

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

NOAH

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 66:1-24

OCTOBER 25, 2014

1 HESHVAN 5775

Rosh Hodesh Heshvan will be celebrated on Friday & Shabbat, Oct. 24 & 25.

DEDICATIONS: To the thousand women who baked Challah together next door at the Sands tonight

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

Candle lighting Friday evening 5:44 p.m. Mincha at 5:44

Through the winter we will schedule Mincha Friday evenings with Candle Lighting

SHABBAT Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 9:16 AM

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30

Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach 4:30 PM

Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon at 4:30

Mincha at 5:05 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 5:40 with Rabbi David

Birkat HaMazon at 6:25 Arbit at 6:30 - Shabbat Ends – 6:43

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00

We have been having a great Sunday morning class with Sam Yusupov 9AM

Looking for Breakfast sponsors

No class this Sunday

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited

Rabba Yenai will advise when his class will resume

Thursday Nights 8:30-9:30 Virtual* Class facilitated by Rabbi Yosef Colish.

Practical Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim

MEMBERS ONLY MEETING – Sunday October 26th at 9:30 AM

By invitation only to members in good standing

GENERAL SYNAGOGUE MEETING For all congregants

At the Synagogue

Sunday December 7th at 9:30 AM

Looking forward to 2015

Plans for the future and transitions

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Editors Notes

Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at (THIS WEEK ONLY 5PM – Mincha and Arbit and back to 4PM on November 3rd after we move the clock) – Please join us! 212-289-2100 – Mincha – The most important tefilah of the day - Give us 11 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!

I thought the following from Shalom Lewis is the senior rabbi of Congregation Etz Chaim, Marietta, Georgia was amazing. ... my article follows ...
 Shabbat Shalom David

They are here!

In 2010, I delivered a Rosh Hashana sermon in which I cried out: "They are coming!"

Today we are in a place of unimagined chaos and cowardice, paralysis and brutality. This year, my cry is: "They are here!"

This is not a time to worry about offending with unfiltered vocabulary. Time is a luxury we no longer possess.

We are being threatened like at no time before by an enemy that worships savagery, celebrates depravity, and is obsessed with an apocalyptic endgame.

There has been a seismic shift in our world. Pick up any newspaper on any day -- most of the articles are about radical Muslims immersed in a vicious culture of blood and slaughter. Skip to the sports page or the crossword puzzle, but that doesn't make the uncomfortable news go away. In fact, it brings joy to the jihadis, who hope we will continue to deny the existence of their evil -- just a few lunatics, thousands of miles away, blowing each other up and occasionally beheading an unlucky journalist. Not so bad.

For years, we have been spared the ugliness and intimacy of war. The Battle of the Bulge and Iwo Jima were black-and-white newsreels before "The Pride of the Yankees." We planted victory gardens, bought Liberty Bonds, and said goodbye to fathers, sons and brothers. But the trenches were across the ocean. So too, with every subsequent conflict.

But today, war has been redefined and relocated. Geneva is finished. We are all combatants in the crosshairs, on the front lines. All are vulnerable and so we must recalculate our strategy, re-examine our tolerance, re-energize our resolve and unequivocally identify the evil-doers. Let us not be silenced by fear, feckless goodwill, or reckless hope.

There are 1 billion Muslims. Authorities agree that 5 percent are committed Islamists who embrace terror and wish to see, by any means possible, the Muslim flag fly over every capital, on every continent. I was relieved when I heard only 5 percent. But wait: That's 50 million Quran-waving, Allahu akbar-howling murderers planning to slit our throats, blow us up or forcibly convert us. It only took 19 of Osama bin Laden's disciples to bring down the Twin Towers, plow into the Pentagon and crash into Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Over 3,000 dead. Over \$10 billion in damages. Nineteen al-Qaida. Fifty million Islamists. Do the math.

Where are the 950 million Muslims who are not terrorists -- who tuck their children in at night with a lullaby, are tolerant toward Christians and Jews, and crave a peaceful world? I want to believe that they are out there and that they weep in pain over the desecration of their faith. I want to believe that we have partners who dream the dreams we do and wish upon the same star. But where are they? A silent partnership is no partnership. Sin is not just in the act of commission -- it is also in the act of omission. Most Germans were not Nazis; most Russians were not Stalinists; and most Muslims are not terrorists -- but it does not matter. Stand up righteously or get out of the way. Perhaps in every mosque and madrasa, the powerful warning attributed to Edmund Burke should be chiseled on a wall: "All that is necessary for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing."

A couple of months ago, three young Israelis were kidnapped and killed by Hamas terrorists. So began Operation Protective Edge. But the Gaza war was much more than shooting down rockets and blowing up tunnels -- it was the preview for a genuine world war. It was a test of resolve, watched carefully by the indecent forces of a rising Islamist world. Israel is only the beginning, the first prize sought in what promises to be a protracted, multigenerational Kulturkampf. The front lines are all over the map -- we just don't know it yet.

The whole world was watching and our performance was pathetic. We, the good guys, stumbled at the gate; tripped clumsily in an embarrassing display of moral confusion and ineptitude.

