

“And Cham being the father of Canaan.” (9:18)

It would have been sufficient to say, “And Cham was the father of Canaan.” Why does the Torah emphasize “*hu*” – “he,” as if there were something unique to be derived from the fact that Cham was Canaan’s father. *Horav Sholom Schwadron, z.l.*, attributes Canaan’s inappropriate behavior to the way he was raised by Cham, his father. Indeed, the apple did not fall far from the tree. Cham – he – is the father of Canaan. He is responsible for the way Canaan acted. The son inherited his father’s genes, his base nature, his contemptible character, his repulsive behavior. Cham saw his father’s debasement and humiliated him. This was the type of individual that Cham was. Is it any wonder that Canaan followed in his footsteps?

Horav Schwadron focuses on parents who, upon seeing their children’s inappropriate behavior, become angry – at their children. Regrettably, their anger is misplaced. Instead of faulting their children, they should first look at themselves. If one seeks to educate his children in the correct *Torah* way, he should first educate himself. Children need to witness an example at home. Regrettably, some see the wrong example.

Along the same lines, *Horav Yissachar Dov z.l., m’Belz* renders the following exposition on the *pasuk* at the beginning of our *parsha*; “*These are the offspring of Noach, Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations.*” He cites the *Targum Yonasan*, who interprets “*ish tzaddik tamim*,” to mean “a righteous man who performed good deeds.” What is the significance of his performance? Certainly, if he was righteous, he must have acted accordingly.

Regarding the *pasuk* in *Devarim* 29:28, “*The hidden [sins] are for Hashem, our G-d, but the revealed [sins] are for us and our children forever,*” the *Arizal* renders it homiletically, as a reference not to sin, but rather to *mitzvah* performance. There are two types of *mitzvos*: ones that by their very nature are performed in private, such as loving and fearing Hashem, and those that are “revealed,” *mitzvos* whose observance is performed publicly. We are instructed that the “*nistaros*,” hidden *mitzvos*, are to be between ourselves and G-d. We should not seek to publicize our *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven and call attention to our *ahavas Hashem*, love of the Almighty. On the other hand, with regard to our “*niglos*,” revealed *mitzvos*, we should make every attempt to make our observance known, especially to our children. This is because our children will emulate what they observe.

Noach’s “*nom de guerre*” was *tzaddik tamim*, two characteristics that aptly describe his behavior and personality. The term, “*tamim*,” perfect, is used to describe his activities. Hence, he is lauded for his public *mitzvah* performance. His “*toldos*,” offspring, were able to learn from him the significance and value of a *mitzvah*. They would in turn emulate him. *Tzaddik*, righteous, is more of a personal nature. It refers to Noach’s personal relationship with the Almighty, his fear and love of G-d. Noach sought to imbue his sons with the proper *chinuch*, knowing what to emphasize and when.

“*Zeh seifer toldos Adam*,” “*This is the (book) account of the descendants of Adam*” (*Bereishis* 5:1). The entire generations and educational development of man is encompassed in a single book. All of the descendants are bonded together into one volume – the father is the cover, the son is the inner text. If the outside of the book is white, the inside will be white. They are inseparable. Likewise, if the children act inappropriately, the parents should introspect before they lay the blame on everyone else.

This does not mean that every situation is the same. Certainly, the external environment plays a crucial role in the development of a child. We only posit that if the parent acts in a manner unbecoming a *Torah* Jew, he can probably look forward to a child who will emulate him.

When parents see a slight change in their child’s behavior; when they see their child respond to the influence of an undesirable environment, either at school or at play, they must act decisively. *Horav* Schwadron suggests that this is what saved Ashur. When Ashur noticed his sons attaching themselves to the wicked Nimrod, volunteering to assist in building the Tower of *Bavel*, he left. He separated himself and went to a different place, where he built the city of Ninveh. He did not wait for a tragedy to occur. He preempted his childrens’ assimilation into Nimrod’s milieu. He cared about his children’s education, seeking to inculcate them with the correct values – not the ones they would acquire on the street. When he saw the harmful environment and influences gaining a foothold in his children’s lives, he left. Incidentally, that is how it previously was. Parents were ever vigilant concerning the influence of the “street.” Sometimes we do not realize the effect of the culture/ environment upon our homes until it is too late.