Flood Assurance
Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by HaRav Chaim Weg
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https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BER82_002_Noach_For
_Dear_Life_The_Halachos_of_Suicide.mp3
And Hashem said in His heart: I will not continue to curse again the ground because of man...nor will I again continue to smite every living being, as I have done.

Bereishis 8:21

In addition to this *pasuk*, the Torah says multiple times in our parsha (e.g., 9:11 and 9:15) that Hashem promised never to destroy the world again after the *mabul.* What is not entirely clear is whether the promise was never to destroy the entire world by any means or only by flood. Some *psukim* note the element of water within the promise, but others do not.

The Gemara in Zvachim (116a) seems to hold that the promise applies to all destruction, saying that when the non-Jews heard the loud noises of *Matan* Torah, they became frightened and asked Bilam whether Hashem was destroying the world, either by flood or by fire. Bilam assured them that Hashem had promised not to destroy the world again.

But the Gemara in Sotah (11a) implies that the promise was limited to floods, saying that the Egyptians did not wish to kill the Jews by fire because Hashem would then destroy them the same way, so they instead killed them with water (by drowning the babies), because Hashem promised not to destroy the world with a flood.

The *mefarshim* also appear to debate this question. The Rambam (Hilchos *Teshuvah perek* 3) says that if the world commits more *aveiros* than mitzvos, it will be destroyed immediately—so the Rambam must maintain that the promise not to destroy the world is limited to flooding. But the Maharsha (Zvachim 116a) understands the Gemara in Zvachim to mean that the promise applies to any means of destruction. He says of the Gemara in Sotah that although the Egyptians thought Hashem would not punish them with water (which was wrong), they also believed Hashem would never destroy the entire world in any manner (which was correct).