

Parshat Noach *Supplement*



Affirmations

After the flood, humanity began to flourish again. After the water receded and trees and plants grew green again people and animals were able to inhabit the land, produce offspring and fill the earth. The flood represented a renewal of the environment, humanity, and animals. Each year on Shabbat Parshat Noach we reflect on these messages and work to make sure God's creations are able to continue in a healthy manner. Therefore:

1. I affirm to honor the world around me, so that I leave the world in better shape than I found it.
2. I affirm to care about the mistreatment of the animal kingdom and work to create a more humane and compassionate world.
3. I affirm to care about my health and the health of my peers.

Re-Thinking The Noach Story

Originally, Adam was given "every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit" (Genesis 1:29). Everyone ate a plant based diet. Ten generations later, God gave Noah permission to eat meat (Genesis 9:2-3).

Today, tens of billions of animals are killed each year for human production. Many of these animals are raised in extremely harsh conditions and live a life full of pain and suffering.

With the knowledge of factory farming, our environment, and our bodies, it is time to reclaim God's original plan. Rabbi Yosef Albo (Genesis 9:2) explains that we are "permitted to eat meat to emphasize [our] higher moral level and degree of responsibility." He believes God wanted people to realize their elevated state, which is coupled with increased responsibility. If this is the case it is time to re-emphasize ethical and responsible living and choose not to partake in food from unethical sources as well as to proactively work to end the suffering of billions of animals.



Blessed are You who opens our eyes to the wonders that fill and surround the world. May we merit to treat Your world with compassion, and may we take responsibility for our actions. May our time on this earth be filled with love and compassion to those smaller and larger than us, and may we care for our fellow citizens of the world with utmost sensitivity and concern.

The Shamayim V'Aretz Institute

The Shamayim V'Aretz Institute is a Jewish animal welfare organization that educates, trains leaders, and leads campaigns for the ethical treatment of animals.

"Shamayim V'Aretz" means "Heaven and Earth" in Hebrew. The goal of Jewish life is to bring heaven down to earth and to sanctify the world through all of our just and holy endeavors. The Midrash teaches that there is a temple located in the heavens that sits directly above the temple on earth (Genesis Rabbah 69:7). The same G-d who makes the heavens radiate also illuminates our earthly existence. We are the stewards of the earth seeking to ensure that heaven still has a place on earth by removing injustice, oppression, and suffering from our midst. The animal kingdom is the most abused of all sentient beings. By protecting the most vulnerable creatures on earth, we return the holiness to our world by bringing Shamayim back down to the Aretz, by bringing heaven back down to earth.

Visit us at www.ShamayimVAretz.org

Quotes to

Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz Founder and CEO, The Shamayim V'Aretz Institute

Noah could not have imagined a world without each animal existing in it. The Midrash teaches that Noah not only heroically saved two from each species (by bringing them on to the ark) but also on the ark itself, running tirelessly from one to the next to give them proper water, food, and care. Reading the story of the flood each year reminds us that to live in a redeemed world we must prioritize care for the most vulnerable sentient beings on our planet.

Today once again the world is flooding, putting the soul of each creature at risk. Will we follow Noah's example to work to reverse the trends of abuse and neglect and to show mercy and compassion to each creature? Jews are called upon to be people of compassion. In fact, the rabbis consider mercy and compassion to be essential characteristics to being Jewish (Beitzah 32b). By doing so, we not only fulfill the mandate of the Torah but we regain our very humanity.

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man knows the needs of his beast.

Baal Shem Tov A man should consider himself as a worm, and all other small animals his friends in the world, for all of them are created.

Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland

I am a vegetarian precisely because I am a believing Jew who strives to live in accordance with the ethical teachings of my heritage . . . I believe that if you follow the most sublime and noble values in our tradition, in this day and age, then there is an imperative to live a vegetarian lifestyle . . . It is a halachic imperative. Compassion for animals is a halachic imperative. And being responsible also for your environment and for your globe, which also have ramifications coming out of the whole question of the meat industry and meat consumption, are all fundamental Jewish questions. So I, simply put, am a vegetarian because I am a religious Jew.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb, Chapter 60, Sect. 416:

Here you are faced with God's teaching, which obliges you not only to refrain from inflicting unnecessary pain on any animal, but to help and, when you can, to lessen the pain whenever you see an animal suffering, even through no fault of yours.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, Liquei Mo'HaRaN, I 5:1

Every person must say: The whole world was created for me"(Sanhedrin 37a). If the world was created for me, it is therefore my constant obligation to examine and consider what is needed to repair the world and provide everyone's needs, and to pray for them.

Rav Abraham Isaac Kook, A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace

It is impossible to imagine that the Master of all that transpires, Who has mercy upon all His creatures, would establish an eternal decree such as this in the creation that He pronounced "exceedingly good," that it should be impossible for the human race to exist without violating its own moral instincts by shedding blood, be it even the blood of animals . . . When humanity reaches its goal of complete happiness and spiritual liberation, when it attains that lofty peak of perfection that is the pure knowledge of God and the full manifestation of the essential holiness of life, then the age of "motivation by virtue of enlightenment" will have arrived . . . Then human beings will recognize their companions in Creation: all the animals. And they will understand how it is fitting from the standpoint of the purest ethical standard not to resort to moral concessions, to compromise the Divine attribute of justice with that of mercy [by permitting mankind's exploitation of animals] . . . Rather they will walk the path of absolute good.

Midrash Tanchuma, Noah 4: [The Torah calls Noah] "a righteous man," because the term "righteous" specifically refers to one who provides food for God's creatures. Two individuals are called righteous for having provided other creatures with food: Noah and Joseph . . . Rav Achavah son of Rav Ze'ira said, "The sons of Noah . . . were all righteous because they showed compassion toward both animal and humans."