

## Noach was a righteous man...Noach walked with Hashem. (6:9)

Noach walked with Hashem. This seems to be a positive comment about Noach's virtue, until we note that the *Torah* writes about Avraham Avinu, "*Hashem before whom I walked*," (*Bereishis 24:40*). *Rashi* notes that Avraham walked in front, without assistance. Noach walked with Hashem; he needed the support of the Almighty to maintain his spiritual strength. Without prompting from Above, Noach would have faltered. Avraham, on the other hand, had the spiritual fortitude to single-handedly override the challenges that confronted him. *Chazal* use the term, "*hisorrerus d'l'eila*," inspired from Above, in reference to Noach's spiritual commitment. In contrast, Avraham Avinu was "*misorrer*," inspired himself, to serve Hashem.

*Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita*, observes that the spiritual difference between Avraham and Noach resulted in the latter's inability to transmit his beliefs to the next generations. A *ben* Noach is still a *ben* Noach with only seven *mitzvos* to fulfill. He is spiritually impaired, always in need of outside support to maintain his spiritual plateau. Avraham's descendants, however, undertake the spiritual challenge on their own. They look for ways to grow in *Torah*, accepting responsibility to reach out to the unaffiliated, to better themselves, to move closer to Hashem.

The litmus test for a *ben Torah* is his ability to ascend on his own in his spiritual dimension. His spiritual drive must be apparent in his every endeavor. Complacency is anathema to the *ben Torah*. Children growing up in a home where there is no motivation, no vigor, no enthusiasm for *Torah* will have no guidelines in their personal quest. We harvest what we sow, cultivate and nurture. That which we ignore will produce nothing. Such a lifestyle has little chance of producing a generation that will be spiritually productive.