I say the following unapologetically and with a heavy heart. When the war began, the president of the United States, the leader of the free world, should have immediately invited to the Oval Office his cabinet, the leading Democrats and Republicans in Congress, and all significant Washington political players. Every news organization should have been notified and the following talk broadcast across the planet. "Fellow Americans -- a crisis has erupted once again in the Middle East and I have been told that the war between Israel and Hamas is complex and nuanced. I have been told that our great nation must be evenhanded -- but I am here to say with no equivocation, this war is neither complex nor nuanced, and we will not be evenhanded in this confrontation between good and evil, right and wrong, civilization and savagery. We Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, from sea to shining sea, stand together in unshakable support of Israel against foul murderers who sacrifice the lives of children in their pursuit of power. To Israel we say - do whatever you must. Take whatever time you need to crush this vile enemy and whatever you require, you can count on us. To the world we say, Israel is fighting for all of us -- for our values, our principles, our civilization. Support her efforts in every way possible. I will not tolerate any words of disparagement against our greatest ally and friend in the Middle East. God bless Israel and God bless the United States of America."

But these words did not ring out from the White House. What we did hear was "no victor, no vanquished." This statement was our president's strategic plan. No call for triumph over terrorism, but a weak-kneed stalemate with butchers -- a tie between good and evil. Right and wrong. Civilization and savagery. This did not go unnoticed. Media coverage during the war was shameful with a few exceptions. To permit Hamas spokesmen and sympathizers to defend their monstrous deeds to millions of viewers is morally shocking. To promote equivalency between Israel and Hamas is morally appalling. The grotesque propaganda, repulsive distortions, and the tolerance of the wicked did not go unnoticed.

As I sat through these numbing broadsides, I wondered if our mainstream media during World War II would have invited the Germans and Japanese to share their perspectives on the hostilities in Europe and the Pacific. As they moaned about Dresden, would the anchors have nodded in sympathy? When the Germans and Japanese explained the need for the bombardment of London and the necessity for the Bataan Death March, would the anchors have expressed understanding?

Words distinguish us from the beast. In a powerful Holocaust tale, Eli Wiesel painfully writes that when words lose their meaning, disaster follows. In today's Middle East lexicon, restraint means suicide. Terrorists have become militants. Self-defense is a war crime. Democracy is apartheid. Israelis and Jews have become Nazis. Warning civilians to get out of harm's way has become genocide. There are 38 Muslim and 22 Arab states, but only the Jewish state must constantly defend its right to exist. Russia invades. Nigeria enslaves. China oppresses. Pakistan rapes. Iraq slaughters. North Korea starves. Iran nuclearizes. Syria massacres. Venezuela plunders. Afghanistan tortures. Sudan annihilates. ISIS beheads. And Israel is the pariah state, put under the microscope by the morally noxious. And this did not go unnoticed.

The philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote the following in 1968. His words have not grown stale with time: "The Jews are a peculiar people: Things permitted to other nations are forbidden to the Jews. Other nations drive out thousands, even millions of people and there is no refugee problem. Russia did it. Poland and Czechoslovakia did it. Turkey drove out a million Greeks and Algeria a million Frenchman. Indonesia threw out heaven knows how many Chinese and no one says a word about refugees. But, in the case of Israel, the displaced Arabs have become eternal refugees. Everyone insists that Israel must take back every single Arab. Arnold Toynbee calls the displacement of the Arabs an atrocity greater than any committed by the Nazis. Other nations, when victorious on the battlefield, dictate peace terms. But when Israel is victorious on the battlefield, it must sue for peace. Everyone expects the Jews to be the only real Christians in the world. Other nations when they are defeated, survive and recover, but should Israel be defeated, it would be destroyed." Hoffer's final prophetic words are chilling: "I have a premonition that will not leave me; as it goes with Israel so will it go with all of us. Should Israel perish, the Holocaust will be upon us."

To the morally obtuse, misguided do-gooders -- from university professors to the useful idiots of the media, from liberal churches to Hollywood, from the U.N. to the clueless Left -- your deeds do not go unnoticed. Europe, for those who have not been recently, has changed dramatically. The continent that gave birth to Western civilization and defined high culture is crumbling. Because of well-intentioned pluralism, Europe is returning to the dark ages. Europe will be unrecognizable by the middle of this century -- crushed by a demographic tsunami.

Europe has not been a melting pot for Muslim immigrants. Many of these immigrants are uninterested in democracy. They want Shariah law and Islamic culture to be ascendant, and in time they will get it. Europe is being flooded not by tolerant, assimilating Muslims but by violent Islamists who reject every value that we treasure.

Want to stare down a guard at Buckingham Palace, see the Folies Bergere dance the cancan, or sip wine from the vineyards of Tuscany? Do it soon. A cold, nihilistic darkness is settling on Europe. A Kristallnacht of Western culture is coming that will destroy a millennium of creative genius.

It is fantasy to perceive a dystopian future that is irretrievably ugly and vile: the Sistine Chapel demolished; Michelangelo's Pieta smashed; Botticelli's torched; the Gutenberg Bible tossed into a bonfire; Beethoven silenced; and the curtain lowered on Shakespeare, all in the name of fundamentalist Islam.

Skeptics would label me an alarmist, but I weighed each and every word. Speak with the "canaries in the mine," the Jews of Europe, fleeing in record numbers. Synagogues fire-bombed. Jewish businesses vandalized. Children threatened on their way to school, kippot and Magen Davids tucked away to hide Jewish identity. Israeli products pulled off store shelves. Sixty-nine years since the Nazis' defeat but their descendants are picking up where he left off. "I have a premonition that will not leave me; as it goes with Israel so will it go with all of us. Should Israel perish, the Holocaust will be upon us." Replace "Israel" with "Jew" and we see the future of Europe. And this tragedy doesn't end neatly in Europe, the Middle East, Mumbai or the Philippines. Most of us have never witnessed the horror of war or clawed our way out from beneath tons of rubble. But we dare not cry out confidently, "We have two oceans to protect us." We have become perilously naive, recklessly evenhanded, unacceptably tolerant, and dangerously comfortable. The greatest generation has spawned the clueless generation. We have been attacked repeatedly by radical Islamists and yet we continue to turn away, euphemizing the enemy. There will not be vast battalions chanting "Allahu akbar" landing on the beaches of Malibu or crossing the Rio Grande -- but make no mistake: We are at war, right now, this very minute. The tactics have changed. The battlefield is different. The rules of engagement have been redefined. But we dare not make the mistake that all is well and that Islamic terrorists are simply violent criminals or a bunch of unemployed losers, not part

of a vast network hell-bent on destroying our country.

