

For I have seen you as righteous in this generation. (7:1)

The *Zohar HaKadosh* (*Zohar Chadash Noach* 29a) relates that, when Noach exited the *Teivah*, Ark, and saw a world destroyed, he became morose and cried out to Hashem, “Master of the Universe, You are called Merciful. You should have had mercy on the world.” Hashem replied, “*Roeh shatya*, foolish shepherd – now you *daven*? You should have *davened* when I told you, ‘For I have seen you as righteous in this generation.’”

Why, indeed, did Noach not pray that the Flood be rescinded and the world not be destroyed? *Horav Tzvi Kushelevsky, Shlita*, explains that Noach believed that the world had degenerated to a point so low that it deserved to be destroyed. He viewed the sins of mankind through the lens of *Din*, Strict Justice – which does not allow for wiggle room or rationalization. One sins – he is punished – end of story. He failed to acknowledge that Hashem is also *Rachamon*, All-merciful, demonstrating the attribute which would have saved the world. When Noach saw with his two eyes the death and destruction that his prayers might have averted, he cried out. The images before him engendered a change of heart. Indeed *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 32:1) teach that Noach said to Hashem, “In truth, I acted much the way they did. What is the difference between me and them? You simply told me to get into the Ark (and I went).” Noach now felt that, since he neither protested their evil, nor prayed for them to be spared, he, too, did not deserve to be pardoned. He understood that he was saved due to *Rachamim*. Thus, he now prayed to Hashem to call upon His Attribute of Mercy.

It is difficult to get a handle on Noach. He is an enigma. Was he righteous? Was he not? Did he have a double standard – for himself and the rest of the world? One thing is for certain: the *Zohar* calls him a *ro'eh shatya*, which is a far from complimentary term. What did he do to warrant this appellation? *Rav* Kushelevsky explains that a *shoteh*, foolish person, is someone who loses what is given to him (*Talmud Chagigah* 4a). He is unable to look after his possessions. Apparently, Noach did not sufficiently value Hashem's favor to him: *Middas HaRachamim*. He should have realized that Hashem was giving him – and only him – a special gift: life. This could only be due to *rachamim*. Why did he not plead on behalf of his generation? What kind of leader/shepherd was he? A leader never gives up. He knows that *tefillah* is a mainstay of our relationship with Hashem. It is not up to him to decide whether the *tefillah* would achieve efficacy. Nonetheless – he must *daven*. Otherwise, he has no business being in a leadership role.

The *Navi Yeshayah* (54:9) refers to the flood waters as *mei Noach*, the waters of Noach, thereby attributing culpability to Noach for not attempting to prevent the flood waters from destroying the world. What should he have done? *Daven*! His *tefillos* could have nullified the decree. One should never short-change the power of his *tefillos*.

Horav Dovid Feinstein, zl, began his day with *Tehillim*. Early in the morning, he sat at his table reciting *Tehillim* for people who were in need. His jacket pockets were filled with scraps of paper covered with names of people for whom he *davened*. His *tefillos* were sincere, identifying with the

needs of those for whom he was asked to *daven*. He felt that *tefillah* was the highest form of endeavor in which one should invest effort and energy. He would often instruct family members of a *choleh*, sick person, that *tefillah* overrides a physician's diagnosis. Hashem has the last word. As such, we must petition Hashem for His blessing.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* felt that the *tefillah*, *V'Hu Rachum*, recited on Monday and Thursday, was one upon which we should all focus – especially when facing adversity. [Many reasons are given for the recital of this *tefillah* specifically on Monday and Thursday. One – *Bais Din*, Jewish courts, would convene on these days, thus implying that they are *yemei hadin*, days of judgment. The *Bais Din shel Maalah*, Heavenly Court, coincides with the earthly court. Two – Moshe *Rabbeinu*'s second round of forty days on *Har Sinai*, which effected *Klal Yisrael*'s reprieve from punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf, began on a Thursday and concluded on a Monday. There is also a poignant story attached to the tradition of reciting this prayer. Let it suffice to say that it is an important prayer which has powerful ramifications for he who says it sincerely with great *kavanah*, concentration.]

In some synagogues, the worshippers sadly look for excuses (such as the *yahrzeit* of a great *tzaddik*) not to recite this *tefillah* because of its length. The *Rosh Yeshivah* felt that it is important that we recite this *tefillah* with great feeling. First, in order to thank Hashem for not issuing adverse decrees against us; and second, to petition Him to keep it that way. A *tefillah* of such significance and efficacy should be “welcomed” and appreciated.