

# The Film *Noah* (2014) as an Intersection between Alternative Spiritualities and Popular Culture



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# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

*Midrash* מדרש

*Plural - midrashim*

Darren Aronofsky and Ari Handel for America



“We tried to remain truthful to the themes and the ideas that are written, but to create a dramatic story for a 21st-century audience.”

“It's not your grandmother's bible. It's something new... and something different.”

# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

Presenting three stances  
on issues of religion, humanity, nature, and God



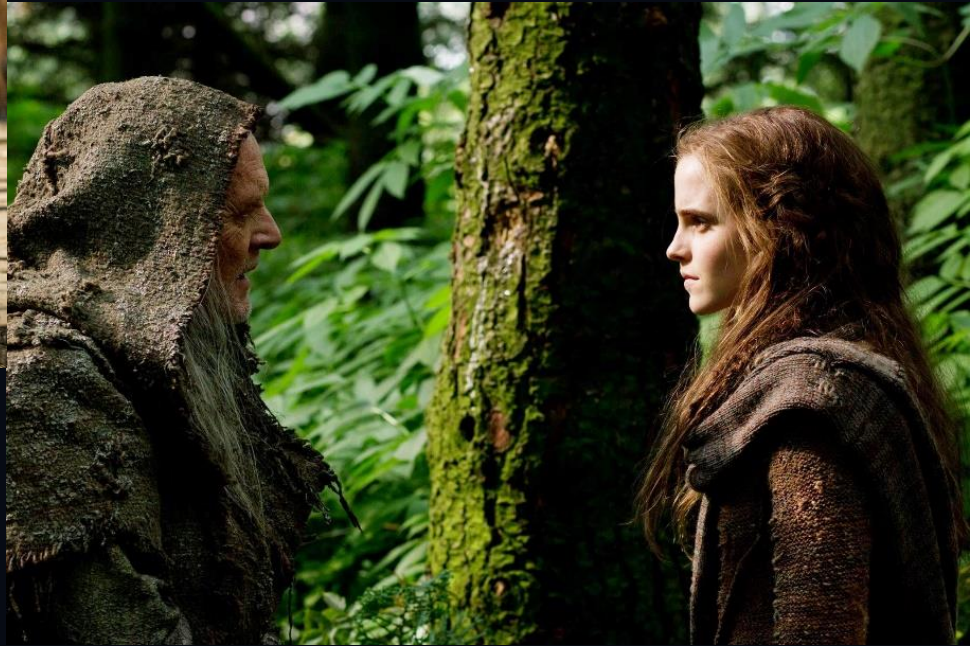
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# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

## Presenting three stances

on issues of religion, humanity, nature, and God

### The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity’s wickedness



“I saw it.  
The wickedness is not  
just in them.  
It’s in all of us.”

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### The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

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“Since Adam, sin has walked within us. Brother against brother. Nation against nation. Man against Creation. We murdered each other. We broke the world. We did this. Man did this. Everything that was beautiful, everything that was good, we shattered.”



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## Presenting three stances

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### The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity’s wickedness

“The Creator does not care what happens in this world. Nobody has heard from Him since He marked Cain. We are alone. Orphaned children, cursed to struggle by the sweat of our brow to survive.

Damned if I don’t do everything it takes to do just that. **Damned if I don’t take what I want!**”



Tubal-Cain

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The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity’s wickedness

“Miracles? A deluge, you claim?  
... Perhaps casting us out of  
Paradise was not enough. Perhaps  
He returns to finish us off.  
Well, if He does, I will ride the  
storm in that ship of yours.  
I’m not afraid of miracles!”



# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

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The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity’s wickedness

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stance:

Conservative-critical – anti-humanity



“The time for mercy has passed. Now our punishment begins.  
Now it begins again.

Air, water, earth, plant, fish, bird and beast. Paradise returns.  
But this time... this time there will be no men.”

# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

## Presenting three stances

on issues of religion, humanity, nature, and God

### The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity's wickedness

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> stance:

Conservative-critical – anti-humanity

a. Conservative clergy

b. Environmental movement

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The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Hedonistic – humanity's wickedness

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stance:

Conservative-critical – anti-humanity

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stance:

Compassionate/maternal – pro-humanity



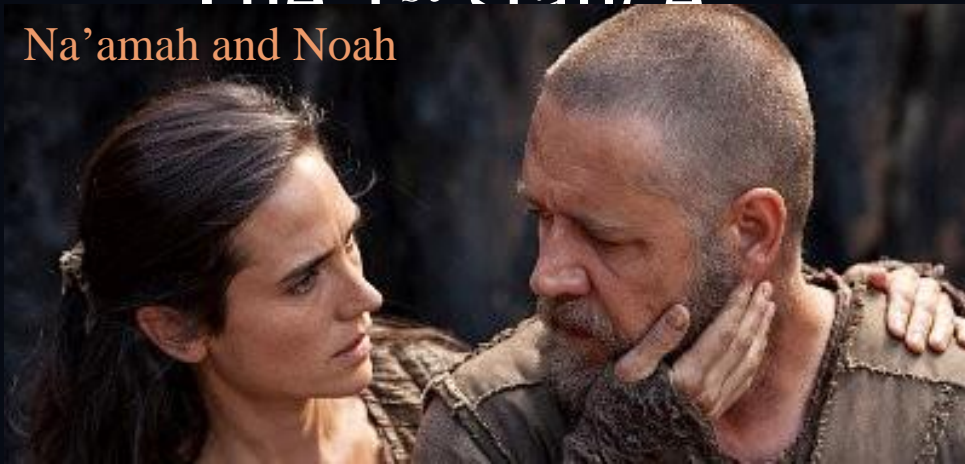
# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

## Presenting three stances

on issues of religion, humanity, nature, and God

### The 1<sup>st</sup> stance:

Na'amah and Noah



**“He has given us a second chance.**

**Be a father. Be a grandfather.  
Help us to do better this time.  
Help us start again..”**

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> stance:

Compassionate/maternal – pro-humanity

# *Noah* as a cinematic midrash

## Presenting three stances

on issues of religion, humanity, nature, and God

The 1<sup>st</sup> stance: *Present* *Indifference toward any values, no faith*  
Hedonistic – humanity’s wickedness

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stance: *Past* *Emphasis upon (religious) values*  
Conservative-critical – anti-humanity

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stance: *Future* *A proper balance between justice and mercy*  
Compassionate/maternal – pro-humanity

# Noah as a cinematic midrash

...thus an Intersection between  
Alternative Spiritualities  
and Popular Culture

כִּיֹּן שִׁיָּצֵא נֹחַ מִן הַתֵּבָה, וְרָאָה אֶת הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהוּא חָרַב וְנִחְרָב, הִתְחִיל מְמַרֵּר  
בְּבָכִי וְאוֹמֵר: רַבּוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים וְאֲדוֹנֵי הָאֲדוֹנִים, אַתָּה נִקְרָאתָ רַחוּם וְחַנוּן,  
הֲיֵה לָּךְ לְרַחֵם עַל בְּרִיּוֹתֶיךָ. אָמַר לוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא: אֵי לָּךְ רוּעָה שׁוֹטָה,  
עֲכָשׂוּ אֶתָּה אוֹמֵר לִי כֵּךְ, וְלֹא אָמַרְתָּ כֵּךְ בְּשַׁעַה שֶׁאָמַרְתִּי לָּךְ: "כִּי אַתָּה רְאִיתִי  
צַדִּיק לְפָנַי בְּדוֹר הַזֶּה"; "עֲשֵׂה לָּךְ תְּבֵת עֲצֵי גִפְרִית"; "וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת הַמַּבּוּל  
מִיָּם עַל הָאָרֶץ"... כָּל זֹאת לֹא גִלִּיתִי לָּךְ אֱלֹא כִּדֵּי שֶׁתַּעֲמִד לְפָנַי בַּתְּפִלָּה  
וְתִבְקֶשׁ רַחֲמִים עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת, וְאַתָּה, מִשְׁשֹׁמְעֶת שֶׁאַתָּה מְצִיל נַפְשֶׁךָ בַּתֵּבָה, לֹא הֲיֵה  
אֲכַפֵּת לָּךְ בְּחִרְבֵּן הָעוֹלָם. בְּנִיתָ לְעֲצֻמָּה תֵּבָה וְהִצַּלְתָּ עַצְמָךְ, עֲכָשׂוּ שֶׁכִּבְּר  
הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד בְּחִרְבָּנוּ, אַתָּה פּוֹתַח פִּיךָ לְהַתְּפַלֵּל וּלְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים?



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