When did this start? Most would say 9/11. That was a catastrophic day but the war began for the U.S. in 1979 when our embassy in Teheran was taken over. It has continued without pause ever since. Lockerbie, TWA Flight 840, the USS Cole, embassies bombed and Americans killed in Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Spain, Kenya, Germany, Egypt, Kuwait, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Connect the dots. On American soil, the Twin Towers were first attacked in 1993. The Times Square bomber. The Boston Marathon bombing. The Fort Hood massacre of 13 American soldiers by a Muslim jihadi yelling "Allahu akbar." The shooting up of an army recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas. The murder of two CIA agents outside Langley, Virginia by a Pakistani whose final words were "there is no God but Allah." The recruitment for ISIS in Minnesota, New York, Colorado, and via social media. Connect the dots. An Israeli ship was prevented from offloading its cargo for three days because of pro-Palestinian mobs in California. University campuses are hotbeds of anti-Jewish hostility and students are taught that Israel commits ethnic cleansing. Synagogues are defaced with swastikas. A Jewish community center in Seattle was attacked. A pro-Palestinian rally in Miami called for "the massacre of the Jews." We are not Europe, but connect the dots.

This past year, many of us saw the Book of Mormon at the Fox. An irreverent, vulgar, hysterically entertaining musical skewering the Mormons. In front of the theater were a half dozen Mormons politely handing out literature. God bless these folks. This is how we disagree in America. What would have happened if it were a tasteless, bawdy musical titled "The Quran, Allah's Holy Book." It doesn't take much imagination to answer that question. Recall the reaction to 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten. Worldwide rage. Riots. Boycotts. Embassies burned. Ambassadors recalled. Attacks on Christians and on churches. Two hundred killed. Soon after, a book about this outrageous event, titled "The Cartoons that Shook the World," was published by Yale University Press. What was missing in the book? The 12 cartoons. This self-censorship was shameful, cowardly, un-American and a sniveling submission to Islamic narcissism and intimidation. Where is a great university's courage? Where is freedom of the press?

I recall the good old days when air travel was a pleasure. Today it is irritating and exhausting. What happened? What changed? Who's to blame? Who has created the need for a multibillion dollar security industry? Who has created a tedious need for us to

remove our shoes and belts, empty our pockets, go through metal detectors and x-ray machines, submit to frisks and wand searches? Arrive hours before departure?

Think of a Muslim play on Broadway, a scholarly text on Muhammad, and who has irretrievably ruined worldwide air travel. Connect the dots. For us, World War II lasted four years. It has been 13 years since 9/11 and 35 years since the invasion of our embassy in Iran. And we are still at war with radical Islam. Roosevelt and Churchill got it and understood that the stakes were not just the Sudetenland and a few islands in the Pacific, but Planet Earth. Today, the radical Islamists seek the same prize -- not just Baghdad or Benghazi -- but Planet Earth. This is not dramatic fiction, but the real thing. Some of us experienced the real thing this summer in Israel. We were there as Qassam rockets rained down, targeting not military bases, not tanks, not IDF divisions, but children at play, families enjoying dinner, friends laughing over a beer, lovers strolling through a park. The world watched and preached and judged and only now has begun to stir from their slumber of hypocrisy and inaction. Hamas is ISIS, ISIS is Hamas. They are all the same: Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, al-Shabaab, Muslim Brotherhood, Boko Haram, al-Qaida, the Taliban, Iran. The only difference is the length of the knife they use in their butchery. Israeli blood bleeds the same red as the blood of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haynes, and of Arab Christians and Yazidis.

Let's reason, some suggest. One last Hail Mary negotiation. Maybe we can figure out what's bothering these troubled Muslims and perhaps they'll tell us what we can do to resolve the friction. I am all for dialogue, but we are dealing with a moral species that eats its own, kills its young and celebrates innocent death. Bin Laden eluded capture for 10 years. Ever wonder why? There was a \$25 million bounty on his head. \$25 million can buy a lot of plastic surgery. A new identity. A suburban home. New partners. New friends. In 10 years, there was not one betrayal of bin Laden. Why not? The answer is simple. These Islamist criminals are unlike us in the most basic of ways and we have yet to accept and understand their total immersion in moral debauchery.

First, they were coming. Now, they are here! The fury of ultimate evil is upon us and we must act -- not to contain, degrade, manage or tolerate it, but to exterminate it utterly and absolutely. If we fail, we will live in a world bereft of color, empty of music, art, romance, laughter, freedom, and invention. A world barren of all beauty, depleted of all virtue.

We are divided today not by faith nor holy book, but by decency and indecency, right and wrong, morality and corruption, courage and cowardice, righteousness and evil. The good citizens of earth must rise up, gather on the mountain top, and proclaim in thundering unison the words of Isaiah: "Woe to them that call evil, good and good, evil; that change darkness into light, and light into darkness; that change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter!" We must turn back the evil. We must turn back the darkness. We must turn back the bitter. My friends -- they are here.

