



PARSHAT NOACH

This shabbat, we read Parshat Noach, the second parsha in Sefer B'Reishit. The first Passuk of the Parsha says that Noach was a tzaddik (a righteous man), **IN HIS GENERATION**. What is the significance of this phrase?

Rashi quotes an argument about this matter. One opinion is that Noach was the greatest man of the generation, a generation full of very low-level individuals, and had he lived in a generation full of better people, he would have been even greater!

The other opinion is not as optimistic. It says that, yes, compared to the rest of the people who lived at that time, Noach was righteous. But if he had lived in a generation such as that of Avraham Avinu, for example, he would have been, at most, just an average person.

Why, in the second answer, is Noach faulted? How was he different from, or less than, Avraham (who we read about next week)? The answer is in the influence on others. Avraham saw the negative actions of the people around him, and made strong attempts to bring them closer to G-d, and was quite successful.

Noach, on the other hand, kept his righteousness to himself, and did not attempt to "spread the word" about G-d. Despite his personal greatness, he was not able to spare the people of his time from utter destruction.

If we have something great, let's use it not just for ourselves, but rather try to influence others as well!

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Cohen