



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Parshat Noach begins, with the world about to be imperiled, even face the brink of destruction, and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* instructing *Noach* to build a *teiva*, which will not only offer shelter and protection during the onslaught of rain and flood that is about to descend upon earth, but also ensure the survival of humanity and many other species of animals.

In the directives as to how *Noach* should construct the *teiva*, *Hashem* tells *Noach*:

Tzohar Taaseh LaTeiva-you shall make a light for the teiva....

What was this *tzohar*, the source of light, that *Noach* placed within the *teiva*? *Rashi* offers two potential interpretations: According to one opinion it was a window, while according to others the *tzohar* was a precious stone that shined brightly and lit up the *teiva*.

Each of these interpretations leaves us to ask a fundamental question. How could one window or one shiny jewel provide sufficient light for a massive structure with multiple stories and compartments?

The ***Baal Shem Tov HaKadosh zy'a***, offers a beautiful answer to this very question. *Noach's* mission was to take a world of misery- *tzarah* - and transform it to a world of light. The word *tzohar* is made up of the same letters as the word *tzarah*. *Noach's* mission is indeed to transform darkness and misery to light.

The *Baal Shem Tov* continued to explain that the word *teiva* can also simply mean- word. The *Baal Shem Tov* explains that when we recite words of *tefila* or *divrei torah* they metaphysically serve as a source of light not only for ourselves but for the entire world.

There is a fascinating teaching in the *Zohar HaChadash* that offers an interesting take on the entire narrative of *Noach*. Upon emerging from the *teiva* and witnessing the destruction in the world following the flood, *Noach* began to weep, and then called out to *Hashem*- questioning how it could be that the world was decimated. *Hashem*, according to this teaching, answers *Noach*, calling him a foolish servant- I told you that you were



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righteous before me, and that the world was destined for destruction, and you did nothing! You had the capacity to *daven* and intercede, and you did nothing to convince me that the world was worth protecting!

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, zy'a points out something interesting in this teaching. In not advocating at all, by not making any effort whatsoever to show concern for others, *Noach* was not simply selling others short, but rather was selling **himself** short! *Noach* simply did not understand or believe that he, as a righteous person, had the ability to both advocate for or influence others! He simply didn't understand that he, like each of us, can indeed make a difference—that we are all given the gift of *koach hatefila*, the power of *tefila*, to transform ourselves, and transform the world!

Perhaps each of these ideas presented by the holy *Baal Shem Tov* and the *Kedushat Levi*, can be a source of much *chizuk* for each of us.

Yehi Ratzon, may the light that each of us can continue to bring to the world through our words of *tefila* and through sharing *divrei Torah* with one another be a source of *chizuk* for each of us and for the entire world. May the heartfelt *tefilot* we utter, and the words of *Torah* indeed shine bright, may they be a source of illumination which outshines any suffering and darkness, and may these sacred words of *tefila* and *divrei torah*, contribute to the betterment of humanity and the entire world. ■

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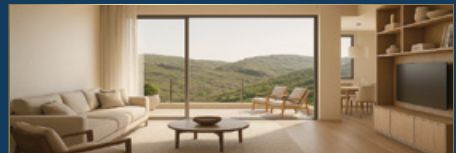
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