Shalom Lewis is the senior rabbi of Congregation Etz Chaim, Marietta, Georgia.

I wrote the following last week, but it never went out ...

Bereshit – G-d's Promise! Can we get some Help?

It's a pity we simply can't point to the Bible and remind our friends that G-d promised us this land. Election Day in America is only three weeks away. When Eric Cantor of Virginia who was the majority leader in the House of Representatives and the sole Jewish Republican in all of Congress, lost his interparty primary this summer, the entire Jewish political spectrum was shocked. With Cantor gone it means that out of 233 representatives and 45 senators in the GOP, not a single one is Jewish. Moving towards November, we have an incumbent Democratic president who is extremely unpopular. What progress can be claimed in the economy is tentative, uneven, and feels temporary. Americans are less hopeful than they've ever been in recent history. Scandals, war, uncertain leadership—all this has yielded a sense the whole enterprise of the past six years just did not work. It seems very likely that the new Congress will seat even more representatives and senators representing the Republican Party.

Is it possible for one of those representatives sitting on the Republican side of the aisle, to truly represent us?

This morning's news stories, somewhere in between Ebola, Syria, Isis and Mr. Putin, remind us that despite the odds against success, Secretary of State John Kerry is not relenting in his effort to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. On Sunday, Kerry arrived at an international donor's conference in Cairo, at which the Palestinians are seeking \$4 billion in aid pledges for reconstruction in Gaza in the wake of Operation Protective Edge. No doubt to

rebuild their tunnels, rocket launchers and ammunition supplies. While in Cairo, Kerry is expected to call for the renewal of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. I guess we can translate that into renewed and increased pressure on Israel. It seems that too many American presidents as they approach the end of their lame duck term decide that it is incumbent upon them to make peace in the Holy Land and that inevitably translates into a full course press against the Israeli government. The next two years will see President Obama, John Kerry and Valerie Jarrett making Benjamin Netanyahu's life a living hell.

With no one to turn to in the Democratic Party – we've tried Senator Charles E. Schumer who regardless of his claim of being Shomer Yisrael – the guardian of Israel – hasn't been able to sway the White House much -, can we get some help on the other side of the aisle to counter that pressure?

Rabbi Shelomo Yitzhaki who we affectionately refer to by his acronym Rashi lived almost 1000 years ago. Highly praised for his skill in presenting the basic meaning of the text in a crisp and simple fashion, Rashi's commentary on the Torah is an essential aid to students of all levels. I don't know how anyone can even begin to learn Chumash or the Five Books of Moses without his commentary.

As we begin the Torah anew this week, Rashi offers a very interesting observation on the very first words of Genesis. Bereshit ... In the beginning

Rabbi Isaac explains. The Torah should have begun with the words from Exodus "HaHodesh HaZeh LaChem - This month is to you," which is the first commandment that the Israelites as a nation were commanded, (for the main purpose of the Torah is its commandments, and although several commandments are found in Genesis, e.g., circumcision and the prohibition of eating the thigh sinew, they could have been included together with the other commandments).

And so the question is asked, "For what reason did He commence with "In the beginning?" And Rashi responds quoting the verse from Psalms, "The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations"

Rashi explains, "For if the nations of the world should say to Israel, "You are robbers, for you conquered by force the lands of the seven nations [of Canaan]," they will reply, "The entire earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it (this we learn from the story of the Creation) and gave it to whomever He

deemed proper When He wished, He gave it to them, and when He wished, He took it away from them and gave it to us."

It's a pity we simply can't point to the Bible and remind our enemies that G-d promised us this land. It's a pity we simply can't point to the Bible and remind our friends that G-d promised us this land.

On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I had the pleasure of praying with Bruce Blakeman and his fiancé Segal Magori - a fellow Flatbush graduate - who recently joined our Synagogue. Bruce Blakeman is running for Congress in New York's 4th Congressional District. It was a pleasure for all of us to begin to get to know Bruce and Segal. Wouldn't it be nice if we could work together to get one Jewish Voice into what will surely be a Republican majority? "I'm glad to endorse and enthusiastically support Bruce Blakeman for Congress," said John Bolton. "Bruce is a problem-solver who has never been afraid to be independent. He knows how to make a positive difference in people's lives and believes in an America that is strong at home and abroad. As the only candidate in this race with an economic plan, Bruce's strong support of Israel also sets him far ahead from President Obama, Kathleen Rice and the Democrats."

Bruce's statement on Israel: Israel should not be forced to enter into any agreement or treaty that is not durable, maintainable and based upon the premise that it is a Jewish State that has a right to exist as such. The relationship between the United States and Israel is a valuable, deep and complex relationship based upon:

- (1) Shared values of democracy, human rights, religious freedom and freedom of the press;
- (2) Strategic and military importance – Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East and her locations, technological prowess and military capability make Israel an important strategic and military partner to the United States.
- (3) Economic and trade partnership – Israel's economy is robust and her technological advances and innovations are out of proportion to her size. American companies such as Intel, Motorola, Apple and Google all have thriving businesses with and within Israel. Israelis invest billions of dollars each year in the United States. Many Israeli companies are traded on American exchanges.
- (4) Moral obligation – the United States has a moral obligation to ensure that the Jewish State is protected from those who seek to destroy her. After the Holocaust, it has been clear that the safety and vitality of Jews around the world can best be guaranteed by maintaining a Jewish State; and

(5) Homeland Security – Israel is a partner with the United States on the war against terrorism. Israel and the United States cooperate on a day-to-day basis to share intelligence and interdict terrorist cells operating around the world.

