

**The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons thanks the following for their support towards our High Holy Days Appeal:
If you haven't yet sent in your contribution, it's not too late. Please help.**

Harry Redlitz
Amy and Robert Feinblatt
Pam and Hal Kalkstein
Merrill and Steven Barnett
Robert and Arlene Rifkind
Gary Gaines
Roberta Kaplan and Rachel Lavine
Lynn and Joram Siegal
Anonymous
Shelley and Paul Lindenauer
Sheila and Norman Bleckner
Cheryl and Richard Weisberg
Esther and Harvey Gralnick
Michelle and Robert Hougie
Bonnie Oglensky and Ira Schwarz
Arlene Davis
Ron and Amy Guttman
Margaret and Michael Bromberg
Linda and Les Frank
Sydell Rosen
Anita & Norm Sussman
Jean & Richard Appel
Jill Erlitz
Jill Schoenbach
Roberta and Steven Dinkes
Fernande and Edward Wagman
Joan and Paul Schreiber
Bart Farber
Lorraine and Herb Schottenfeld
Ali Pratt
Irwin & Susan Cohen
Robin Bach
Sally & Elliot Heller
Jules and Linda Toch
Frances Stein
Carol Steinberg
Yves-Andre Istel/Kathleen Begala
Howard Jablow
Sarah Engel
Sue Shapiro
Neil Kleinhandler
Emil Braun
Sheila Pack
Howard Jablow
Lillian Menzer
Debbie and Mark Menzer
Stacy Menzer
Jeffrey and Debra Wisoff & Family
Neil Kleinhandler
Frances and Ed Gotbetter
Murray/Esther Redlitz

Jan and Joel Rotner
Jill Schoenbach
Sag Harbor Inn
Schwarz Family

NEXT SHABBAT

Please join us for a

CSH Shabbat Dinner

October 30th 6:30pm

at my home in East Hampton

RSVP by Tuesday October 27th to csH1800@aol.com

Saturday, October 31st

Old Whalers Church 9:30

44 Union Street Sag Harbor

Kiddush following services

סחיייתהל וא ליגרת

Candle Lighting Friday, October 23rd 5:40 pm

Torah Reading for Noach

Annual (Gen. 6:9-11:32): (Etz Hayim, p. 41)

Triennial (Gen. 11:1-11:32): (Etz Hayim, p. 58)

Haftarah: (Etz Hayim, p. 64)

Noach Musings

"This is the sign of the covenant that I am placing between Me, you, and every living creature that is with you, for all generations: I have set My rainbow in the clouds... The rainbow will be in the clouds, and I will see it to recall the eternal covenant." [Gen. 9:11-16]

Most of us remember hearing the story of Noach and the flood at some point in our lives, and how God chose the rainbow as the symbol that God will never bring a flood upon the earth again. But contrary to what most of us were told, it is not the "rainbow" alone that acts as this symbol. When examining the verses quoted above, every time God mentions this sign, it is described as "the rainbow" along with "the cloud". So, it is not merely the "rainbow" that acts as the symbol of God's covenant, but the "rainbow in the cloud". Now that this has been clarified, we may ask: why was it that God chose this symbol in particular as a reminder for His covenant to never again destroy the world? What is it about the "rainbow in the cloud" that relates to this covenant?

Before we answer this question we must first understand what a rainbow is, what a cloud is, and exactly how these phenomena are brought about.

Rainbow: An optical phenomenon that causes a spectrum of light to appear in the sky when the sun shines onto droplets of moisture in the Earth's atmosphere.

Cloud: A visible mass of droplets or frozen crystals floating in the Earth's atmosphere.

Interestingly, both rainbows and clouds are formed through water droplets; whereas rainbows are formed by sunlight refracting through droplets, clouds are formed by the accumulation of droplets. By comparing these phenomena even further, one may notice that they perform the exact opposite function in regards to sunlight! Rainbows are formed by droplets that allow sunlight to pass through them, however clouds are formed by droplets that cluster together and prevent sunlight from passing through!

