

PARSHAT NOACH  
1 CHESHVAN 5782/7 SEPTEMBER 2021



*Hic* (Persian: Null)  
Acrylic on canvas by Ali Bursali (2008)

### BROKENNESS AND TRUE WHOLENESS

1. “Come, let us build a city, and a tower with its top in the sky, to make a name for ourselves; else we shall be scattered all over the world.” (Genesis 11:4)
2. Adonijah son of Haggit exalted himself to say “I will be king! (*ani emloch*).” He provided himself with chariots and horses and an escort of fifty outrunners. (I Kings 1:5)
3. God made everything out of nothing. But the nothing shows through. (Paul Valery)

For Valery the goal of poetry was to invent a literature that could transmit *nothing*. He viewed language as deceptively assertive/determinative, that to say something is to posit it as there/fully formed. He was more interested in getting outside this concept of language so as to transmit, not ideas of something, but the nothingness around and within things...to make space for the silence inside language. The poem is supposed to open up a space for the object’s nothingness to resonate with the nothingness inside the reader (not the reader’s ego or self or understanding). (Lucas)

4. The very purpose of Creation was that all would be compelled to ask, “Who created all these?” – that all would know clearly that a supreme force, in its goodness, is sovereign of the world, and none would make a claim to autonomous power. To that end, God planted in each entity some lack, a fissure in its being, making them all incomplete. (Rabbi Ya’akov of Izbica-Radzyn)

5. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא נִפְשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹן עַל כָּל מָה שֶׁבָּרָאתָ לְהַחַיּוֹת  
בְּהֵם נִפְשׁ כָּל חַי בָּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים  
*Baruch atah ado-nai elo-hai-nu melech haolam borei nefashot rabot v'chesronan al kol ma she'barata l'hachayot bahem nefesh kol chai baruch chei ha'olamim.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of numerous living beings and their needs, for all the things You have created with which to sustain the soul of every living being. Blessed is the One who is the Life of the worlds.

6. Everything with a soul is in need. And that is a good thing. (Based on Chofetz Chaim)

7. אַחֵר – an other  
אֶחָד – behind  
אֲחֵרִיּוֹת – responsibility

Moses said, “Oh, let me behold Your Presence!” And God answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name יהוה, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show. But you cannot see My face...I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you will see My back (אַחֲרַי)....” (Exodus 33:18-23)

8. *Hic* as used in Islamic mysticism seeks to describe the relationship between the omnipresence of the universe and its absence; the never-ending, infinite and incomprehensible depth of God’s existence.

9. I approach the infinite insofar as I forget myself for my neighbor who looks at me....A you is inserted between the I and the absolute He. (Emmanuel Levinas)