Bruce evidently read Rashi on the first verse in the Torah.

I know that Kathleen Rice has strong support in the community and would probably do a nice job representing the district. But given the reality that the Republicans will control congress; wouldn't we be much smarter throwing our support towards Bruce Blakeman? Let me suggest that if you live in Congressional District 4, you vote for Bruce and if you don't you visit his website <http://bruceblakeman.com/> and make a contribution. It would be great if we had Bruce to replace Eric Cantor?

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Noach, a righteous man, is introduced in contrast to a generation that "has perverted its ways". Hashem instructs him to build, and outfit the Ark.

2nd Aliya: Noach is told to enter the Ark along with all the animals. On Cheshvan 17, 1656 - October 27, 2106 b.c.e the flood began.

3rd Aliya: For 40 days and nights the waters increased, destroying all living things. The water raged upon the surface of the earth for 150 days, and then diminished for the next 150. On Nissan 17, May 23, the Ark rested upon Mt. Ararat. Noach sends out the Raven and then the Dove, and on Cheshvan 27, October 27, exactly 1 solar year after it began, the earth was dry.

4th Aliya: Noach and his family exit the Tayvah, and offer sacrifices to Hashem. They are commanded to keep the 7 Noahide mitzvos.

5th Aliya: Hashem promises to never again destroy the world and designates the rainbow as the symbol of that covenant.

6th Aliya: The story of Noach, the vineyard, and the subsequent blessings and curses is related. The descendants of Cham, Yefes, and Canaan are listed.

7th Aliya: The story of the Tower of Babel in 1996 and Nimrod's world dominance is told. The 10 generations of Shem, culminating in the introduction of Avram and Sarai, are listed. The year is 2023. Note that Avram was 48 years old when the Tower of Babel took place and he was 56 years old when Noach died.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"For it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation." (Beresheet 7:1)

Mankind was given one hundred and twenty years to repent its violent ways, while watching Noah building the ark. Now on the last day of this period, Hashem tells Noah that only he and his household could enter the ark. "For it is you that I have seen to be righteous in this generation."

The Zohar Hakadosh has a criticism of Noah. When Hashem told Noah that he and his children will be saved, he didn't pray for mercy on the world, and the world was destroyed. Because of this the flood was named after Noah, as we see in the Haftarah: "For like the waters of Noah shall this be to me."

The Zohar continues in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua who asks: Why didn't Noah pray for his generation? He was afraid that if he prayed he wouldn't be saved. He reasoned that since Hashem said he was the righteous one of the generation, it must be because he was righteous in comparison to that generation. Therefore, he didn't pray for them, because he was afraid for himself. Rabbi Elazar continues and says that Noah should have prayed anyway, because it is always good in the eyes of Hashem to speak well about His people, as we find that the judge Gideon was chosen to lead the people in battle because he spoke well of the Jews (Shoftim 6:14).

Rabbi Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l, the Mashgiah of Lakewood Yeshivah asks: What's the complaint against Noah? How was he supposed to know that his prayers would have been accepted? The Rabbi answers that Noah should have understood that Hashem didn't tell him he was righteous in order to flatter him. But he told him he was righteous to hint to him that he has the power to pray for the world. As we find with Moshe that Hashem told Moshe "Leave me so I can destroy the people" (Shemot 32:10). Rashi explains that Hashem was hinting to Moshe that it was up to Moshe, for if he would pray for them, Hashem will not destroy them.

From here we learn that sometimes Hashem sends a hint, and performs a miracle to save someone, to tell him he was worthy to be saved in order to do some good. A person could be miraculously saved in an auto accident to relay a message for the future. What is the good thing Hashem wants him to do? Well, that's up to the person to figure out by searching through his deeds to see what he can do. He has to dig deep to figure it out, like when a person works hard to understand a Gemara with all the commentaries. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And from the animals that are not pure..."
(Bereshheet 7:2)

Noah was commanded to take from each specie seven pairs of animals which are kosher and one pair of animals which are not kosher, and bring them into the ark. The Torah calls the kosher animals *ruvy (tahor)* - pure - and the non-kosher ones are called *ruvy tk rat (asher lo tahor)* - those that are not pure. The Rabbis point out that the proper word to use when describing the unacceptable animals is *tny (tameh)* - unclean, and yet the Torah uses the longer phrase *ruvy tk rat (asher lo tahor)* - which is not pure. This is to teach us the importance of not using negative words when talking about someone or something. The Gemara tells us that once three Kohanim were describing what kind of a portion each one received and one of them used a negative word to describe his share. They checked up after him and saw that there was something wrong with his lineage.

The lesson is very simple yet extremely important. The way we speak says so much about ourselves. Not only what we say, but the kind of words we use reflect on our character and on our spirit. We should always try to use words of purity and beauty and stay away from vulgarities and the like. It is especially difficult in today's day and age, when the sharper the word, the more recognition one gets. But it is much more meaningful if we put some thought into the choice of words we use. If the Torah, in which every letter counts, saw fit to add extra words in order to speak in a positive way, shouldn't we do the same? Shabbat Shalom.
Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR **Our Most Precious Commodity**

The Torah at the beginning of Parashat Noah describes the generation of the flood as a corrupt, depraved and immoral society, a society of crime and sinfulness that God ultimately decided to eliminate.