The "rainbow in the cloud" was chosen as a symbol for God's covenant for this very reason! God brought destruction upon the entire world only because of man and his evil ways. But if man ever reaches this corrupted state again, which it surely has time and time again, why won't God bring destruction upon the world again? Because it is now within man's power to change. It is within man's power to change his ways and start the world over again by transforming the evil into good. This is the message of the "rainbow in the cloud". Those droplets that can act in unison to obscure light in this world can be the very same droplets that can act in unison to allow light to shine through in this world. So it is with man. This human race that can fall so low into a heavy state of corruption that obscures God's light in this world, is the very same human race that can mend their ways by transforming the evil within them, thus causing God's light to shine forth in this world. (A look closer at these words conveys the message further: The rainbow **in** the cloud. The idea is that even though an individual appears to be a cloud for he is one who obscures light through his actions, nevertheless, we must believe that deep down there is a rainbow **in** that cloud.) <http://www.tzippyah.com/2008/10/parshas-noach-the-rainbow-in-the-cloud.html>

The rainbow represents divine enlightenment, a refraction of God's light, as it penetrates into our physical world. Why does the Torah emphasize that the rainbow is 'in the clouds'? Clouds represent our emotional and physical aspects, just as clouds are heavy and dark (the Hebrew word *geshem* means both 'rain' and 'physical matter'). The covenant of the 'rainbow in the clouds' indicates that the Divine enlightenment (the rainbow) now extended from the realm of the intellect, where it existed before the Flood, to the emotional and physical spheres (the clouds). God's rainbow of light now also penetrated the thick clouds of the material world. How was this accomplished? The Divine light became 'clothed' in a more physical form – concrete *mitzvot*. God gave to Noah the first and most basic moral code: the seven laws of the Noahide code. These commandments served to bridge the divide between intellect and deed, between the metaphysical and the physical. <http://www.ravkooktorah.org/NOAH59.htm>

According to the esteemed biblical scholar Nahum Sarna, the rainbow in the ancient world was a fairly common "symbol of divine bellicosity and hostility" (JPS Torah Commentary, p. 63). Regardless of your position on authorship of the Bible, what we witness in parashat Noah is the remarkable transvaluing (evolving meaning or value) of a common symbol of belligerency and violence into a symbol of peace and reconciliation! (The warlike value of the word for rainbow ['keshet'] in Hebrew is retained in its other meaning as in bow and arrow).

The violent, warlike, symbolism of the rainbow undoubtedly arises from the timing of the appearance of the rainbow in the sky after violent storms. Yet, how a people, presumably the ancestors of Abraham, elicited another aspect of the meaning of the rainbow is a mystery. Perhaps they associated the life-renewing element of rain with the concepts of mercy and compassion and sustainability. If so, it is not hard to see how believers in an all-powerful God might have embraced the rainbow as sign of God's covenantal relationship with humanity. This is just one small example of the innovative, even revolutionary, nature of Torah. <http://jrf.org/showdt&rid'9&pid=2>

Masechet Berachot – Perek Tet (Chapter 9) 59a4 (in the Schottenstein pagination)

"Rabbi Alexandri also said in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: One who sees the rainbow in the clouds should fall on his face, as it says, As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud, and when I

saw it I fell upon my face (Ez. 1:28). In the West [Palestine] they cursed anyone who did this, because it looks as if he was bowing down to the rainbow; but he certainly makes a blessing.

What

blessing does he say? — 'Blessed is the One who remembers the Covenant'. In a Baraita it was taught: Rabbi Ishmael the son of Rabbi Yochanan ben Beroka says: He says: Who is faithful with his

Covenant and fulfils his word."

