

# HIDE THE SHAME

*by Rabbi Dovid Green*

Noach is one of the people who saw the world before its destruction, survived the actual tragic ending, and saw the world in its rebirth. We are told of how Noach emerged from the Ark and brought sacrifices to G-d. Then Noach sets out to plant a vineyard. From its grapes he makes wine, drinks and becomes drunk. He is found by his son Cham in his tent, undressed, and in an embarrassing state. Instead of taking action, Cham leaves Noach in his drunken state and reports the incident to his brothers, Shem, and Yefes. Shem and Yefes immediately set out to cover their father and minimize his embarrassment. They take a blanket, and walking backwards they drape the blanket over their father without staring at him in his low state. When Noach awakes, and finds out what happened, he blesses Shem and Yefes, and curses the descendants of Cham. (See Genesis 9:18-29)

The lesson and focus of this story is what Shem and Yefes did. Unlike Cham who publicized the shame of his father, Shem and Yefes sought to hide it. Shem and Yefes showed their father consideration, and attempted to restore his dignity.

**In the book "Reaching the Stars" by Ruchoma Shain, the following story is told. Mrs. Shain was a general studies teacher in a Jewish school, teaching 1st grade. There was a child named Ruthie in her class whose parents were immigrants from Hungary. Ruthie's father, a bricklayer, had fallen off of a scaffold and injured his spine. He was confined to a wheelchair. Her mother with the burden of caring for the family singlehandedly, suffered a breakdown and was hospitalized. The children were shunted between relatives and friend, their lives falling apart in front of them. This young child, suffering and confused, came to school every day, but never spoke a word. Every attempt to coax the child out of her shell met with failure. Toward the spring Ruthie still had not uttered a word in class. During a game, the children were sitting on the floor near the radiator. Mrs. Shain noticed a puddle growing under Ruthie, and she knew what would happen to Ruthie if the other girls became aware that she had had an accident. The embarrassment would be a death blow to the child. The children were absorbed in their game and had not yet discovered what had occurred. Mrs. Shain rapped on her desk with her ruler, and got everyone back to their seats. "The radiator is leaking badly and causing a puddle on the floor, and so you should get ready for dismissal." Mrs Shain never lied to her students, but in this case she made an exception. Another few minutes and the children were gone. The door opened and there stood Ruthie. "Uh... Uh... Mrs. Shain," she whispered. Those were her only words. Then Ruthie took**

### **Mrs Shain's hand, kissed it, and fled from the room.**

The student of Torah takes an important lesson from the events of this week's parsha. We must always try to understand others; not to seek their faults, and to try to bring out the good which is in everyone. When the opportunity presents itself, we should even try to prevent others from becoming aware of other's mistakes, shortcomings, and personality flaws. This is most important in regard to close relationships such as between siblings, and husbands and wives. In the merit of taking this lesson to heart, may we merit that G-d should always emphasize the good in us, and ignore our faults and shortcomings.

Good Shabbos!

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