How did the people of the time deteriorate to this point of immoral conduct? How did this happen? To what may we point as the root cause of the spiritual degeneration of the people at this time?

The likely answer is found toward the end of Parashat Bereshit, where we find a verse that provides the background to the story of the flood. Upon Noah's birth, his father, Lemech, declared, "Zeh Yenahamenu Mi'ma'asenu U'me'isevon Yadenu" – "This one shall give us respite from our work and the sorrow of our hands" (5:29). Ever since the sin of Adam, God cursed the land, such that man encountered great difficulty producing food. Lemech foresaw that Noah's birth will herald a new era, a

period when farming will become easier. Indeed, Noah invented a number of tools – such as the plow and the sickle – that enabled mankind to till the land and produce food with far less effort than was previously required.

The blessing of easier farming resulted in the emergence of free time. Finally, people did not spend all their time in the endless drudgery of making a living. For once, they had time for other pursuits, for other interests, for other activities. This was a great blessing. People now had the time and peace of mind to develop themselves spiritually, to engage in contemplation, study and prayer. Sadly, however, they made the tragic mistake of using this free time for crime and immorality. Whereas previously, nobody had the time or energy to care about what their neighbors had, now they started to pay more attention to their peers. This resulted in jealousy, which in turn led to the theft and murder. Until now, people had no time for mischief, but with the advent of an easier workload, they filled their time with decadence.

Our generation is similarly plagued by the misuse of free time. Labor laws and technology have given us the great blessing of free time. We are no longer required to work 14-hour workdays six or seven days a week, and employers are obligated by law to give vacation time. Travel has become immeasurably faster, easier and more convenient, as have simple tasks and chores such as sending a letter and warming up dinner. We now have lots of free time, time which the entertainment and travel industries seek to fill with all kinds of meaningless and wasteful activities.

Time is our most precious commodity. God gives us life in order to spend it productively, fill it with meaning, and earn our share in the world to come. Unfathomably, today people look to "kill time," to destroy the most precious asset of all. It would be no exaggeration to call this a form of suicide. Wasting time means taking away precious moments from our life. Is this not murder? Aren't we killing ourselves by destroying hours and days and weeks of our lives by spending them wastefully?

The Kotzker Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, Poland, 1787-1859) was once asked, what is the most critical moment of a person's life? He replied, "The present moment." The past cannot be changed, and the future has not yet arrived. The most important moment is therefore the present moment, which a person can choose to either use wisely, or squander.

One of the cruel tricks of the Yeser Ha'ra (evil inclination) is to divert our attention away from the present, to have us focus on the past or the present. If we dwell excessively on the past, or obsess with anxiety or anticipation over the future, we are wasting the present. Rather than making most of the opportunities in front of us, we are stuck in the past or in the future. When a person stands on the platform waiting for a train, the Yeser Ha'ra tells him that this is what he should do with the present: he should simply wait for a train. But if a person spends those moments learning Torah, then he has transformed those moments into an intrinsically meaningful experience. Instead of living for the future, he is living in the present.

The Hafetz Haim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, 1839-1933) compared life to a postcard. When people write a postcard to their friends, they begin writing in big letters, but soon realize that they are running out of space. So they start writing in tiny print in order to use their space as efficiently as possible. Similarly, the Hafetz Haim lamented, people tend to waste the best years of their life in vanity. It is only when they grow older and begin seeing the end of the "postcard" that they quickly try to make up the lost time. But time, unlike all other commodities, can never be retrieved or replaced. Once it has been squandered, it is lost forever.

Let us therefore not make the mistake of wasting our time. In today's day and age we are blessed with the gift of free time; let us ensure that this blessing does not become a curse, that it does not become our undoing. And if God sees that we use the great gift of life wisely and productively, then He will, hopefully, continue to grant us this blessing, and extend our lives so that we will have even more time to and more opportunities to serve Him, Amen.

Rabbi Wein

THE RESIDUE OF THE GREAT WAR

What is Europe's problem and hang up with the State of Israel? Why is it so focused on this Middle Eastern conflict, almost to the exclusion of other seemingly greater issues closer to home? Anti-Semitism certainly plays a role in this European fixation regarding Israel but I do not believe that it is the sole, and perhaps not even the main catalyst driving European policies, statements and actions.

I feel that a great deal of the attention that Israel claims from the European nations is a residue of the revolutionary inconclusiveness of World War I, a century ago. In Europe, World War I is still referred to as The Great War. Even though World War II was ever more brutal and costly in human life than its predecessor, it is World War I and its residue that has

affected European thinking and behavior till this very day.

World War I changed Europe forever and destroyed its veneer of civilization, scientific and social progress, and peaceful stability. Twenty million people died as a result of the war, and apparently for no reasonable aim or end. The brave slogans that the war was being fought "to safeguard human values and democracy" or to bring about the utopia of "a war that would end all wars" all proved to be empty of meaning and value.

The new nations that were created in Europe – Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland – all proved to be sources of trouble, bigotry, hatred and aggression. And the carving up of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East into many artificial countries – Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and later Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, etc. – has proved to have been disastrous folly. So, there is a heavy layer of guilt that encompasses Europe over the wasted lives of tens of millions of people caused by The Great War. So, therefore, enter Israel.

Israel remains practically the only success story produced by World War I. A product of the Balfour Declaration and of the League of Nations mandatory policies, Israel was nurtured by the Zionist movement and parts of the Jewish people, and fulfilled its promise of becoming an independent state and a homeland for the Jewish people.

