

Noach 5774

Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

The Parsha of Noach opens up with the phrase that Noach was a tzaddik, complete in his generations. On the surface, this seems redundant. If the two terms, *tzaddik* and *tamim*, have the same meaning, why the repetition? If the two terms have differently meanings, even slightly, why are both being used here as Noach is introduced to us?

Rav Moshe Feinstein, Zt'l explained the terms in this opening phrase in the following manner. A *tzaddik* is one who comes out innocent in judgment but there was nevertheless a claim against him. A *tamim* is one who never had any claim against him in the first place. In Noach's case, though, why are both terms used? Rav Moshe Feinstein explained that some *tzaddikim* were sent into this world to influence the world and some were sent to perfect themselves but not necessarily influence others. If the *tzaddik* is only here to perfect himself then he would be a *tamim*, even if he does not influence others. However, Noach was sent to influence his generation. Once one is in such a position, no matter how minimal, there will always be people who will have issues with him. Even Moshe Rabbeinu had people who were against him. Noach was a *tamim* in his own mission and he was a *tzaddik* in that he did try to have some influence on his generation even if he did not try as hard as he should have as some of our rabbis have suggested. Hence, the two terms

Rav Moshe Feinstein then stated that one should not try to escape his/her mission to influence others. True, it would be easier to stay in the 'four amos of halacha' where it is 'safe.' However, in this world, we not only have to strive to be better for ourselves but also see to it that we are a good influence to all those who are around us. This is why all Jews, in the second bracha before the morning *shema*, ask Hashem to put into our hearts to learn and teach his Torah. Even those of us who are not in the field of education or are not raising children and grandchildren must still always try to be a good influence on those we come into contact with. Teaching is not only in the formal sense but in how others perceive us. We must always strive to be a good influence on those who see us and help everyone do Hashem's will.