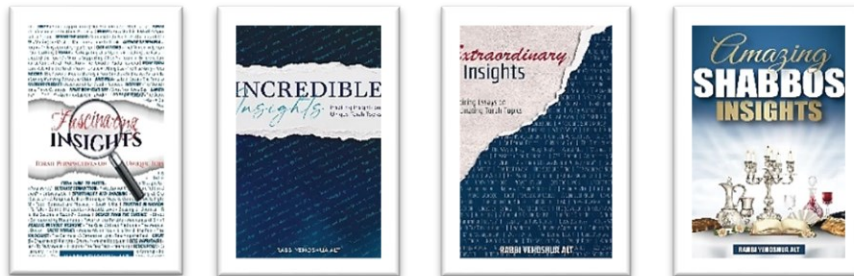


Fascinating INSIGHTS

כ"ו תשרי תשפ"ג
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Three Sons, Three Qualities

The pasuk states ומאלה נפצה הארץ שם, from these—שם, הם, and יפת—the world spread out.¹ This seems obvious, since who else was alive then?

The three sons of Noach represent three different qualities. שם represents essence, intellect, and the like. For this reason, we refer to our G-d as ה'שם—the essence.²

This is also demonstrated in the episode in which he covered his father after he became intoxicated. Shem exerted effort to honor him, as he was the essential one who did it.³ יפת also covered his father, but only because of

שם. It was an external action. Indeed, יפת means beauty, which is external. הם is the lowest of the three, as הם is a term for mating, as in יהם הצאן.⁴

Based on what we said, we can understand that שם represents intellect, הם base instincts, and יפת beauty. שם symbolizes meaning, that which has significance. This is the eastern side of the world where people strive for meaning through meditation and so on. הם refers to Africa, as it is written that his children are ...כוש ומצרים,⁵ since people there accentuate their desires. יפת, external beauty, represents places such as יון, Germany,⁶ and the western world, where emphasis is put on beauty.

¹ Breishis 9:19.

² We also see this in the word נשמה, soul, essence—as it is rooted in שם.

³ Breishis 9:23, Rashi. Rashi tells us that שם received the mitzva of tzitzis for covering his father when he got drunk, since he initiated the mitzva. He therefore received this because it is the first mitzva a father educates his child with. Furthermore, it is the first mitzva done in the morning. This is in contrast to יפת, who waited, thus receiving the mitzva of burial—the last mitzva. We see from here how important it is to make every beginning

strong, whether it is the beginning of the day, Seder, tefila, or any other beginning. This is just as we need kavana in the first bracha of Shmoneh Esrei.

⁴ Breishis 30:39, 41. See Mishna Brura 619:14 that on the night of Yom Kippur, one shouldn't wrap himself with pillows and cushions that warm him, and at least not to cover his legs.

⁵ Breishis 10:6.

⁶ As it says that his descendants were אשכנז, Germany (10:3). יון, who embodies beauty, also descends from יפת. In fact, יון consists of the same letters as נוי, beauty.

These types of people stem from שם, חם, and יפת because the world came from them. These three traits are also in each individual person, as we all possess intellect and meaning, base desires, and beauty. Now we can understand on a deeper level נפצה הארץ—these three traits of שם, חם, and יפת spread throughout the world.



Chava had these three qualities when she sinned. It says that **ותרא...למאכל**,⁷ she perceived that the tree was good for eating—the trait of יפת; וכי תאווה הוא לעינים, a delight to the eyes is the quality of חם, appealing; and ונחמד העין, the tree was desirable as a means to wisdom, שם, intellect.

The reason Chava sinned is because these traits need to be applied in the correct order. That is to say, first one needs to apply the intellect and then see how it feels. The reverse order leads to sin. To illustrate: If one sees a cake that looks good, he will consume it. After that, he justifies it to himself and says it's not really so unhealthy. Everyone eats it. However, the proper way is to first consider whether or not it makes sense for me to eat it: Is it good for my health? Will it help me in my relationship with Hashem? Is there a downside to eating it? We should merit to properly use the qualities we possess in our service to Hashem.

יפת	חם	שם
Beauty	Base instincts	Intellect
West	Africa and the like	East
ותרא...למאכל	וכי תאווה הוא לעינים	ונחמד העין להשכיל

Noble Noach

The following are some explanations showing the greatness of Noach:

⁷ Breishis 3:6.

⁸ Avos 2:6.

⁹ See Breishis 6:11,12 Rashi.

¹⁰ Breishis 6:9. Rashi says (Noach 6:9) some expound the Pasuk to Noach's praise while others' to his disparagement. According to the latter even though it is to his disparagement but the world nevertheless still exists because of him. Rav Pam would say likewise in our generation people comment we are on such a low

1) The Mishna⁸ teaches במקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש, in a place where there are no men, strive to be a man. When people are not behaving correctly we need to make an effort to act properly. During the time of Noach, the world was corrupt to the extent that even the animals mated with different species.⁹ Yet, Noach did not follow this path. This is the meaning in איש צדיק.¹⁰ Additionally, צדיק refers to someone who stands up against promiscuity as in יוסף הצדיק. The same is with Noach. Accordingly he is given this title.

2) Rashi¹¹ tells us the main children of a Tzadik are his good deeds. The children of Noach—שם, חם and יפת—are his Maasim Tovim. שם: he always had the ה' שם, name of Hashem with him. חם means warmth meaning he did acts with passion and enthusiasm.¹² יפת, beauty refers to that he performed actions תפארת לעושה ותפארת לו מן האדם.¹³

3) The continuity of the world was due to Noach. In this way we can grasp יסוד עולם וצדיק, a Tzadik is the foundation of the world,¹⁴ since Noach is called איש צדיק.¹⁵

4) Rashi¹⁵ says ...מקטני אמנה היה מאמין ואינו מאמין. Noach was one of little faith, he believed and didn't believe that the Mabul would come. R' Yitzchok of Vorka asks if Noach is described as איש צדיק תמים¹⁶ how can we label him with the title קטני אמנה? Furthermore, the words וצדיק וקטני אמנה¹⁷ contradict this since he is called צדיק? Noach believed that his generation would do Teshuva and remove the decree of the Mabul. So, this is how we should read Rashi: מקטני אמנה היה מאמין, Noach believed that even those with little Emuna would do Teshuva. He therefore didn't believe the Mabul would come — ואינו שיבוא המבול — מאמין — since their Teshuva would remove the decree.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of four books including the recently released Amazing Shabbos Insights, in addition to being the host of The Fascinating Insights Podcast. His writings, some of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

spiritual level in comparison to previous generations. However, the world continues its existence because of us.

¹¹ Breishis 6:9.

¹² Incidentally there is a quote, "The core of genius is passion."

¹³ Avos 2:1. Mayana Shel Torah, Noach, 6:9,10.

¹⁴ Mishlei 10:25.

¹⁵ Breishis, Rashi, 7:7.

¹⁶ Breishis 6:9.

¹⁷ Chavakuk 2:4.