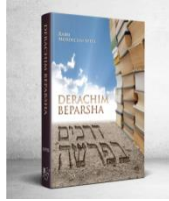


דרכים בפרשה נח

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ויחל נח איש האדמה ויטע כרם (ט:יח)

Noach, the man of the earth began and planted a vineyard. (9:18)

Upon exiting the *teiva* Noach's first action was to say thank you to HaShem for saving him from the waters of the *Mabul*. Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer explains that Noach understood that the reason he was commanded to bring seven pairs of clean animals on to the *teiva* was to have them available now to bring as *korbanos*, thanking HaShem.

Noach was then given the task of rebuilding the world anew. One quick glance at the world would have been more than enough to cause great depression for even the happiest of people. Thus Noach began with planting vineyards. As Dovid HaMelech exclaims (*Tehillim 104*), "Wine gladdens the human heart". The world would be a happy place.

Subsequently, "*Noach drank of his wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself inside of his tent. Cham saw his father uncovered.*" Instead of covering him, he furthered the shame by "*Telling his two brothers outside. Shem and Yafes took a garment and placed it on their shoulder. Walking inside backwards, they covered their father's shame without seeing him.*"

Together, Shem and Yafes took action to cover Noach. Yet the Torah expresses this in the singular as "**Vayikach-and he took**". Rashi explains that Shem took the initiative whereupon Yafes joined him. As a result Klal Yisroel, the descendants of Shem, were rewarded with the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, and Yafes received burial in Eretz Yisroel. Cham's descendants were cursed with slavery and tragedy.

The Netziv offers a brilliant insight into the mindset of Shem and Yafes. He explains that

there was a great difference between the brothers. Yafes saw his father's shame and proclaimed that something must be done about this great disgrace to human dignity. Noach was in a state of embarrassment and must be covered. It really didn't matter to Yafes who covered him as long as in the end, human dignity was restored. Yafes only joined because Shem needed his help. Shem's approach was completely different. Shem understood that he was faced with a mitzvah of protecting his father's honour, *kibud av*. The rule of a mitzvah is that it is preferable to do it on your own without deferring to someone else, unless help is required. Shem also cared for human dignity, not because human intellect dictates such, but rather because it is a mitzvah. *Ve'ahavta* and *tikkun Olam* are very much a part of a Yid's life, but only because HaShem commanded us. This then is the reason the Torah states "**Vayikach-and he took**" in the singular. Shem gets the credit for he was truly the initiator.

Based on the above explanation we can suggest an understanding of the rewards that were given to each son. Shem received the mitzvah of *tzitzis*. Although mitzvos in general can be fulfilled by others on one's behalf, some mitzvos do not come with that option. The mitzvah of *tzitzis* is one such example. One must fulfill it on his own. Shem received a reward that represented his approach to mitzvos, which would become his descendants' approach to all mitzvos; *Mitzvah bo yoser mibi'shluch*.

Yafes was concerned with *tikkun olam*. The merit of proper burial as one of human dignity is well understood throughout the world. This, then, was very apropos for Yafes. Cham on the other hand was cursed with slavery and tragedy. Someone who stands laughing at an unfortunate situation is only deserving of a life of pain, hardship, and servitude.

מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos