

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades

שבת ראש חודש פרשת נח

Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Parashat Noach

October 21, 2017 | Marcheshvan 1, 5778



## TORAH STUDY

**This Week: Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, Parashat Noach**  
**B'reishit 6.9-11.32, pages 41-63**

**Added reading: B'midbar 28.9-15, pages 930-931**

**SECOND ALIYAH:** "All the fountains of the great *t'hom* [deep] burst forth," says the text in verse 7.11. What is most significant about the word "*t'hom*"?

**SIXTH ALIYAH:** The word for naked in verse 9.22 is *ervah*. In B'reishit 2 is *arom*. What is the difference, and how does that explain how the episode progresses?

*The haftarah, Yishayahu 66.1-24, begins on Page 1220.*

**Next Week: Shabbat Parashat Lech L'cha**  
**B'reishit 12.1-17.27, pages 69-93**

**FIRST ALIYAH:** Avraham has been severely criticized for placing his wife's honor at risk, and rightly so. Yet, there is a hint that Sarah was complicit in this deception from the outset. What is that hint?

**SIXTH ALIYAH:** The sign of the covenant God makes with Avraham includes male circumcision. In what way do we know that this covenant is not gender-specific, but includes women?

*The haftarah, Yishayahu 40.27-41.16, begins on Page 94.*

*For haftarot, we follow S'fardi custom.*

### BLIND OBEDIENCE IS NOT WHAT GOD WANTS

Noach is one of the most tantalizing figures in the Torah, and nowhere is this more evident than in the first and last glimpses we catch of him this week. The opening is full of expectation: "Noach was a righteous man, faultless in his generation. Noach walked with Hashem (6.9)"

No one else in the Torah receives such accolades. Yet, the end of his life is full of pathos: His sons discover him drunk and naked. How had the sole human worthy of rescue during the flood fallen so low? The midrash provides many answers. One is surpassing in its sharpness:

"Once the waters had abated, Noach should have left the ark. However, Noach said to himself, "I entered with Hashem's permission, as it says, 'Go into the ark' (7.1). Shall I now leave without permission?' [Hashem] said to him, 'Is it permission that you are seeking? Very well..., come out of the ark.'" (Tanchuma, Noach, 13-14)

This Midrash is quite unmistakable in its note of exasperation. When it comes to rebuilding a shattered world, you do not wait for permission. Yet this is the Noach we know. What does Noach say to Hashem when told the world is about to perish? The answer is: nothing. Instead, we read four times of his silent obedience (see 6.22, 7.5, 7.9, and 7.16). Noach is the paradigm of biblical obedience. Yet the Torah tells us obedience is not enough.

Hashem does not command blind obedience. If He sought no more than mindless submission to the Divine will, He would have created robots, machines, or genetically programmed people who responded automatically to commands as dogs to Pavlov's bell. Hashem wants us to be mature, deliberative, to do His will because we understand or because we trust Him when we do not understand. He seeks from us something other and greater than obedience, namely responsibility.

Noach saved only himself and his family. At least on the evidence of the text, Noach did not even try. Noach's end—drunk, disheveled, an embarrassment to his children—eloquently tells us that if you save yourself while doing nothing to save the world, you do not even save yourself. Noach could not live with the guilt of survival.

*—Adapted from the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks*

### CBIOTP STANDARDS & PRACTICES

1. Men must keep their heads covered in the building and must wear a talit when appropriate. Women may choose to do either or both, but it is not mandatory.
2. Anyone accepting a Torah-related honor must wear a talit, regardless of gender.
3. Only one person at a time may take an aliyah.
4. No one should enter or leave the sanctuary during a K'dushah. One should not leave the sanctuary when the Torah scroll is being carried from or to the ark.
5. No conversations may be held in the hallway outside the sanctuary, or while standing in an aisle alongside a pew.
6. The use of recording equipment of any kind is forbidden on sacred days.
7. Also forbidden are cell phones, beepers and PDAs, except for physicians on call and emergency aid workers (please use vibrating option).
8. No smoking at any time in the building, or on synagogue grounds on Shabbatot and Yom Kippur.
9. No non-kosher food allowed in the building at any time.
10. No one may remove food or utensils from the shul on Shabbatot. An exception is made for food being brought to someone who is ailing and/or homebound.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Tuesday Barry Montauk  
Thursday Nadia Massuda,  
Deborah Umansky, Howard Weiss

Did we miss a birthday, anniversary, or other simchah?  
Let us know. We can't print what we don't know.

