

THE NAME OF HASHEM

by Rabbi Label Lam

Then HASHEM said to Noach, "Come to the Ark, you and your household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation." (Breishis 7:1)

Playing on the word "TEVA" -ARK which also means "word" the Sefas Emes quotes his grandfather the Chidushei HaRim, "The Ark of Noach is (figuratively) the words and letters of the Torah!" He goes on to explain what this means, "That every person is able to enter himself into each "TEVA"-each word from Torah and Prayer and through this he will be able to be saved from all matters of lurking danger. Any of the words can give him refuge but the person must be fitting to enter into words of Torah. However, through nullifying one's self to the entirety of Israel each person can become enveloped in words of Torah".

This explanation also needs an explanation. How can a person find shelter in a word? Is this some cute poetic riddle? Can a word deny a person entry?

King Solomon states, "The name of HASHEM is a strong tower, a righteous person will run within it and be raised on high." The following verse, in contradistinction reads, "A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination."

Apparently, according to the wisest of all men it is possible for righteous people to take refuge and find security in "the name of HASHEM." And so the Nefesh HaChaim makes the following bold claim, "In truth it is a great matter and wondrous spiritual strategy to remove from upon him-self all judgments and external influences, so that no one should rule over and they should not make even the slightest impression at all. When a person fixes in his heart saying, 'Is not HASHEM the true G-d and there is no force independent of and except for Him in the world and even the worlds above the worlds at all, and is not everything permeated and saturated with His simple oneness, blessed be His name?!' When he completely subjugates his heart and he doesn't pay even the slightest attention to any other force or desire in the world, and the pureness of his thoughts are anchored only to the absolute unity of his Master, bless is He, then HASHEM grasps him in His hand and automatically all the powers and agendas in the world are removed from him so that they will not be able to impact him in the least."

There are stories about great people like the Brisker Rav and his son who remained hidden in the open using just and only such a mental strategy. The Nazis were searching for them on a train and they were not detected though they were in plain view, amazingly. As the story goes, the son had apparently lost his concentration for a moment, perhaps due to fright, and they were almost caught. Only when reminded by his father was he able to recover his holy train of thought, and like that they were saved. There are a number of similar such amazing and verifiable stories.

In a less miraculous vein, I remember being at the Western Wall with a Sefer Tehillim. I had pulled up a chair next to a shtender. I had no pressing plans that day. I figured I could sit for a while and say Tehillim. I was seated in the bright hot sun in the middle of the plaza distant from the then thin shade of the wall. I started to recite with seriousness and rapidity when I began to slow down to a halt, in response to a thought that quietly asked, "Where are you running to? Why are hurrying to the next word already?" I decided to sit with one word! So there I sat for a long while absorbed in that word till I was enveloped completely in the cooling shadows of the Western Wall. It was one of the most exalting experiences I have ever had, for whatever that is worth, and I believe it's worth plenty. My experience tells me it is repeatable at almost any time. Often when one first approaches a word, it seems as if the word is much smaller than him. Then, afterwards, he is swallowed by the enormity of the implication of the concept contained within it. By the way, what was that single word? It was **the name of HASHEM**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).