

# MORASHAH

## THE RABBINIC FELLOWSHIP OF THE UTJ

811 Palisade Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666

[www.utj.org](http://www.utj.org) 201.801.0707

Parshat HaShavuah Series

Rabbi Martin J. Berman

*The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness. (Genesis 6:11)*

*Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words. (Genesis 11:1)*

‘The generation of the flood – not a remnant was left but the generation of the dispersal– a remnant was left. Since the generation of the flood was steeped in violent theft... no remnant was left. But as to the latter since they loved one another, as it says: “*Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words*” they survived.”

Rabbi said: How great is peace for even were Israel worshipping idols yet had peace amongst themselves, the Omnipresent says, as if it were possible, “I cannot overwhelm them since they have peace among themselves.”<sup>1</sup> Genesis Rabbah 38:6

In Parshat Noah there are two generations that are punished: *dor hamabul*, the generation of the flood, and *dor haflagah* the generation of the dispersion those who tried to build the Tower of Babel. The *dor hamabul* was wiped out in the flood but the *dor haflagah* was merely dispersed over the face of the earth. The midrash sensitive to the language of the Torah explains why: the *dor hamabul* acted with violence and lawlessness towards each other; the *dor haflagah* while attacking the Kadosh Baruch Hu, lived in peace with each other.

It seems to me that the rabbis are telling us how important it is for a community to be unified and at peace. Dor haflagah survived because of that. Even an Israel that would turn away from G-d would have protection from divine punishment.

Just think if the generation that built the Tower of Babel, to rebel against G-d merited Divine protection, we who are involved in the positive mitzvah of building and guiding Jewish communities, if we were only unified and at peace with each other, how much more we could accomplish with G-d’s blessings. Those to whom Judaism and Jewish tradition is important should be aware of this traditional midrash and make it part of their living tradition.

---

<sup>1</sup> בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשה לח סימן ו  
אותן של דור המבול לא נשתיירה מהן פליטה ואלו של דור הפלגה נשתיירה מהם פליטה. אלא דור המבול  
על ידי שהיו שטופים בנזל שנא' (שם/איוב/כד) גבולות ישיגו עדר גזלו וירעו. לפיכך לא נשתייר מהן  
פליטה אבל אלו על ידי שהיו אוהבים זה את זה שנאמר ויהי כל הארץ שפה אחת לפיכך נשתיירה מהן  
פליטה. רבי אומר גדול השלום שאפילו ישראל עובדים עבודת כוכבים ושלום ביניהם אמר המקום כביכול  
איני יכול לשלוט בהן כיון ששלום ביניהם