



Torah Reflections on *Parashat Noah*

Genesis 6:9-11:32

6 Cheshvan 5767

October 28, 2006

A few years ago, someone passed along to me the following thoughts regarding Noah's Ark. There was no attribution mentioned.

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old (the age of Noah), someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the Ark was build by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
11. No matter the storm, there's always a rainbow waiting.

I think this is pretty sound advice for day-to-day life, but I'd like to reframe it for those who are seeking a healing perspective from this well-known incident in the Torah.

A few things people facing illness can learn from the story of Noah's Ark:

1. Stay informed about new procedures, modalities and unexpected opportunities for healing and recovery.
2. Stay connected to others in your community, and world-wide through the internet, regarding common experiences, breakthroughs, disappointments, and yearnings.
3. Plan ahead. If you know your life will take a detour as a result of a temporary or long-term incapacitation, make whatever arrangements you can in advance to provision and protect yourself and lessen the unknowns that may lie ahead.
4. The stronger you are in mind, body and spirit, the better head-start you'll have to coping with any kind of challenge you find yourself facing.
5. Stay positive and informed. Love and laugh as much as possible.
6. Believe in healing and reconciliation even if a complete cure is not possible.
7. Be receptive to the good company and useful help that comes your way, whether from God or the loved ones and fellow travelers sharing part of your journey. Of those you would choose or allow to be with you, give them the opportunity to support and help sustain you in whatever ways they can.

8. Achieving stasis following a disruption takes time. Give your mind, body and spirit time to find their equilibrium following a procedure, a diagnosis, a dramatic health episode in your life.
9. Breathe. Meditate. Pray.
10. You know yourself best. Listen to what your heart is telling you in terms of what course of action to pursue and how and when to pursue it.
11. Unexpected and beautiful outcomes may well lie ahead. Never give up hope.

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