1) I heard a teaching from my brother-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Ginian, that addresses the question of acknowledging a natural wonder as a manifestation of God's Wonder. Moshe wove a parable, "It's like

someone attending a joyous wedding. Everyone is singing, everyone is dancing. The beddeken is taking place, and the holiness is everywhere. The bride and the groom are staring at each other with

tears in their eyes, and the person next you pokes you in the side and says, 'Did you see the groom's tie? That's a nice tie!'" Noticing the rainbow and saying "Mah Gadlu Ma'asecha Yah/How unbelievable are your works God (Ps. 92:6)" might be akin to praising the groom's tie in the midst of a world of rapture.

But what if the tie was chosen by the bride? What if it had some significance? Wouldn't it be a legitimate manifestation of love? So too, perhaps, is the rainbow. As Rabbi Ishmael suggests, the rainbow

is a sign of God's faithfulness.

As Rabbi Irwin Kula of Clal (clal.org) says in an intense 18-minute documentary called "Time for a New God", "Nothing is simply what it is."

www.shefanetwork.org/.../Masechet%20Brachot%20-%20Perek%20Tet.doc

“And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech”

The Torah tells that, at some point in history, all human beings spoke the same language: “And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech” (Bereishit 11:1). Everyone came together and decided to build a tower that would reach the heavens. With no reason whatsoever, the Torah recounts that God intervened and made people speak several languages.

The question that arises from the text is why God intervened and caused men to speak different languages instead of just one, as they had done until then. What was the problem?

Some commentators explain that men, by means of construction and technology, tried to show how powerful they were, claiming that they were even capable of reaching the sky and competing with God Himself. Then, God's meddling is understandable, in the sense that human beings behaved badly, challenging the divinity, and therefore, were punished through their being made to speak different languages.

There is an interesting explanation developed by a contemporary Jewish scholar, Isaiah Leibowitz, that I would like to share with you. He does not understand God's participation as a punishment but, to the contrary, as a gift. Leibowitz, on his book Parashat Hashavua, maintains that the transgression of men was not to have built the tower but rather to have attempted that all men speak the same language, the same way of thinking, the same values; without taking into account people's differences.

God did not expect that of humankind; therefore, with mercy and clemency, He created a situation wherein differences, conflicts, and contradictions could happen.

Throughout the history of humankind, there were many totalitarian governments that did not allow people to distinguish themselves from the prevailing norm. Differences and contradictions were symbols of rebellion and cause for punishment. People had to read and think only what was permitted by the government.

Nowadays, a large number of countries live under democratic governments, which stimulate the differences and the respect for the different life views. But we live in an age where, unfortunately,

there is a trend to adopt fundamentalist positions regarding the different spheres of life, creating situations wherein majorities have to obey a few, who dictate what is the truth and how each one must live his/her life.

On the personal level, we often expect everyone around us to think as we do. We cannot bear that a son decides to do something we haven't agreed upon; that our partner does not think the way we do; that a friend behaves in a way totally opposite to ours. We find it difficult to understand that we are all different; with different feelings, thoughts, and beliefs.

When a single language, a single kind of thought, prevails in the family, in the social group, in the country and in the entire humankind, it is a sign that something is not working well; it is a sign of danger and a warning. <http://www.ujcl.org/english.html>

Yom Huledet Sameach

Frances Gotbetter

Harry Redlitz

The next time you are looking for a meaningful way to celebrate a simcha, a birthday, a promotion, remember a loved one, or comfort a mourner, please consider making a donation to The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons.

Quotes of the Week

“May God give you...For every storm a rainbow, for every tear a smile, for every care a promise and a blessing in each trial. For every problem life sends, a faithful friend to share, for every sigh a sweet song and an answer for each prayer.” Irish prayer

“Be thou the rainbow in the storms of life. The evening beam that smiles the clouds away, and tints tomorrow with prophetic ray.” Lord Byron

Shabbat shalom.

Stacy

Stacy Menzer
President
The Conservative Synagogue
Of the Hamptons
PO Box 1800
East Hampton, NY 11937
631 725 8188
www.synagoguehamptons.org