This week's Shabbat Booklet  
is being co-sponsored by

JUDY GOLUB

in memory of her late daughter,  
CAROL GOLUB FABRIKANT, ז"ל,

and

BARNETT SILVERSTEIN

in memory of his late brother,  
ALAN JAY SILVERSTEIN, ז"ל

May their memories be for a blessing.

## GOT SHABBAT?

*If you know children who might enjoy  
Morah Karen's Shabbat morning programs,  
tell them about it.*

## THE IMAHOT:

*Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee  
for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and  
those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:*

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי  
אֲבֹרָה וְשָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְרַבֵּקָה, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, רַחֵם  
וְלֵאדָּה. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל  
חֲסִדִּים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֶּל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסִדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמֵבִיא  
גּוֹאֵל לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Recite this only between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

זְכָרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים, מִלֶּךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים, וְכֹתֵבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים,  
לְמַעַן אֶ-לֹהִים חַיִּים.

מִלֶּךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִגֵּן אֲבֹרָה  
וְעִזְרַת שָׂרָה.

Присоединяйтесь к нам дл  
освящение и обед

This week's kiddush and luncheon  
are sponsored by CBIOTP

in honor of

ALEX GLICKMAN

in recognition of his many contributions as  
gabbai, baal korei, baal maftir, shaliach tzibur,  
and this list is just the beginning!

## When to bow—and how to bow

**Bowing at Bar'chu**, although halachically controversial, is so ingrained an Ashkenazi custom that to eliminate it also is questionable. That being said, the procedure is:

1. At Bar'chu, bow from the waist (not from the knees).
2. Before saying Hashem's Name, stand erect.
3. At Baruch shem, bow again from the waist.
4. Again, before saying Hashem's Name, stand erect.

**During the Amidah**, we bow at various points. Bowing at other times actually may be a violation of halachah. The method is:

1. At the opening of the Avot blessing, at Baruch, and again at the end of Avot (Magen Avraham), bend the knees.

At the second word (Ata), bow from the waist.

At Hashem's Name, stand erect.

2. **At Modim, we have an exception to the bowing procedure. We do not bend our knees.** Instead, we simply bow from the waist. At Hashem's Name, we stand erect.

3. At the end of the Modim blessing (v'al kulam... hatov shimcha), we repeat the full procedure: Bend the knees at Baruch; at the second word (Ata), bow from the waist; at Hashem's Name, stand erect.

There is, of course, yet another "bowing," but it is not technically part of the Amidah. As we recite *oseh shalom bimromav*, we take three steps backward, as if we are taking leave of our King, bowing first to our left (*oseh*), then to our right (*shalom*), and then forward, as we take three steps back. The gemara credits the practice to Rava, who said we should bow first to Hashem's right, which is our left.



## RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT LEADERSHIP

The praise that Noach is accorded is unparalleled anywhere in Tanach. He was, says the Torah, “a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noach walked with Hashem.” No such praise is given to Avraham or Moshe or any of the prophets. The only person who comes close is Iyuv (Job), described as “blameless and upright; he feared Hashem and shunned evil” (Iyuv 1.1). Noach is in fact the only individual in Tanach described as righteous (tzaddik).

Yet the man we see at the end of his life is not the person we saw at the beginning. After the flood:

“Noach, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Cham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Yaphet took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.” (9.20-23)

The man of Hashem has become a man of the soil. The upright man has become a drunkard. The man clothed in virtue now lies naked and unashamed. The man who saved his family from the flood is now so undignified that two of his sons are ashamed to look at him. This is a tale of decline. Why?

Noach is the classic case of someone who is righteous but not a leader. In a disastrous age, when all has been corrupted, when the world is filled with violence, when even Hashem himself—in the most poignant line in the whole Torah—“regretted that He had made man on earth, and He was pained to His very core,” Noach alone justifies Hashem’s faith in humanity, the faith that led Him to create humankind in the first place. That is an immense achievement, and nothing should detract from it. Noach is, after all, the man through whom Hashem makes a covenant with all humanity. Noach is to humanity what Avraham is to the Jewish people.

