

“Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations.” (6:9)

Rashi cites a difference of opinion regarding the meaning of *b'dorosav*, in his generation. Some are of the opinion that Noach was a *tzaddik* in a generation that was evil, immoral and hedonistic.

If he could ascend to spiritual leadership in such an environment, then he could certainly succeed in a generation such as Avraham's. Others contend that Noach seemed to be a *tzaddik* only because he was alive during a period of evil unparalleled in our history. Had he lived, however, in Avraham's generation, his righteousness would not really have appeared as great. Some interpret Noach in a positive light, while others dispute his righteousness in an absolute sense.

Nachlas Tzvi suggests an interesting twist to the meaning of *b'dorosav*, in regard to Noach. *Chazal* say in *Talmud Eiruvim 105a* that in the circumstances in which there are no *Kohanim temimim*, whole and healthy without any physical blemishes or impediments, to serve in the *Bais HaMikdash*, enter between the *Ulam* and the *Mizbayach*, Altar, to make the beaten plates of gold with which the interior of the *Kodshei Kodoshim*, Holy of Holies, was overlaid then any *Kohen*, regardless of his physical challenge, may do so. While the ideal is through *temimim*, it applies only if such individuals are available. If they are not to be found, then even a *Kohen baal mum* may enter. This is the meaning of *b'dorosav*. Noach was a *tzaddik* in the context of “his generation.” Since no one else other than he was inspired to come close to Hashem, he was blessed with an extra *shefah*, spiritual flow, from Hashem. When “*bnei aliyah*,” those who strive to succeed spiritually, are few, Hashem increases His Divine spiritual flow to the world. Hashem rewarded Noach with special favor, since he was the only one who cared.

Horav Aharon Kotler, z.l., once explained that those who studied Torah during the terrible years of World War II achieved incredible heights in Torah erudition, because so few studied. The dearth of students available and committed to Torah engendered a special, unprecedented *Siyata d'Shmaya*, Divine assistance, to the point that whoever sat down to learn Torah became successful.