



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

פרשת נח

עָשָׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי גֹפֶר וגו'. וְזֶה אָשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ, שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אָרְךָ הַתֵּבָה, חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רָחְבָּהּ וְשָׁלְשִׁים אַמָּה קוֹמָתָהּ. (בראשית ו, יד-טו)

Make for yourself an Ark of gopher wood ... This is how you should make it – three hundred amos the length of the Ark; fifty amos its width; and thirty amos its height. (Bereishis 6:14-15)

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* queries why the Torah deemed it necessary to recount the exact measurements of the *teivah*. We won't need to rebuild a *teivah* as Hashem has promised that He will never flood the world again, and without a miracle, the *teivah* itself did not have the power to save Noach and his family. If so, why is it important for us to know the dimensions listed here, something that is seemingly irrelevant for the future?

Explains the Rosh Yeshiva, that even though we will never need a *teivah* to shield us from a **מבול** of water, the message of the *teivah* sheltering us from harm is still pertinent. This can be understood from how we find that Chazal termed different *nisayonos* in life as “the flooding of mighty waters”. The *possuk* in Tehillim (32:6) says: **עַל זֹאת יִתְפַּלֵּל כָּל חַסִּיד אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְעֵת מִצָּא, רַק לְשֹׁטֶף מַיִם רַבִּים אֵלָיו לֹא יִגִּיעוּ**, *For this every devout one shall pray to You at a time when (misfortune) befalls: Only that the flooding, mighty waters not overtake him.*

The Gemara (*Berachos* 8a) cites the above *possuk* and brings numerous stages in life where one threatened by “raging waters” needs to daven to Hashem for assistance: **אָמַר ר' חֲנִינָא לְעֵת מִצָּא זֶה**. *R' Chanina learns the possuk referring to the time of marriage; R' Nosson says it refers to the time (when one starts to learn) Torah; and R' Nachman bar Yitzchok says it refers to the time of death.* The Rosh Yeshivah explains that these times are incidents when one finds himself at a spiritual crossroads. At such a precarious time, the pious one is davening to be successful and saved.

אִשָּׁה זֶה מִצָּא זֶה - One who is about to get married finds himself at a pivotal stage concerning his future spiritual growth. Much of man's spiritual success depends on his wife. We find that both Odom and Korach were brought to sin and their downfall by their wives, whereas, Oin ben Peles and others were saved through their wives' actions. Marriage is a crucial time for man; hence he needs to daven for success the marriage should be instrumental to his *shteiging* and not *chas veshalom* otherwise.

זֶה תוֹרָה זֶה מִצָּא זֶה - When one begins to learn Torah, one finds himself in a perilous state that requires *tefillah* for success. This is so since learning Torah is something which can have diverse effects on man as the Gemara (*Yuma* 72b) states: **זֶכָה נַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ סֵם חַיִּים, לֹא זָכָה נַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ סֵם הַמָּוֶת**, *If one is deserving, the Torah becomes a drug of life for him. But if one is not deserving, it becomes a drug of death for him.*

זֶה מִיָּתֵה זֶה מִצָּא זֶה - When one finds himself about to die, he is facing a crucial juncture. Sincere thoughts of *teshuvah* and regret over past sins have the power to save a person from a lifetime of *aveirah*. The *yetser horah*, too, understands this and realises that years of his efforts may prove

worthless with this dying person's *teshuvah*. He therefore works overtime like flooding, mighty waters to make the dying man stumble and not let him use his last moments correctly.

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that the key to success in trying times, to enable oneself not to be flooded by the *yetser horah*, lies in the dimensions of the *teivah*. The Malbim explains that the measurements of the *teivah* allude to two names of Hashem – הו"י, and אדנות. When one multiplies the first letter of one name by the first letter of the other, it results in the measurements of the *teivah*:

א (1)	x	י (10)	=	10	10 + 20 = 30 - שְׁלִשִּׁים אַמָּה קוֹמְתָהּ - 30 <i>amos</i> high.
ד (4)	x	ה (5)	=	20	
נ (50)	x	ו (6)	=	300	שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אַרְבֵּי הַתְּבִיחַ, 300 <i>amos</i> long.
י (10)	x	ה (5)	=	50	חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רְחֹבָהּ, 50 <i>amos</i> wide.

What do these names of Hashem signify? אדנות indicates that Hashem is guarding, overseeing and orchestrating everything in the world. הו"י declares Hashem's reign in the past, present and future. When a person is aware of and internalises these facts, many *nisayonos* dissipate and vanish. When one realises that everything which has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future, is in the Hand of Hashem, one appreciates that it is incumbent to fulfil the will of Hashem.

With this concept, the Rema begins his commentary on Orach Chaim as the introducing remarks for all *mitzvah* observance: "שְׁוִיִּתִּי ה' לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד" הוא כָּלֵל גְּדוֹל בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמַעֲלוֹת הַצְּדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹלְכִים לְפָנָי, הַאֲלֹקִים, "I have placed Hashem before me constantly," is a major principal in the Torah and is among the virtues of the righteous who walk before Hashem.

Explains the Rosh Yeshivah, although we may not experience another *מבול* of water that requires us to construct another *teivah*, its dimensions are still significant. In turbulent times, when we need to protect ourselves from flooding, mighty waters, we need the lesson imparted to us with the measurements of the *teivah*. We must internalise how Hashem is termed in both הו"י and אדנות, and by experiencing clarity in Hashem's power and how all our lives are orchestrated by Him, may we be *zoche* to be saved from tumultuous times.

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