Noach was a good man in a bad age, but his influence on the life of his contemporaries was apparently zero. That is implicit in Hashem’s statement, “You alone have I found righteous in this whole generation.” It is implicit also in the fact that only Noach and his family, together with the animals, were saved. It is reasonable to assume that these two facts—Noach’s righteousness and his lack of influence on his contemporaries—are intimately related. Noach preserved his virtue by separating himself from his environment. That is how, in a world gone mad, he stayed sane.

The famous debate among the Sages as to whether the phrase “perfect in his generations” is praise or criticism may well be related to this. Some said that “perfect in his generations” means, only relative to the low standard then prevailing. Had he lived in the generation of Avraham, they

said, he would have been insignificant. Others said the opposite: if in a wicked generation Noach was righteous, how much greater he would have been in a generation with role models like Avraham.

The argument, it seems to me, turns on whether Noach’s isolation was part of his character—he was a loner—or merely a necessary tactic in that time and place. If he was naturally a loner, he would not have gained by the presence of heroes like Avraham. He would have been impervious to influence whether for good or bad. If he was not a loner by nature but merely by circumstance, then in another age he would have sought out kindred spirits and become greater still.

Yet what exactly was Noach supposed to do? How could he have been an influence for good in a society bent on evil? Was he really meant to speak in an age when no one would listen? Sometimes people do not listen even to the voice of Hashem himself. We had an example of this just two chapters earlier, when Hashem warns Kayin of the danger of his violent feelings toward Hevel—“Why are you so furious? Why are you depressed...? Sin is crouching at the door. It lusts after you, but you can dominate it” (B’reishit 4.6-7). Yet Kayin did not listen, and instead went on to kill his brother. If Hashem speaks and men do not listen, how can we criticize Noach for not speaking when all the evidence suggests that they would not have listened either?

The Talmud raises this very question in a different context, in the years leading to the Babylonian conquest and the destruction of the First Temple, another lawless age:

“Rav Acha bar Rav Chaninah said: Never did a favorable word go forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, of which He retracted for evil, except the following, where it is written, ‘And Hashem said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.’” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Gavriel, ‘Go and set a mark of ink on the foreheads of the righteous, that the destroying angels may have no power over them; and a mark of blood upon the foreheads of the wicked, that the destroying angels may have power over them.’ Said the Attribute of Justice before the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! How are these different from those?’ ‘Those are completely righteous men, while these are completely wicked,’ He replied. ‘Sovereign of the Universe!’ said Justice, ‘they had the power to protest but did not.’ Said Hashem, ‘It was fully known to them that had they protested they would not have heeded them.’ ‘Sovereign of the Universe!’ said Justice, ‘If it was revealed to You, was it revealed to them?’ Hence it is written, ‘[Slay] the old man, the young and the maiden, and little children and women; but do not come near any man on whom is



## NOACH VS. AVRAHAM

Intuitively, Chazal, our Sages of Blessed Memory, understood that the hero of faith was not Noach but Avraham—who fought a war to rescue his nephew; who prayed for the people of the Plain even though he knew they were wicked; who challenged heaven itself in words unrivalled in the history of the human encounter with Hashem: “Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?”

What might an Avraham not have said when confronted with the possibility of a flood. “What of there are 50 righteous people? What if there are 10? Far be it from You to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike.”

Avraham might have saved the world. Noach saved only himself and his family. Avraham might have failed, but Noach, from what we are told this week, did not even try.

the mark; and begin at my Sanctuary [mikdash].’ Then they began at the elders which were before the house. R. Joseph said, ‘Read not mikdash but mekuddashay [My sanctified ones]: this refers to the people who fulfilled the Torah from alef to tav.” (BT Shabbat 55a)

According to this passage, even the righteous in Jerusalem were punished at the time of the destruction of the Temple because they did not protest the actions of their contemporaries. Hashem objects to the claim of Justice: Why punish them for their failure to protest when it was clear that had they done so, no one would have listened? Justice replies: This may be clear to angels—translate this to mean, this may be clear in hindsight—but at the time, no human could have been sure that his words would have had no impact. Justice asks: How can you be sure you will fail if you never try?

According to the Talmud, Hashem reluctantly agreed. Hence the strong principle: when bad things are happening in society, when corruption, violence and injustice prevail, it is our duty to register a protest, even if it seems likely that it will have no effect. Why? It is because that is what moral integrity demands. Silence may be taken as consent. Besides, we can never be sure no one will listen. Morality demands that we ignore probability and focus on possibility. Perhaps someone will take notice and change his or her ways, and that “perhaps” is enough.

