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PARSHA NOACH

Reflections

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The Missing Link

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Was the flood Noach's fault? Crazy as it may seem, the Zohar does just that! In explaining Yeshayahu's words in our haftora referring to the flood as "*Mei Noach - The Waters of Noach.*" (54:9) The Zohar elaborates that if Noach had convinced his generation to better their ways, he could have prevented the fateful flood. Noach had 120 years to make a difference, and in all that time he did not convince anyone to change. But how could that have happened? Did Noach simply ignore God's instruction and never even try to influence his neighbors?

Rav Chaim Friedlander, in his *Sefer Siftei Chaim on Tefillah*, explains the *Yaaleh V'Yavo* prayer, in which we ask Hashem to help us grow spiritually. This is peculiar. Spirituality is normally something Hashem asks from us, not something we request from Him! But Rav Friedlander teaches something powerful: No matter how much effort we put in, and no matter how long we try, we cannot grow spiritually without the help of Hashem. No amount of effort will suffice; it **must** be accompanied with Tefillah.

With this in mind, a novel understanding of Noach's mistake comes to light. We cannot consider that Noach did not **try** to teach his generation. The Torah even tells us that Noach "did everything that Hashem commanded him." (6:22) What if Noach, in fact, DID do everything he was commanded, but it wasn't enough? Noach brought pizza to the public schools, he ran shabbaton conventions, he ran discovery seminars and hosted guests for Shabbos every week for 120 years! Noach did anything and everything to spread Godliness. He embodied the best practices of NCSY, Aish Hatorah and Chabad! But Noach made one fatal mistake: he never davened for his generation. He never prayed that his students grow spiritually.

We are well familiar with asking Hashem for help in many areas of our lives. Wealth, health, family, safety and security are just some of the things we frequently request. But do we daven for spiritual growth? Have we ever davened to be **able** to daven? Noach's mistake wasn't a lack of effort, but a lack of appreciation that spiritual growth necessitates asking Hashem for help.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Do we have any proof of Noach's righteousness?
- Why does the Torah outline all the details of the ark's construction?
- What were Noach and his family doing for a year in the ark?
- Why do you think there is such a difference between the raven and the dove?
- Why was the Generation of the Flood destroyed, but not the Generation of the Tower?

