



## פרשת נח

**W**e should all be enthused, even excited, as we begin again our exploration of the greatest gift Hashem bestowed his people. Learning it all, from Beraishis until Vzot Habrachah every year is a well-traveled path - some of us may still have every Parsha memorized - but we still view ourselves as tourists in a new fascinating environment, like wide-eyed sightseers, always aware of something new that deserves our attention. Long ago I heard someone comment about the Gadlus of Torah; that the same Pasuk can be learned by Rav Moshe Feinstein and by a first grader and it will speak to both of them at their level. So true, but as we always mention, the Alter from Slobodka said that the purpose of his Shmuzen was to remove the childish perspective we were all taught in cheder. For a 40-year-old to approach Chumash with the vision of a child, with the same infantile perception is like asking him to use a tricycle as his means of transportation. Let us explore and hopefully we can find some sort of inspiration from things that we thought we already knew.

As we enter into Parshas Noach, we encounter a world with its humanity in serious decline. It did not turn into the utopia that Hashem had intended. The Borei Olam, the ultimate Baal Harachamim, is ready to put an end to it all. The land was overrun with the *shchata* (to translate it simply as 'corrupt', as commonly done, really misses the obscenity that is its root) and filled with *chamsa*, robbery. What happened to us? How? Where did it all start? And how does it all speak to us? One of the myriad *חסדים* that Hashem did for me was that I was *Zoche* to be, to see, to maybe learn a thing or two from *Moreinu* Rav Moshe Shapiro. It is an exercise in futility to even try and describe the knowledge, the genius, coupled with an extraordinary humanity. What I can say is that his insights into things always left us figuratively shaking our heads, mouths open at the way he saw things - we would never even think along those lines. I would like to share one of those ideas and use it to our advantage.

Rashi (6:13) quotes Chazal: "כל מקום שאתה מוצא זנות כל אנדכלמוסיא באה לעולם והורגת טובים ורעים" (he adjusts the

Chazal based on Gemarah and Midrashim which leaves out Avodah Zara - see R'Eam there). The Maharal (Gur Aryeh 6:13) quotes the Aruch that אנדכלמוסיא means Dever- a plague. (See Hartman Gur Aryeh #139 quoting the Yalkut Reuvaini- quoting Zohar in Vayakel.) That the Malach Hamaves traveled along with the Mabul waters and therefore Noach had to be sealed up in the Teiva similar to the rule of *לא תצא מן הבית* by Makkas Bechoros. Rav Moshe's classic insight is that "Dever" (plague) relates to the word "Dovor", which references "Dibur", which elevates man over the animal world. Speech is what makes a man an Adam. A deceased person is called *יורדי דומה*, descended into silence, unable to use the *כח הדיבור* that distinguishes man based on his level of Neshama.

My friends, allow me a few moments of clarification that might help, at least me, to understand this a little bit better. It is highlighted by many Mefarshim that the struggle of life, the incessant tension man must deal with, is the strife between body - *Guf*, and soul- Neshama, for dominance over man. Who is really driving the bus? The man that Hashem wanted to describe as being טוב מאד was dominated by his Neshama. The humanity we meet in Parshas Noach was a pathetic shell, driven beyond help, by desire and hopeless whim. Rav Hirsh so beautifully explains the Pasuk (6:3) "לא ידון רוחי באדם בשגם הוא בשר" "my spirit within man will not remain the judge forever, since he is also flesh" writes Rav Hirsh (Feldheim Edition) "the divine spirit which I breathed into man was intended to be a Dayan - דין". The voice of God that judges man from within man himself... However, this "judge" within man is corruptible and can be lulled to sleep... the sensual element within man becomes increasingly animated and the judging spirit within man abdicates its authority entirely." What words to describe our struggle! But the Borei Olam knows us and with the *Rachmanus* of both *בשר* and *רוח*, understands our battle for a moral and spiritual high ground . He says, as quoted by Rav Hirsh "this state of affairs will not continue much longer, בשגם הוא בשר , since he is also flesh.... with a body that is attracted to the sensual and that resists G-D's spirit... He therefore



