



HEARD FROM YEHUDA SPETNER, BASED ON THE RAMBAN

Just Skip Parashas No'ach!

TRUE, IT MAKES FOR CUTE PARASHA PROJECTS by our preschoolers, it has captured the imagination of millions, and it helped launch Bill Cosby's career (for whatever that's worth). But overall, we are left wondering: Why does the Torah see fit to include the episodes related in this week's Torah portion? What are we supposed to learn from these episodes in particular, when there were certainly other, similar episodes in the first 2,000 years of history, which the Torah just glosses over, if it mentions them at all?

Lest you feel that this is a completely inappropriate and outrageous question, this very query—but in an even more extreme and shocking form—was posed by none other than Rashi himself! In his very first comment on the Torah, Rashi opens up by citing "Rabbi Yitzchak" (according to some, Rashi's father):

Said Rabbi Yitzchak: The Torah [which is a book of laws] didn't have to begin [with anything before Sh'mos, Chapter 12,] "This month shall be, for you, the first month," which was the first mitzvah...

Forget about our reservations about the episodes retold in *Parashas No'ach*. Rabbi Yitzchak, as cited by Rashi, questions the point of the Torah's relating even the narrative of Creation—the very episode that forms the foundation of our belief in the Creator who created the world *ex nihilo* (from nothing), the very episode that gives our history a

definite beginning, gives us context from whence we came, that explains why the world is the way it is and what we need to do to correct it!

Is Rabbi Yitzchak truly suggesting that we remove the entire Chumash of B'reishis, returning "something to nothing?" That certainly seems to be the case.

How can he make such a suggestion?

The answer is actually a riff on our original question.

These episodes do make for good *parasha* projects for the children, and they have piqued mankind's collective imagination since the beginning of time. (Literally!) But the truth is that these episodes are so beyond what the human mind is capable of processing that, in a sense, they could have not been written at all! After all, how can a finite, human mind possibly hope to grasp the infinite concepts that Creation was based on? Creation *ex nihilo* has confounded the greatest of minds for centuries, to the extent that many other cultures—up to and including the "great" philosophers and scientists of our day—have needed to bastardize the concept to fit into their puny, limited worldviews. ("If I were G-d..." Well, it is a good thing that you are not G-d!)

The true secrets of Creation—and destruction—were given to Moshe at Sinai and passed on to a select few, along with the Oral Law. But when it comes to including them in the Written Torah, well, that's hard to justify, if these concepts can't be understood by most

readers. It should suffice for the Torah to start with the mitzvos. As far as all his existential questions are concerned, man would be satisfied with that what is stated in the Ten Commandments:

...In six days Hashem created the heavens, the land, and the seas, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day..." (Sh'mos 20:11)

In terms of the mechanics of how this came about,

...One should not expound on the Workings of Creation before two [students]... If anyone looks into the following four things, it would be better had he never [been born]: What is above [the angels in heaven], what is "below" [the physical world], what was before [Creation] and what will be after [its end]... (Mishnah, Chagiga 2:1)

So why are these first two Torah portions in the Torah?

Rabbi Yitzchak's novel answer is that the whole purpose of relating these episodes is to stress one point, and one point only.

Hashem created the world, He gave dominion to Man over all that is under Man's feet, and He placed Man in the Garden of Eden; then He expelled Man from Eden due to Adam's sin. Hashem allowed mankind to inhabit the world at

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Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbis Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM
ShabbosN/A

Mincha
Sunday5:45 PM
Monday–Thursday5:45 PM
Shabbos2:45 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM
ShabbosN/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbis Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning
(private & small groups).....times vary

Just Skip Parashas No'ach! CONTINUED

large, but then He expelled mankind—with the exception of No'ach—from that world with the Great Flood, because of mankind's corruption. Later, No'ach's descendants were scattered, again due to their sins.

In other words, people settled where they did, and they stayed there *as long*

as they were deserving of it. When they sinned, Hashem expelled them. Since the beginning of time, the world has been set up so that when people sin, they are expelled from their land and new people come in to replace them.

The justification for including B'reishis and No'ach in the Torah is to

stress the point that Hashem, and only Hashem, decides the fate of peoples and lands, and determines who gets what. No one nation has a “right” to a place more than any other nation, without Hashem's approval. 🙏



This week
at
the kollel