



yanuah. In the Shabbat law it applies to an ox. The ox has to rest. Noah's very name contains within it a hint to this condition. If in the Shabbat context the

resting implies an equilibrium between humans and animals, Noah's very name implies a restored equilibrium between humans and animals. **Thus, when Noah was born the hierarchy in nature was restored by bringing rest (and by implication, comfort) to humanity.**

Resh Lakish: Noah Will Restore the Boundary Between the Living and the Dead.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: **לֹא הַשֵּׁם הוּא הַמְּקָרֵשׁ** The name does not correspond with the midrash, (the interpretation) **וְלֹא הַמְּקָרֵשׁ הוּא הַשֵּׁם** and the midrash (interpretation) does not correspond with the name.

Resh Lakish reverses R. Yohanan's opening, preparing us for a different argument. First he is going to make the same case that the name does not fit with the explanation.

It should have said instead: **Noah**, this one will give us rest [**yanihenu**], or **Nahman**, this one will comfort us [**yenahamenu**].

On this they concur.

However, until Noah appeared, the water would rise and inundate them in their graves. Who calls the waters of the sea is written twice (Amos 5:8; 9:6) corresponding to the two times that the water would rise and inundate them in their graves, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Okay. This requires an urgent explanation. Resh Lakish is appropriating a phrase from the prophet Amos, **הַקּוֹרֵא לַיָּם הַיָּם** which means, **God calls the waters of the sea** and applying it to the period of generations after Adam's sin and prior to the birth of Noah. This is a big stretch relying on a lot of assumptions, which is why it is such a fascinating argument (and why Resh Lakish is such an interesting figure!) When people died in the generations after Adam their graves were inundated by water twice a day, at morning and at night. How he arrives at this is a brilliant (if not mind-bending!) feat of midrashic reasoning.

That is what is written: Like desecrated corpses lying in the grave (Psalms 88:6)³ - the corpses (from those generations) who were lying (in their graves) were desecrated.

He cites this very dark psalm which is all about death, graves, corpses, and divine abandonment, and makes an implicit connection to the horrible generations leading up to Noah. The psalm is referring to them. In his reading, the people of those generations who died and were buried do not rest in peace. Based on a later verse in that psalm⁴ he imagines that their

graves are inundated with water, morning and night, such that the water remains there all the time. However...

When Noah appeared, they rested [in their graves].

This is his punchline. Noah brought proper rest to all those who had died in previous generations. And this is based on Resh Lakish's reading of a verse in Isaiah, describing the fate of the righteous, says that they rest in peace. As we will note next week, Noah is such a person.

Rest [neyaha] is stated here [Noah's name] and rest [neyaha] is stated elsewhere [in Isaiah]. The verse [in Isaiah] reads: May he [referring to Noah, the upright one] depart in peace...may they [all the people who have died and been buried] rest [yanuhu] [in peace] upon their resting places (Isaiah 57:2).⁵

Resh Lakish bases his interpretation on the similarity of the name *Noah* to *yanuhu-they shall rest*.

Just as neyaha that is stated there refers to the rest of the grave so too neyaha that is stated here refers to the rest of the grave.

A Sermonic Conclusion on the 3rd Anniversary of 10/7:

If you have made it this far, you might now ask the reasonable question: what is this debate about?

The era that followed the expulsion of Adam and Eve was filled with turmoil. According to R. Yohanan that turmoil was reflected in the unravelling of nature. According to Resh Lakish that turmoil was reflected in the breakdown between the zone of life and death.

For R. Yohanan nothing worked properly. For Resh Lakish, people lived with the primordial fear that their loved ones would be submerged and that death would inundate the living. Noah's father, Lemekh, was a person of hope. He named his son Noah in the hope that this era of natural disorder (R. Yohanan) or the commingling of the dead with the living (Resh Lakish) would cease. **וְיָנִיחֵנוּ-this one will comfort us.**

A Takeaway: When people experience trauma - consider this past week as we remembered the traumas of October 7, 2023 - they deploy metaphors to describe how their world has been broken. Some, like R. Yohanan, would say, **there is no order, nothing works the way it should, nothing makes sense.** Some, like Resh Lakish, would go further and say, **we live in fear; the zone of the living has been polluted by the dead; how do we reverse life?** Comfort is about lifting those metaphors. To Lemekh, Noah was a harbinger of comfort. **וְיָנִיחֵנוּ-this one will comfort us. How so? By restoring our sense of order (R. Yohanan) or by restoring our sense of life (Resh Lakish).** To Israel and the Jewish People throughout the world: **May we have comfort - with a renewed sense of order in our world and a renewed reverence for life.** אָמֵן.

Shabbat Shalom! This Parasha Sheet is sponsored by Lynn and Larry Zamick in honor of 2010 Woman of Torah honoree, Mona Zamick, on her 90th Birthday. Mazel Tov!

³ בַּמַּיִם חִפְשִׁי כִּמוֹ חֲלָלִים שֶׁכְּבִי קֶבֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא זִכְרָתָם עוֹד

⁴ They swirl about me like water all day long...(88:18)

⁵ יָבוֹא שְׁלוֹם יִנְחוּ עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹתֵם הַלֵּךְ נִכְחוּ