

# Na'ama / נַעֲמָה

## Biblical Text

As for Tzilah, she bore Tuval-Kayin, who forged all implements of copper and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain was **Na'ama**.



This is the line of Noah. Noah was a simple man; he was righteous for his time. Noah walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

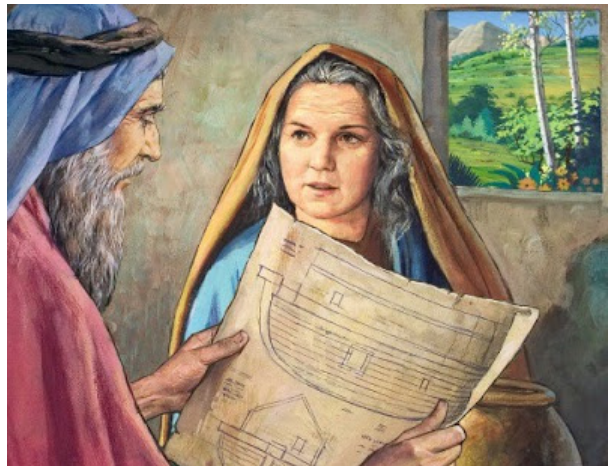
God said... “for My part, I am about to bring the Flood—waters upon the earth—to destroy all flesh under the sky in which there is breath of life; everything on earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, **your wife**, and your sons’ wives.”

Noah was six hundred years old when the Flood came, waters upon the earth. Noah, with his sons, **his wife**, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the Flood....that same day Noah and Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, went into the ark, with **Noah’s wife** and the three wives of his sons....and the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.... in the second month, on the twenty-seventh month, the earth was dry. God spoke to Noah, saying, “Come out of the ark, together with **your wife**, your sons, and your sons’ wives....So Noah came out, together with his sons, **his wife**, and his sons’ wives.

*(selected from B'reisheet, Chapters 4, 6,7,8)*

## Questions:

1. Who is Na'ama, according to either or both of these texts above?
2. What evidence do we have that the named woman in the second text (Na'ama) is the unnamed wife of Noah in the first text?
3. What, if anything, can we learn or infer about Na'ama from the texts themselves? What questions remain?



## Classical Midrash

**THE SISTER OF TUVAL-KAYIN WAS NA'AMA.** Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: Na'ama was Noah's **wife**. Why was she called Na'ama? Because all of her deeds were pleasant (*ne'imim*). The Rabbis said this is a different Na'ama. Why was she called Na'ama? Because she lulled people (*man'emet*) with a drum to seduce them into idol worship.

*B'reisheet Rabbah 23:3 (4-6 century)*

**NA'AMA** — She was Noah's wife (per B'reisheet Rabbah 23:3).

*Rashi (11<sup>th</sup> century commentator)*

[According to B'reisheet Rabbah 23:3] Na'ama became the wife of Noah, being the only surviving individual of the offspring of Cain. She was called Na'ama in recognition of her good character. Other scholars in the same Midrash do not agree that the Na'ama who became Noah's wife was the one mentioned [in B'reisheet 4]. They attribute the name Na'ama *here* to *this* woman's ability to play music on these instruments.

*Radak (12<sup>th</sup> century commentator)*

In *B'reisheet Rabbah* some say that she (Na'ama) was Noah's wife. Why do they call Na'ama? That her ways were exceedingly pleasant (*Na'im*). This means to say that she had a name in that generation, because she was a true "*tzadeket*" (righteous woman), and gave birth to righteous people. For this reason the scripture makes note of her.

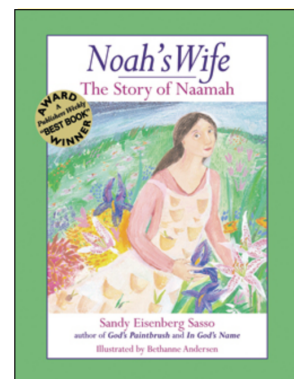
*Ramban (13<sup>th</sup> century commentator)*

## Contemporary Midrash

Consider the issue of women's silence, a phenomenon that is common in the Bible. What do you make of the silence of Noah's wife in Genesis? How is it different from, or the same as, Sarah's silence when Isaac is taken by Abraham to be sacrificed in Genesis 22? How is it different from, or the same as, Hannah's silence before she goes to Shiloh to pray for a child in I Samuel 1:1-9? The silences of biblical women are the reason why many Jewish women today feel compelled to use the medium of midrash to understand and fill those silences. - Penina Adelman, *Praise Her Works* (2005)

### *Noah's Wife: The Story of Naamah*

by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso  
(2002)



# נְעֻמָּה Na'ama: Confusion and Chaos

## The Zohar tells another story of Na'ama. Is this the same character?

*“The sons of God saw the daughters of humanity that they were beautiful; and they took them wives, whomsoever they chose.”\*\**

Na'ama's beauty seduced the sons of God, Uzza and Azael. God cast Uzza and Azael down from their holy place and they went astray after the womenfolk and seduced the world also.

Two female spirits (Lillith and Na'ama) would come and copulate with [Adam] and bear children...and those whom they bore are the evil spirits of the world who are called the Plagues of Mankind. And they lead the sons of man astray, and dwell in the doorway of the house, and in the cisterns and in the latrines.... But if the holy name Shaddai with supernal crowns is found in the doorway of a man's house, they all flee and go away from there.

This association with Adam continued a hundred and thirty years until the coming of Na'ama by whose great beauty Aza and Azael, sons of God, were seduced and fell from their high state of light and purity. From them came forth a brood of evil spirits into the world. It is Na'ama who wanders through the world at night time, causing men to lose their virility- and wherever they are found sleeping alone in a house, she acquires power over them, especially in times of physical weakness and ill health, while the moon is waning.

- Zohar 1:19b; 3:208a; 3:76; 4:7

**\*\*FULL BIBLICAL TEXT:** *And it came to pass, when humanity began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of humanity that they were beautiful; and they took them wives, whomsoever they chose.*

*And the LORD said: “my spirit shall not abide in humanity for ever, for that he also is mortal - therefore shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.” And God saw that humanity's evil was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And God regretted making humanity on earth, and it grieved God. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. - B'reisheet 6*