Not only that, against all odds and expert opinions, it has prospered economically and socially, over-coming enormous odds in so doing. It became the dominant military power in the Middle East and has been able to successfully defend itself against a host of enemies that have created a century of conflict. Out of all of the chaos and disappointment that The Great War created, it alone stands as a positive result of that disaster.

This preys on the European mindset. Everything else that Europe created after and as a result of World War I lies in the ash heap of history and current events. Eastern Europe is still quite destabilized, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are no more, and Germany is again too big and too powerful.

That Israel has somehow escaped this fate of failure is very troubling to the European mindset. It points to a mockery of human planning and alleged wisdom. It underlines the failure of nineteenth and twentieth century European diplomacy and civilization. It diminishes Goethe and Schiller, Rousseau and Renoir, Locke and Wordsworth. So, if Europe feels itself discredited, then it must discredit everything that it also feels it created – especially the State of Israel.

On a deeper psychological level this explains, though it certainly does not justify, the European fascination with suicide bombers and those that behead others. Though it recoils in horror at such events, there is a deep empathy for this type of extreme violence, which is then unfortunately elevated to martyrdom in the European mind.

The Great War and its aftermath created a climate of nihilism and detachment from reality, which still pervades European society. It is in such an environment that anti-Semitism flourishes and expands. Somehow, the destruction of Israel, God forbid, would complete the cycle of the tragic residue of World War I in European minds and hearts.

It cannot be that Israel alone should survive as the sole positive product of the European upheaval that claimed so many millions of lives. There is a death wish that exists within European society and that death wish is not only aimed at Christian Europe itself, which is disappearing in front of our very eyes, but it is now focused on the state of Israel as well.

After one hundred years, the residue of The Great War is still with us and remains relevant as ever. The future of Europe - and certainly of the Jews in Europe - remains clouded and truly uncertain.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

Are we naturally good or naturally bad? On this great minds have argued for centuries. Hobbes believed that we have naturally "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death." We are bad, but governments and police can help limit the harm we do. Rousseau to the contrary believed that naturally we are good. It is society and its institutions that make us bad.

The argument continues today among the neo-Darwinians. Some believe that natural selection and the struggle for survival make us, genetically, hawks not doves. As M. T. Ghiselin puts it, "Scratch an 'altruist' and watch a 'hypocrite' bleed." By contrast, naturalist Frans de Waal in a series of delightful books about primates, including his favourite, the bonobos, shows that they can be empathic, caring, even altruistic. So by nature are we.

T. E. Hulme called this the fundamental divide between Romantics and Classicists throughout history. Romantics believed that "man was by nature good, that it was only bad laws and customs that had suppressed him. Remove all these and the infinite possibilities of man would have a chance." Classicists believed the opposite, that "Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that

anything decent can be got out of him."

In Judaism, according to the sages, this was the argument between the angels when God consulted them as to whether or not He should create humans. The angels were the "us" in "Let us make man ...". The angels of chessed and tzedek said "Let him be created because humans do acts of kindness and righteousness." The angels of shalom and emet said, "Let him not be created because he tells lies and fights wars." What did God do? He created humans anyway and had faith that we would gradually become better and less destructive. That in secular terms is what Harvard neuroscientist Steven Pinker argues in *The Better Angels of our Nature*. Taken as a whole and with obvious exceptions we have become less violent over time.

The Torah suggests we are both good and bad, and evolutionary psychology tells us why. We are born to compete and co-operate. Life is a competitive struggle for scarce resources. So we fight and kill. But we survive only within groups. Without habits of co-operation and trust, we would have no groups and we would not survive. That is part of what the Torah means when it says, "It is not good for man to be alone." So we are both aggressive and altruistic: aggressive to strangers, altruistic toward members of our group.

But the Torah is far too profound to leave it at the level of the old joke of the rabbi who, hearing both sides of a domestic argument, tells the husband, "You are right," and the wife "You are right," and when his disciple says, "They can't both be right," replies, "You are also right." The Torah states the problem, but it also supplies a non-obvious answer. This is the clue that helps us decode a very subtle argument running through last week's parsha and this.

The basic structure of the story that begins with creation and ends with Noah is that in the beginning God created a universe of order. He then created human beings who created a universe of chaos: "the land was filled with violence." So God, as it were, deleted creation by bringing a flood, returning the earth to as it was at the very beginning when "the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters." He then began again with Noah and his family as the new Adam and Eve and their children.

Genesis 8-9 is thus a kind of second version of Genesis 1-3, but with two differences. In both accounts a key word appears seven times, but it is a

different word. In Genesis 1 the word is "good." In Genesis 9 it is "covenant."

The second is that in both, reference is made to the fact that humans are in the image of God, but the two sentences have different implications. In Genesis 1 we are told that "God created humanity in His own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female He created them." In Genesis 9 we read, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made mankind" (Gen. 9: 6).

The difference is striking. Genesis 1 tells me that "I" am in the image of God. Genesis 9 tells me that "You," my potential victim, are in the image of God. Genesis 1 tells us about human power. We are able, says the Torah, to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air." Genesis 9 tells us about the moral limits of power. We can kill but we may not. We have the power, but not the permission.

Reading the story closely, it seems that God created humans in the faith that they would naturally choose the right and the good. They would not need to eat the fruit of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," because instinct would lead them to behave as they should. Calculation, reflection, decision – all the things we associate with knowledge – would not be necessary. They would act as God wanted them to act, because they had been created in His image.

