

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

If you just emerged from the ark in which all living things were saved, what would you do first? Initially, Noah seems to prove God's assessment of his righteousness by making an offering of thanksgiving for being allowed to survive. God is so touched by this simple gesture that He blesses Noah and his children with the mission of repopulating the Earth, and He promises never to bring such a catastrophic flood again.

This sounds well and good, but after that exchange there follows a peculiar episode in which Noah and his sons are tarred with the brush of severe dysfunction. Adopting a life of farming, Noah made wine from his vineyard and got so drunk that he disrobed in his tent. His son Ham saw him in this vulnerable state and told his brothers Shem and Japheth, who covered him respectfully. Yet when Noah awoke, he reacted to Ham with such fury that generations of Biblical commentators have not been able to agree on his exact sin. Whatever it was must have been a doozy to evoke the "Curse of Ham," in which Noah prophesied that Ham's son Kena'an would be a slave to his uncles.

Whenever the Torah presents a righteous figure who acts unfairly, we assume that there must be more to the story than what is reported openly in the literal text. Our longstanding tradition is to fill in these gaps with Midrashim, which bring new layers of narrative to the Tanakh in a way that fits with the language of the verses. A graphic Midrash in the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 70a) infers that Ham castrated his father out of jealousy for his ability to sire more children than Adam, leading to more sibling rivalry against himself. This explanation also

solves the problem of why Noah cursed Kena'an instead of Ham: since Ham prevented Noah from having a fourth child, Noah cursed Ham's fourth son with having to serve the uncles who would now need to put aside their own lives to minister to their father.

In Christian circles, the "Curse of Ham" underwent many reworkings to justify the social injustices of the times. In the High Middle Ages, the curse was used by the nobility, who presented themselves as the descendants of Japheth, to explain why they should have the right to control the serfs, whom they understood as the descendants of Ham. But as African slavery posed an even greater challenge to Christian morality than serfdom in the Early Modern period, Ham was recast as the ancestor of all black-skinned people, enabling the white descendants of Japheth to claim that their oppression of Africans was none other than the fulfillment of a Biblical prophecy. Lest we lay the blame for this at the feet of Christians, it is noteworthy that even the Talmud understands the "Curse of Ham" to include being the father of the black Kushites (*Sanhedrin* 108b).

These ugly polemics are a far cry from the sweet simplicity of Noah's offering when he first emerged from the ark. Explaining away modern wrongs with Biblical proofs is a blunt instrument indeed, and we should withdraw from going down this route wherever possible. Instead of using our Torah to proclaim why the world is fine in its broken state, let us rally around its cry of justice to proclaim why and how it should be fixed!



Parashat Noah

Torah: Gen. 6:9–11:32, 153 Pesukim
Hertz 26–40; Stone 30–53
Haftara: Is. 54:1–10
Hertz 41–42; Stone 1131–1132
Tefillot: Mashiv Haruah

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, November 4th

Shaharit 6:25 am
Candle Lighting 5:39 pm
Minha 5:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit 6:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, November 5th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am
Musaf 11:45 am
Women's Tehillim right after kiddush

Minha 5:00 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet 5:45 pm
Arvit 6:25 pm
Havdala 6:41 pm

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Weekdays / Sunday, November 6th
Daylight Savings Ends

Shaharit7:30 am
Talmud Torah10:00 am

Monday through Friday, November 7 to 11
Shaharit.....6:25 am

Tues, Nov 8th / Presidential & Local Elections

Next Shabbat / Fri & Sat, Nov 11 & 12
Candle lighting4:33 pm
Friday Minha4:15 pm
Shaharit8:30 am
Saturday Minha3:45 pm



Daylight Savings Ends

Remember to set your clocks back one hour this Sunday morning! Enjoy the 25-hour day and get ready for Shabbat to start coming in early!

Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in memory of

Yaacov ben Shaul, z”l

by
Tilda Levy & Shaul Levy



Presidential and Local Elections

If you are an American citizen, remember to vote in the election this Tuesday! In addition to the presidency, many regional and local offices are on the ballot, as well as several state-wide propositions. Exercise your right to vote and make your voice heard in our democracy!



Thanks for a wonderful baby naming!

The Melhado and Cavanagh families are humbled by the incredible turnout at the baby naming last Sunday. Nearly 150 people from our community came together for a memorable afternoon of celebration and merriment. Our **Elisheva Hadassa** was welcomed into the world in an affectionate outpouring of love and warmth!

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank everyone who made it possible, including staff members Sarah Bouchoucha, Penina Meghnagi Solomon, and Molly Jalali; Jose, Christina, and Stan; the entire Board of Directors; and those who performed kibudim including Rabbi Daniel Bouskila, Hazan Saeed Jalali, and David Kohan. A huge appreciation is also due to Almighty God for giving us our little Ellie to cherish across a lifetime of experiences!

In Memoriam

We remember yahrzeit anniversaries from November 5 to 12, 2016. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

4 Heshvan / Shabbat, November 5th

Sam Bekhor *Shmuel ben Yaacov*
Hilda Gillis *Haviva bat Sarah*
Grace Saltoon *Garziee bat Masouda*

5 Heshvan / Sunday, November 6th

Ruby Cohen *Rivka bat Salha Khatoun*
Salha Hoory *Salha bat Noona*
Jacob Izaac *Itzhak ben Yaacov Itzhak*
Menashe Levi *Menashe Hai ben Yoseph HaLevi*

6 Heshvan / Monday, November 7th

Meyer J. Jonah *Meir ben Yaacov Yonah*
Saul Sopher *Shaoul ben Avraham Shalom*

8 Heshvan / Wednesday, November 9th

Eliezer Chammou *Eliezer ben Yosef*

9 Heshvan / Thursday, November 10th

Ezekiel Ezra
Farha Joseph *Farha bat Haviva*

10 Heshvan / Friday, November 11th

Jacob Ezekiel Azoory *Yaacov Yehezkel*
Nissim Elie *Nissim Elie ben Dona*
Edward E. Sassoon *Yehezkel ben Aharon*

11 Heshvan / Shabbat, November 12th

Jacob Silas Mussry *Yaacov ben Saleh*
Naji Perry

Refua Shelema

Moselle Amron • Sally Amron
Yehezkel Avrahamy • Haskell Avrahami
Sylvia Cohen • Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke
Sassoon Ezra • Lev Hakak • Yoel Iny • Tilda Levy
Florice Newberry • Maurice Ovadia • Grace Tizabi
• Katie bat Farha • Miriam bat Yetta • Aliza bat
Rahel Aliza bat Victoria • Devora bat Patricia

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorakh