

"Of clean beast(s) and of beast(s) that are not clean, and the bird(s) and of everything that creeps on the ground." (7:8)

The symbol of "*acharis ha'yamim*," the days of *Moshiach*, is the "wolf will live in peace with the lamb." This concept has been presented by *Chazal* as the paradigm of peaceful co-existence that will reign during that period of time for which we pray and yearn daily.

Addressing a major Rabbinic conference in Warsaw, *Horav Meir Shapiro z.l.* questioned the uniqueness of this prophetic vision. What is so unique about the wolf "living" with the lamb? Did not all of the various species of the world co-exist harmoniously in Noach's ark? If we take Noach's ark into consideration, the vision of *acharis ha'yamim* is no longer impressive!

Horav Shapiro explained that in reality there are two forms of peace. There is peace which is the result of intellectual advancement, emanating from an attraction to pure spiritual refinement. The participant is dedicated to promoting the ideal of peace. This "idyllic" form of peace bespeaks the *Navi's* vision of *acharis ha'yamim*.

There is however, another form of peace: instinctive peace, which is dominant during times of elevated stress and anxiety. Indeed, for the sake of self-preservation, sworn enemies have made a hasty, temporary conciliation. When the world is "coming apart" and fear of annihilation prevails, arch enemies seem to find a way to mollify their differences.

This, noted *Horav Shapiro*, was the form of peaceful coexistence which prevailed in the ark. At a time when the Heavenly rains lashed out at the ark from all sides, when the waves of death engulfed them, when any moment could be their last, it is no wonder that every living creature lived in harmony. If they were to "fight" with one another, then their end would be imminent, death would devour them. This peaceful coexistence was a matter of life or death!

Horav Shapiro summed up his speech with a plea for peace and unity among all Jews. The dangerous crisis which loomed ahead was so intense that, unless they all banded together, they would be engulfed by the sea of death and destruction (w"x).