

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ו RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS BEREISHIS THE LION OF NOACH'S WORLD ZOO

One time Rav Hunter ztl had an appointment with the Satmer Rav ztl. He arrived five minutes late. As he was sitting in a waiting room, the *talmid* who accompanied him noticed that his *Rebbi* was acting a little nervous. The *talmid* attempted to calm him by saying that there is no reason to worry since it was only a few minutes late and is expected. His *rebbe* obviously didn't agree with him for immediately he went directly on giving his *talmid* a *shmooz* on why this scenario was different and brought a proof from our *parsha*.

The *passuk* says וישאר אך נח (Bereishis 7,27 Rashi) that when Noach left the *Taivah* he was physically compromised because of an encounter he had with the lion. One time he delayed his food and due to its impatience to eat its scheduled meal, it attacked and injured him.

ויש אומרים שאיחר מזונות לארי והכישו ועליו נאמר (משלי יא) הן צדיק בארץ ישולם

One might ask that this seems a little unfair and even unjust to Noach. Here we find a righteous individual cooped up in a ark for an entire year. He was light years more that your regular zoo keeper for he was in charge of all the animals, birds, rodents, creatures, beasts, insects that were to destined to live and multiply in the new world after the flood. Noach had to keep daily tabs on every single diet that each creature required. Not only this, but he had to be conscious of every creature's feeding time and their schedule. *Chazal* tell us that because of all the above, Noach hardly slept during the entire period that he was in charge of the World Zoo. The only break that Noach had was breaking all his *middos* and perfecting them. Rashi writes on the same *passuk* above "He was coughing and retching blood because of his trouble caring for the animal and beasts".

Yet with constant daily chaos it appears that he was deserving of the lion attack for that one time just for coming late to feed it as Rashi ends the above commentary with the words הן צדיק בארץ ישולם behold the righteous gets paid retribution for his sins while he is still on earth. But why? We are not *malachim* but humans who are not constantly perfect.

The answer is. That for a regular zoo keeper in the Bronx to come a little late to feed the lion in the cage is no big fuss. However, in Noach's World Zoo one cannot be tardy even for a second, for that lion was the **last** remaining one in the world and was irreplaceable. In this *Taiva* there were nested a pair of unique representatives for the future of Hashem's species in the new world. This situation absolutely requires zero allowance for laziness, impatience, frustration, quitting, procrastination or tardiness of any sort. That being said, his *talmid* understood very clearly the reason why the Rosh Yeshiva was nervous for his coming late to the Satmer Rav even by a minute.

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What could we derive from this episode? *Chazal* explain חייב אדם לומר בשבילי נברא העולם Every person is **obligated** to say because of my existence the world was created (Sanhedrin 37). This is the reason why **one** man was created which is in contrast to the immediate all at once creation of every species of creatures, vegetation, and inanimate matter. The message is that as far as human beings go there are no duplications or doubles or replacements, only חד פעמי one of a kind. This means that we too have to look at each individual as the last lion in the world and likewise one must see himself in the same light. You are irreplaceable with a personal mission that cannot be fulfilled or substituted by anyone else but you. Now that is responsibility at its highest!

בא אל התיבה (Bereishis 7,1) the Baal Shem Tov says that the word תבה which means **ark** also means **word**. This teaches that Hashem wants that when one *davens* he should **enter** the word and not merely say it superficially with lip service. After all *tefillah* is called "*avoda* of the heart" and by merely repeating words without feeling by habit and rote, the organ of the heart is not involved at all. It is comparable to putting *tefillin* on your leg instead of your head and hand.

