

Noach 5777- The



In this week's *parsha* we learn about the unfortunate episode when Noach gets inebriated and ends up on the floor of his tent in an unclothed state. Upon hearing this, two of his son's Shaym & Yefes enter the tent and with great sensitivity cover their father, When the *passuk* describes this it says as follows "*Vayikach Shaym veYefes es hasimlah.....vayechasu es*

ervas avihem" –"Shaym & Yefes took the garment.....and covered their father's nakedness" (*Beraishis*, 9:23) The question is what does the Torah mean when it says "*hasimlah*" –"the garment"? The "the" infers it is referring to either a famous article of clothing or to a garment that had been recently mentioned. But neither of these options are apparent. So, shouldn't it just say that Shaym & Yefes took "a" garment?

Perhaps we can suggest the following. Imagine a kingdom where the King is loved by one and all. One day one of his faithful subjects is sitting at home minding his own business, when suddenly there's a knock at his door. Upon opening he is surprised, shocked and thrilled to see none other than His Royal Highness standing there. The King is invited inside and after getting himself comfortable on the couch he spends half an hour or so shmoozing with his host before leaving. From that point on, that couch which until that occasion was just an unremarkable piece of furniture, that couch which had more lumps than a badly made porridge, that couch whose springs were poking through the fabric, that couch will be known as "The" couch, yes, the one upon which His Majesty sat.

The purpose of all creation is to merit serving G-d in some capacity. Not only mankind, but even in-animate objects such as articles of clothing, they too have the same purpose. In the type of world that is important to *Yidden*, claim to fame is not defined by whether one has waltzed down a red carpet or one has been spotted on the Forbes 500 list, rather whether the world is a better place due to having played a role in a *mitzva* or good deed. So, even the most expensive or exclusive garment will remain in obscurity if it has not increased G-d's honor. And thus, there once was a *simlah* living a nondescript existence until one day Shaym & Yefes picked it up for a higher calling, to give *kavod*-honor- to their father who was having a bad day. It was at that very moment that that *simlah* became the most beautiful thing that exists, a *cheftza shel mitzva* - an object with which to perform a mitzva. It was at that moment it had fulfilled its purpose in life and the Torah can now truly call it *hasimlah* -"The" garment.

Have a great Shabbos,

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Noach 5777- Apropros

This week's *parsha* begins with the words "*Aileh toldos Noach*" - These are the children of Noach" (*Beraishis*, 6:9). Each weekly portion of the Torah has traditionally been given its name using the first distinct word found (usually) in its first sentence. The question has been asked why is this week's *parsha* called Noach and not Toldos? We know that *toldos* is a distinct enough word to use as a title for a *parsha* because it is used in a month from now as a title of the 6th *parsha*. So why not consider it here as the title of this week's *parsha*, since it is the first distinct word available (and we could have called the later one "Yitzchak")?

Perhaps the answer is that the word *toldos*-children- is something we associate with life, joy, continuity, dreams, legacy, and vibrancy. Being so, in a *parsha* describing a *mabul*, an episode of extreme death, sadness, interruption, dashed dreams and lifelessness, it seems hardly appropriate to entitle it "Toldos". Rather, "Noach", a name that conjures up *nechama*-consolation (as Lemech, Noach's father prophetically said that he is calling his son **Noach** because, "*zeh yenachamainu*" -" this [child] will console us" (*Beraishis*, 5:29), something the world bitterly needed after the *Mabul*, yes, "Noach" makes for a way better title.

Oh, by the way and for what it's worth, the first *parsha* that does not have any death in it whatsoever is Toldos!

L'chaim!

Have a great Shabbos,

Rabbi Nosson Greenberg

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