



Cry of Chesed

“*Vayizkor Elokim et Noach* - Hashem remembered Noach.” (*Bereisheet* 8:1) Chazal teach that Hashem remembered how Noach fed the animals in the Ark for twelve months. Was Noach not a “*tzadik tamim*,” a perfect individual who had numerous fine qualities? Is this the only thing that we can point out? Further, this is one of the ten verses quoted in the *Zichronot Musaf* on Rosh Hashanah. What is the significance of this and how is it relevant to us?

In *Lev Eliyahu*, Rav Lopian explains that had Noach and his family not been involved in this chesed, they never could have left the Ark. It was only the *zechut* of Noach's total devotion and concern for the needs of each animal that allowed him to survive the flood. Indeed, this particular act reflects the ways of Hashem Who takes care of the whole world. We too are taught, “*vehalachta bedrachav*,” to emulate Hashem and concern ourselves with the needs of others. We are obligated to feel the pain of another and see how we can alleviate their distress and address their needs.

In his *Machzor* Rosh Hashanah, Rav Druk discusses that when the world is being judged, we emphasize the middah of chesed that can tip the scales for a person's merit. “*Olam chesed yibaneh*,” we too must build our individual worlds on this quality.

“*Ve'tzedakah tatzil mimavet*” (*Mishlei* 10:2), when there is a decree of death in the world, such as at the time of the flood, the only recourse to be saved is to engage in chesed. The Ark itself was not sufficient to stop the raging waters from breaching and drowning everyone. Rather, it was the act of selfless giving to the animals during the entire year that protected Noach's family and spared them from destruction.

Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* quotes a powerful idea from Rav Haksher that further expounds on why Noach needed this specific merit. It was a *tikkun* for Noach since he was faulted for not praying for his generation; he lacked a certain degree of necessary empathy and compassion. It was therefore important for him to rectify his error by showing boundless concern for the animals to develop and solidify this middah.

We learn in *Sanhedrin* 98b that Rabi Elazar's students asked him what one should do to be spared the pains preceding the coming of Mashiach. He responded, “Engage in Torah study and acts of kindness.” As we find ourselves in these tumultuous times, we must strengthen ourselves in this arena. To say a few chapters of Tehillim is not enough, organize Tehillim groups among friends, encourage others to create groups. Find ways to assist those

under siege, organize or contribute to collections to provide basic needs for others. Call people who may be feeling alone, give them strength and comfort. This is what we are being summoned to do, *be'ez-rat Hashem*, may it help us merit a full redemption. In the words of the prophet Yeshayahu (1:27), "*Tzion bemishpat tipadeh ve'shavehah be'tzakah.*" ■

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