How then can we get the heart more involved in this mitzvah? Not knowing what the translation of the words that you are saying, is the first major hurdle that one must overcome. I was fortunate to be in a yeshiva elementary school which one of the subjects learned twice a week was *Biur Tefillah*. There is no doubt in my mind that it was from there that I merited an appreciation for *davening*. I suggest to my *bachurim* that for a starter, one is to take a single *berachah* from *Shemoneh Esrai* for three days three times a day or even one *bracha* a week and learn the translation of each word 100%. If you can get an accompanying commentary with it of which today we have Baruch Hashem many in English, it will enhance your appreciation and even love for that *beracha*. By the end of a few months or less you will discover in yourself new excitement to *daven Shemoneh Esrai*. Of course one will always have to fight and refresh himself to battle the ongoing struggle not to let his new appreciation of his understanding of *Shemoneh Esrai* also fall into automatic pilot. But that is a separate *shmooze* by itself.

We suggest that in the beginning of the *Shemoneh Esrai* our *Chachameinu* planted for us a preparatory consciousness of how to make our *tefillah* more meaningful if we take a second or two to understand the opening words אדני שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהילתך.

Standing in front of a very powerful and mighty king one becomes overcome with awe to the point that he himself becomes overwhelmed with the feeling of powerlessness finding severe difficulty to even speak. How much more so should we feel when standing before the King of Kings, creator and sustainer of the cosmos, from whom we are beseeching His mercy and compassion to grant our wishes for life, sustenance, health, wisdom, redemption, children etc. If we can picture this scenario for a second or two we will find that our lips become frozen tight together and we cannot even open them to request what we came for. In our humility and nothingness in the presence of Hashem, we

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can only ask Him to open one's lips to say His praises which precedes one's beckoning from the Almighty Master of the universe to bestow upon us blessing.

It is at this very moment that one must feel that he is the only lion in the world commissioned from this infinite king to sing His praises and no one else can take his place or duplicate his praises to Hashem. With this self image of one's personal "one of a kind" relationship with Hashem, his heart can open and all the varied excuses why he cannot have *kavannah* or it doesn't pay to concentrate, will suddenly disappear.

Furthermore, this strategy is hinted in the end letters of this passuk **יגיד תהילתך** **ופי** **אני שפתי תפתח** which spells the word **כִּיחִידִי** alone, like a one of a kind. That are approach to *davening* is I am **like** **יחידִי** all alone and all dependent upon **me** **אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי**. At this moment you are the only single person on earth to be given this exclusive task and super honor. More so, one must look at this *tefillah* that he is about to *daven* as also **כִּיחִידִי** a one time opportunity never to come about since **מעשה בראשית** and never to return again. The *tikkun* that must come about from this *tefillah* should cause **fomo** the acronym of fear of missing out. This image of the *tefillah* as the **OA O one and only**, is not a fantasy or dream but the reality that we will be shown after 120 how we either succeeded in making a universal *tikkun* with it or instead we missed the *tikkun* opportunity that comes once in 6000 years of earth's existence.

In order to make our *tefillah* heartfelt, one must first rise on time. Shema has its limited time and *Shemoneh Esrai* as well. Even coming late for *Pesukai D'zimrah* will compromise our *teffilos*. I composed a word that describes the individual who is tardy because he wants to *chapp* another few minutes of *shnooze*. It is called **horizontilitus**. He needs a *refuah*.

This brings us back to the opening story of the *mamar*. The Shulchan Aruch begins with **יתגבר כארי** **לעבודת בורא** **לעמוד בבקר** that one should be as strong as a lion to stand up in the morning to serve Hashem. The comparison to a lion from where to draw the inspiration to be zealous in rising from bed is a little perplexing since the lion does not rise in the morning with a roaring manifestation of strength but he is rather quite lazy? We suggest that it is referring to the lion in the *Taivah* of Noach who attacked him for being tardy in serving it the last lion in the world. We too must be characteristic of that lion because each person is the last lion in the world as we explained above and should therefore not tolerate any tardiness or laziness or excuses why one comes late to the *davening*.

Maybe if we start the morning with that lion in mind we will merit to *daven* the *Shemoneh Esrai* with **אני כדבר** as in Yiddish a lion is called **ליב**.

Gut Shabbos