



Noach

Don't be like Noah

We should always try our best not to be like Noah. That is one of the key lessons of Parshat Noah.

At the beginning of the parsha, the Torah tells us "va'tishachet ha'erezt lifnei ha'Elokim" - "and the earth was corrupted before God." The Kotzker Rebbe brilliantly gives different punctuation to the sentence, and this is how he reads it: "Va'tishachet" – "there was corruption". And why was there corruption? It was because "ha'erezt lifnei ha'Elokim" – "people placed the earth before God". People's materialistic values were, in their eyes, far more important than Hashem and any spirituality that a person can experience.

Some of our commentators point out that Noah was the very antithesis of Moses. Why is that? Because, at the beginning of the parsha, Noah is described as "ish Tzadik, et ha'Elokim mithalech", "he was a righteous person who walked with God" and at the end of the parsha, after the flood, he's described as being "ish ha'adamah", "a man of the earth".

However, with regard to Moses, the first time he is described by anybody, it is by the daughters of Jethro in Midian and they say that he is an "ish mitzri", "an Egyptian man". And right at the end of the Torah, on the last day of his life, he is described as being "ish Ha'Elokim", "a man of God".

Every single one of us throughout our lives, is on a journey. With regard to Noah's journey, he started way up there as a righteous man of God and he went all the way down to become a man of the earth. Whereas, Moses was just the opposite, coming from being just an ordinary Egyptian, he went all the way up to becoming a man of God. So therefore, unlike Noah, on our personal journey here on earth, we should always strive to raise our maderigah, to raise the steps of our endeavor to reach greater and greater heights of spirituality and to come closer to Hashem.

One of the direct consequences of the 7th of October and the past two bitter years of conflict has been a strengthening of Jewish identity. I have seen it, I have heard it and I have come across so many people who feel more Jewish on their journey in life. They are now focusing far more on their spiritual identity.

In his recent historic address to the Knesset, President Donald Trump, in his words, ushered in, "a new age of faith, of hope and of God". This indeed is the opportunity of this moment. Let us not squander the chances we have, and let us focus always on being far more like Moses than on being like Noah.

Shabbat Shalom.