Cham, being the father of Canaan. (9:18)...Cham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. (9:22)

Why does the Torah find it necessary to inform us twice that Cham was the father of Canaan? *Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl,* explains that the Torah is teaching us the reason that Canaan was such a morally-depraved person: his father, Cham. When one has a Cham for a father, he is hard-pressed to expunge the nefarious character traits that have likely become part of his DNA. Children inherit the nature of their parents. Does that mean that a child whose parents leave much to be desired in the areas of morality, ethicality, human decency is challenged with also being a miserable person? Hopefully not. With the proper guidance, he could learn to expunge the repulsive attributes or apply them positively. For instance, arrogance could be used for Torah, by demanding of himself that he act in a manner that compliments his Torah erudition. Anger can be used for protesting, or righteous indignation on behalf of Torah. While a negative character trait is a great challenge to overcome, at times it can be used to one's advantage by manipulating it properly.

Canaan did neither. His father was an outstanding mentor, who taught his son by example that miscreancy and immorality can be a way of life. Canaan made his father proud, imbuing an entire nation with the Chamite, Canaanite culture of moral profligacy and hedonism.

When one sees his son deviating from the prescribed Torah way of life, he should delay his reaction. Anger at the son should not be the first course of action. He should introspect and ruminate over the fact that this son has a father. Do not pass judgment on your son until you have asked yourself, "Is he really any different than I am?" One who seeks to educate and guide his children properly should first begin by educating himself. Before he lays blame at the feet of the school, the *rebbe*, the *morah*, let him look at himself in the mirror and ask: "Is he not like me?"

Rav Shalom cites the *pasuk* at the end of *Parashas Bereishis, Zeh sefer Toldos Adam* (ibid 5:1), which he interprets as a guide for child-rearing: "The descendants of an *adam*/person and their education is a *sefer*, book; all are bound together (as a book), inseparable between the two covers: The father/mother are the front cover; the child is the back cover. The two covers always match! If the front cover is blue, the back cover will also be blue, because they are one cloth. Parents should never forget the enduring influence they have on their offspring.

When the Torah lists those who left the Ark, it begins, *Va'yiheyu bnei Noach ha'yotzim min ha'teivah, Shem, Cham, vaYafes, v'Cham hu avi Canaan*, "The sons of Noach who came out of the Ark were Shem, Cham and Yafes – Cham being the father of Canaan" (ibid 18). After mentioning the names of Noach's sons who left the Ark, it continues on to describe/narrate Cham's debasement of his father. It appears as if the fact that Cham was on the Ark is a preface that segues into his disgrace of Noach. What does Cham's presence on the Ark have to do with

his immoral activity following Noach's inebriation? *Rav* Sholom explains that despite being on the Ark for a year, witnessing the demise of an entire evil world and the reward that was set aside for the righteous, they all continued to be "*bnei Noach*," the <u>same</u> sons of Noach. They exited the Ark in the same manner on the same level as when they entered it. No change whatsoever occurred.

Furthermore, one may wonder how Cham could have acted so outrageously following a year in the Ark, how he did not derive a lesson in how a human being should act. The answer is: They were all "*bnei Noach*"; no change. Cham had been morally flawed prior to the flood, and he continued his indecent behavior once he left the Ark. Seeing a world destroyed will not impact a person unless he applies what he sees to his mind and heart. Otherwise, it is a purely wasted experience.