It did not turn out that way. Adam and Eve sinned, Cain committed murder, and within a few generations the world was reduced to chaos. That is when we read that "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart." Everything else in the universe was tov, "good." But humans are not naturally good. That is the problem. The answer, according to the Torah, is covenant.

Covenant introduces the idea of a moral law. A moral law is not the same as a scientific law. Scientific laws are observed regularities in nature: drop an object and it will fall. A moral law is a rule of conduct: do not rob or steal or deceive. Scientific laws describe, whereas moral laws prescribe.

When a natural event does not accord with the current state of science, when it "breaks" the law, that is a sign that there is something wrong with the law. That is why Newton's laws were replaced by those of Einstein. But when a human being breaks the law,

when people rob or steal or deceive, the fault is not in the law but in the deed. So we must keep the law and condemn, and sometimes punish, the deed. Scientific laws allow us to predict. Moral laws help us to decide. Scientific laws apply to entities without freewill. Moral laws presuppose freewill. That is what makes humans qualitatively different from other forms of life.

So, according to the Torah, a new era began centred not on the idea of natural goodness but on the concept of covenant, that is, moral law. Civilization began in the move from what the Greeks called physis, nature, to nomos, law. That is what makes the concept of being "in the image of God" so different in Genesis 1 and Genesis 9. Genesis 1 is about nature and biology. We are in the image of God in the sense that we can think, speak, plan, choose and dominate. Genesis 9 is about law. Other people are also in God's image. Therefore we must respect them by banning murder and instituting justice. With this simple move, morality was born.

What is the Torah telling us about morality?

First, that it is universal. The Torah places God's covenant with Noah and through him all humanity prior to his particular covenant with Abraham, then later with his descendants at Mount Sinai. Our universal humanity precedes our religious differences. This is a truth we deeply need in the twenty-first century when so much violence has been given religious justification. Genesis tells us that our enemies are human too.

All societies have had some form of morality but usually they concern only relations within the group. Hostility to strangers is almost universal in both the animal and human kingdoms. Between strangers, power rules. As the Athenians said to the Melians, "The strong do what they want, while the weak do what they must."

The idea that even the people not like us have rights, and that we should "love the stranger," would have been considered utterly strange by most people at most times. It took the recognition that there is one God sovereign over all humanity ("Do we not all have one father? Did not one God create us?" Malachi 2: 10) to create the momentous breakthrough to the idea that there are moral universals, among them the sanctity of life, the pursuit of justice and the rule of law.

Second, God himself recognises that we are not naturally good. After the Flood, He said: "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, even though the inclination of their minds is evil from

childhood on." The antidote to the yetzer (in rabbinic Hebrew, yetzer hara) the inclination to evil, is covenant.

This has a neuroscientific basis. We have a prefrontal cortex, evolved to allow humans to think and act reflectively, considering the consequences of their deeds. But this is slower and weaker than the amygdala (what Jewish mystics called the nefesh habehamit, the animal soul) which, even before we have had time to think, produces the fight-or-flight reactions without which humans before civilization would not have survived.

The problem is that these rapid reactions can be destructive. Often they lead to violence: not only the violence between species (predator and prey) that is part of nature, but also to the more gratuitous violence that is a feature of the life of most social animals. It is not that we only do evil. Empathy and compassion are as natural to us as are fear and aggression. The problem is that fear lies just beneath the surface of human interaction, and it can overwhelm all else.

Daniel Goleman calls this an amygdala hijack. "Emotions make us pay attention right now – this is urgent – and give us an immediate action plan without having to think twice. The emotional component evolved very early: Do I eat it, or does it eat me?" Impulsive action is often destructive because it is undertaken without thought of consequences. That is why Maimonides argued that many of the laws of the Torah constitute a training in virtue by making us think before we act.[1]

So the Torah tells us that naturally we are neither good nor bad but have the capacity for both. We have a natural inclination to empathy and sympathy, but we have an even stronger instinct for fear that leads to violence. That is why, in the move from Adam to Noah, the Torah shifts from nature to covenant, from tov to brit, from power to the moral limits of power. Genes are not enough. We also need the moral law.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL "And Noach walked with Elokim" (6:9)

The word "Hit'halech" (walked) is reflexive, meaning that Noach exerted effort and caused himself to walk with G-d. The Torah is relating that Noach became very great by "walking with G-d". The Torah is our instruction Book to perfecting ourselves. We can achieve greatness through observance of Mitzvot and by studying the ways of Hashem as portrayed in Torah and Nature.

We are studying the great model of Noach who "Walked with G-d" and thereby became great. What was Noach doing during these walks which brought him to this exalted level of Yirat hamayim/Awareness of Hashem that brought G-d to speak to him?

"And walk secretly/humbly with Hashem" (Micha 6:8). One way that we can accomplish this high ideal is to Think about Hashem. When you practice this, no one is aware of what you have on your mind therefore it is a secret. Noach was constantly thinking about Hashem which was his system to greatness as revealed to us by the Torah.

We can utilize Noach's system and become elevated by Thinking about Hashem in the following ways:

1. Contemplate all the good things that we are grateful to Hashem for. Including the many times we were saved from all types of situations; or led to successful circumstances.
2. Notice the wisdom of Hashem in Nature and in the world all around us. Consider the endless Wisdom and Kindliness which demonstrate "plan & purpose" throughout the Universe thereby causing us to have Awareness of Hashem.
3. Think about the wonders and miracles that Hashem did for the Jewish Nation throughout history. For example: Splitting Yam Suf; Holding up the Sun for Joshua; Being fed by Mann from Heaven... Now we know a way to become great!

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