[P> 11:24 (2)] Nachor was 29 when **Terach** was born. He lived 119 more years (148).

[P> 11:26 (7)] Terach was 70 (there's that number again, and also notice how much older Terach was when he had children, compared with all previous generations back to Arpachshad.) Terach had three sons, **Avram**, **Nachor**, and **Haran**. (Remember that No'ach also had three sons.) Haran had **Lot**. Haran died. Avram married **Sarai** and Nachor married his niece **Milka**, Haran's daughter.

The Torah makes a point of telling us that Sarai was barren.

Terach takes his son Avram, his grandson Lot, his daughter-in-law Sarai, they leave Ur Kasdim and head

out for the land of K'naan. They make it as far as Charan and settle there. Terach dies in Charan at 205 years of age (first one since No'ach with a recorded age at death).

The sedra thus ends with the stage set for the next major phase of world development - the return to belief in one G-d and the "birth of Judaism" via Avraham Avinu.

Haftara - 22 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 54:1-55:5

Yeshayahu draws a comparison between the covenant that G-d made with all mankind via No'ach and the promises to the People of Israel concerning their future. Just as G-d promised never to flood the whole Earth again, so too does He promise not to rebuke and punish Israel (in the future). There are phrases in the haftara that make the connection to the sedra all the stronger.