

These are the generations of Noach – Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generations. (6:9)

Noach is the first person to be called a *tzaddik*, righteous man. *Chazal* (*Avodah Zarah* 25?) say that *Sefer HaYashar* (*Sefer Bereishis*) is the *sefer*, book, dedicated to the lives of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. The *Talmud* (*Taanis* 15a) contends that *ohr*, light, is reference to the *tzaddik*, while *simchah*, joy, refers to the *yashar*, straight, upright person. *Rashi* explains that *yashar* is a more exalted level than *tzaddik*. *Ohr zarua latzaddik, u'l'yishrei lev simchah*, “Light is sown for the righteous, and for the upright of heart, gladness” (*Tehillim* 97:11). Joy is greater than light. *Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita*, explains the difference between the *tzaddik* and *yashar*. A *tzaddik* contends with his *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, and overpowers it. Nonetheless, his triumph comes at the expense of a battle. The *yashar*, however, is so straight and upright that he circumvents the *yetzer hora*. He is bound with Hashem in such a manner that the evil inclination has no leeway to worm itself in.

Noach was a *tzaddik*, a righteous and good man. He succeeded in his battle with the *yetzer hora*. The Avos, Patriarchs – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov – were *yesharim* whose relationship with Hashem transcended the possibility of the *yetzer hora* entering into the equation. Man was originally created to be *yashar*, until he sinned and fell in status. Avraham *Avinu*, followed by Yitzchak and Yaakov initiated the process of returning the crown of *yashrus* to its original state. Thus, the *tzaddik* only achieves the level of *ohr*, light. The *yashar*, however, achieves *simchah*. This should be our goal: to live a life of *yashrus*, so that we will enjoy true *simchah*.

The offspring of the *tzaddik* is his good deeds. This means that the primary legacy of a person is comprised of the worthwhile things that he does/achieves. We are remembered by the good things that we do. Likewise, our children are a testament to who we are. The way we raise them will attest to our own worthiness of a well-deserved and valuable legacy. The *Sfas Emes* offers a powerful parallel between children and good deeds. In order for a person to propagate offspring, he must infuse all his vigor into the endeavor. Likewise, *tzaddikim* are tenacious and forceful in carrying out the good deeds they initiate. It does not just happen. Only those who fully commit and devote themselves fully to the endeavor will succeed and, thus, be worthy of the appellation *tzaddik*. While others who preceded Noach executed good deeds, it was not with the vitality and passion required to leave a lasting impression and enduring legacy. Only Noach made it his life's endeavor. Therefore, only Noach earned *tzaddik* status, because only Noach could count his *maasim tovim* as his offspring.