This idea did not suddenly appear for the first time in the Talmud. It is stated explicitly in the book of Y’chezkel. This is what Hashem says to the prophet:

“Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.” (Y’chezkel 2.3-5)

Hashem tells the prophet to speak, regardless of whether people will listen.

So, one way of reading the story of Noach is as a failure of leadership. Noach was righteous, but not a leader. He was a good man who had no influence on his environment. There are, to be sure, other ways of reading the story, but this seems to me the most straightforward. If so, then Noach is the third in a series of failures of responsibility. Adam and Chavah failed to take personal responsibility for their actions (“It wasn’t me”). Kayin refused to take moral responsibility (“Am I my brother’s keeper?”). Noach failed the test of collective responsibility.

This way of interpreting the story, if correct, entails a strong conclusion. We know that Judaism involves collective responsibility (“All Israel are responsible for one another”), but it may be that being human also involves collective responsibility. Not only are Jews responsible for one another, so are we all, regardless of our faith or lack of it.

Chasidim had a simple way of making the point. They called Noach a tzaddik im peltz, “a righteous man in a fur coat.” There are two ways of keeping warm on a cold night. You can wear a fur coat or light a fire. Wear a fur coat and you warm only yourself. Light a fire and you warm others. We are supposed to light a fire.

Noach was a good man who was not a leader. Was he, after the Flood, haunted by guilt? Did he think of the lives he might have saved if only he had spoken out, whether to his contemporaries or to Hashem? We cannot be sure. The text is suggestive but not conclusive.

It seems, though, that the Torah sets a high standard for the moral life. It is not enough to be righteous if that means turning our backs on a society that is guilty of wrongdoing. We must take a stand. We must protest. We must register dissent even if the probability of changing minds is small. That is because the moral life is a life we share with others. We are, in some sense, responsible for the society of which we are a part. It is not enough to be good. We must encourage others to be good. There are times when each of us must lead.

—From the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

# May He who blessed | מי שברך

*May He who blessed our ancestors bless and heal all those whose names are listed here, those whose names will be called out, and those whose names we do not know because either we are unaware of their illness or they are.*

*We pray He mercifully quickly restore them to health and vigor. May He grant physical and spiritual well-being to all who are ill. אמן*

Sydelle Klein	Rifkah bat Chanah	Avraham Akivah bat Chanah Sarah
Bonnie Pritzker Appelbaum	Sarah bat Malka	Avraham Yitzhak ben Masha
Deenah bat Sarah Leah	Sarah Rifka bat Sarah	Aharon Hakohen ben Oodel
Rut bat Esther	Shimona bat Flora	Chaim ben Golda
Miriam Zelda bat Gittel D'vorah	Sura Osnat bat Alta Chayah	David ben Sarah
Miriam Chanah Sarah bat Liba	Tziporah bat Yaffa	Ezra ben Luli
Miriam Rachel bat Chanah	Yospeh Perel bat Michlah	Gil Nechemiah ben Yisraela
Harav Mordechai Volff ben Liba Miryam	Michelle Blatteis	Mordechai ben Almah
Adina bat Freidel	Diane Fowler	Moshe ben Shimon
Baila bat D'vorah	Goldy Hess	Harav R'fael Eliyahu ben Esther Malkah
Chavah bat Sarah	Fay Johnson	Harab Shamshon David ben Liba Perel
Chayah bat Flora	Micki Kuttler	Harav Shimon Shlomo ben Taube v' Avraham
Devora Yocheved bat Yehudit	Katie Kim	Yisrael Yitzhak ben Shayndel
Esther bat D'vorah	Elaine Laikin	Yitzchak ben Tziviva
HaRav Ilana Chaya bat Rachel Esther	Mira Levy	Yonatan ben Malka
Liba Ruchel bat Michlah	Robin Levy	Yosef ben Flora
Masha bat Etl	Lani Lipis	Zalman Avraham ben Golda
Masha bat Rochel	Karen Lipsy	Zelig Herschel ben Kreintzeh
Matel bat Frimah	Kathleen McCarty	Harry Ikenson
Mindel bat D'vorah	Gail Schenker	Shannon Johnson
Ninette bat Aziza	Linda State	Itzik Khmishman
Pinyuh bat Surah	Mary Thompson	Adam Messing
Rachel Leah bat Malkah	Michelle Lazar	Gabriel Neri
Rita bat Flora	Norma Sugerman	Mark Alan Tunick

## We pray for their safe return...

May He who blessed our ancestors bless, preserve, and protect the captive and missing soldiers of Tzahal—Ron Arad, Zecharia Baumel, Guy Chever, Zvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, and Zeev Rotshik—as well as those U.S. and allied soldiers, and the civilians working with them and around them, still missing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and all other areas of conflict, past and present.

