

## TWO BY TWO\*

שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם בָּאוּ אֶל־נֹחַ

אֶל הַתֵּבָה זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נֹחַ

Two by two they came to Noah  
Into the ark, male and female  
as God commanded Noah

*Two by Two*—As one who struggled to be righteous in his generation—“Noah needed [God’s] support to uphold him [in righteousness]” (Rashi 6:9)—Noah’s task was to save and preserve all life on earth. *They came to Noah*—The hand of God, guiding all life to the ark, was joined to the hand of Noah, so the task was not his alone. In this, “the Word of God which administers nature . . . [was] the same which gave His Law to Man to be observed by his own free will . . .” (S.R. Hirsch). *Into the ark*—Noah was to build on earth, according to God’s design, the instrumentality of divine purpose and redemption. *Male and female*—Both would be necessary to repopulate and recreate the world by supporting, challenging, and holding one another accountable. *As God commanded Noah*—Although he doubted and delayed until the waters rose, Noah nonetheless bent his heart and mind to the divine will.

\* Genesis 7:9 (in Noah)