And may He bless the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Tzahal, and those who serve the United States and Israel in foreign lands in whatever capacity, official or unofficial, members of our community or related to members, and their colleagues and companions. Guide them in peace and return them speedily to their families alive and unharmed. אמן

**HONOR YOUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES  
WITH A PLAQUE ON OUR  
VIRTUAL MEMORIAL BOARD.**

**CALL THE OFFICE TO ADD THEIR NAMES  
TO OUR MEMORIAL BOARD.**

**Yahrzeits for today through next Friday**  
**זכרונם לברכה — May their memories be for a blessing!**

- 21 Carol Golub Fabrikant\*, *Judy Golub's daughter*  
 Isabelle Singer\*  
 William Gruen\*  
 Lester Feldman\*  
 Sarah Libas\*  
 Alex Stux\*, *Michelle Stux Rodriquez's father*
- 22 Rose Feldman Puteska\*  
 Blanche Zucker  
 Rose Klapp\*  
 George Roth\*
- 23 Wilbur A. Kramer  
 Joel Krooks\*
- 24 Alan Jay Silverstein, *Barnett Silverstein's brother*  
 Dora Harrison  
 Eliyahu Oleszkowski\*  
 Jennie Stern\*  
 Sol Lockser\*
- 25 Betty Manne  
 Morris Newman  
 Morris Woltz\*  
 Jill Lori Peterson\*
- 26 Gussie Sabin\*  
 Lena Levy\*, *Ros Lobel's mother*  
 Sofya Pozharskaya\*  
 Samuel Louis Kravat\*  
 Hinda Pozner\*  
 Tillie Alenikoff\*  
 Theodore Kislak\*
- 27 David Jaroslaw\*  
 Gizzi London\*

\* A plaque in this person's name is on our memorial board.

**Kaddish list**

Selim Chamuel	Jay Greenspan
Francine Feder	Jeanette Shandolow Herman
Dr. Jerry Finklestein	Rebecca Kaplan
Nancy Friedlander	Haviva Khedouri
Blanche Friedman	Peter Koenig
Honora Gershman	Judith Lorbeer
Lawrence Glazer	Harold Rappoport
Moshe Glickman	Norman Harry Riederman
	David Shandalow
	Paul Singman

**Are we in your will?  
 Shouldn't we be?**

When people prepare their wills, they usually look to leave a mark beyond the confines of their families. Thus it is that general gifts are left to hospitals, and other charitable organizations.

All too often ignored, however, is the synagogue, even though its role in our lives often begins at birth, and continues even beyond death. We come here on Yom Kippur and other days, after all, to say Yizkor, the prayer in memory of our loved ones.

Our Virtual Memorial Plaques remind everyone of who our loved ones were, and why we recall them. All of us join in saying the Kaddish on their yahrzeits.

Considering this, it is so unfortunate that, in our final act, we ignore the one institution in Jewish life that is so much a part of us.

The synagogue is here for us because those who came before us understood its importance and prepared for its preservation. By remembering it in our wills, we will do our part to assure that the synagogue will be there for future generations, as well.

Think about it. We have always been here for anyone who needed us in the past. Do not those who need us in the future have the same right to our help?

Of course they do. Do not delay! Act today! Help secure the future of your communal home.

**Is there a yahrzeit  
 we should know about?  
 If it's not listed, let us know.**

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades  
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Alex Glickman does it.  
Dan Rappoport does it.  
Joe Massuda does it.  
Alan Kaminsky does it.  
Eric Weis does it.  
Matt Koenig plans to do it.  
You can do it, too!  
You can read a haftarah.  
Talk to the rabbi.

Attention ALL Vets!  
If you're not yet a member of  
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YOU SHOULD BE!  
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201-869-6218

Shabbat ends Saturday night with havdalah at 6:50 p.m. DST