



October 16-17, 2026

ו' חשוון תשפ"ז

Candlelighting: 6:02 PM

Parashat No'ach נח - Genesis 6:9-11:32

Stone - p 30 Hertz - p 26 Etz Hayim - p 41

Haftarah ישעיה - Isaiah 54:1-55:5

Stone - p 1131 Hertz - p 41 Etz Hayim - p 65

Kiddush is sponsored by the congregation

Shabbat ends: 7:02

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director - traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Governance Committee:

Florence Schachter, Chair

Marty Levy, Vice-Chair

Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green,

Dina Rinder, Mindy Strauss

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We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Torah Portion - Noah

Those who harbor possible doubts about the Divine authorship of the Torah had better come up with some very cogent and credible arguments! Even a casual observer cannot deny the rather remarkable literary patterns of the scriptural narratives of the book of Genesis. Each successive story seems more exciting than the last. Each new crescendo exceeds the previous crescendo. It is as if the Al-mighty is taunting His creations, saying: "Mortals, can you top this?"

Genesis begins with the saga of the creation of the world, which is followed by the emergence of humankind, the banishment of the human beings from the Garden of Eden, and the murder of Abel by Cain. In the ten generations from Adam to Noah we encounter not only the oldest human being, Methuselah (Genesis 5:27), but the most spiritual one as well, Enoch (Genesis 5:24). The tenth generation brings us to the epic story of Noah and the flood that inundates the earth. And all of this takes place within the first eight chapters of Genesis!

Noah, together with his wife, their three sons and their wives, have been saved from the deluge. The inquisitive reader asks, What can possibly top that? And while still only in chapter nine of Genesis, we read about what seems to be a simple and rather innocuous story of Noah planting a vineyard. Immediately, we realize how silly to presume that planting a vineyard would be innocuous. Once the vineyard matures, Noah drinks of its wine, becomes terribly inebriated, and is "dishonored" by his son, Ham. Only the intervention of his other two sons, Shem and Yafet, saves Noah from further shame (Genesis 9:18-27).

The nature of Ham's attack on Noah, however, is not clear, since scripture's description is rather vague (Genesis 9:22): **וַיֵּרָא חָם אֲבִי כְנַעַן, אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו, וַיֵּגֵד לְשָׁנָיו אֶחָיו בְּחוּץ.** Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.

Some of the biblical commentators suggest that Ham gazed disrespectfully at the naked Noah who was wallowing in his drunkenness. Others say that Ham's sin was that he actually enjoyed the sight of his father's shame and drunkenness. There are even those who maintain that the Hebrew words, **וַיֵּרָא חָם... אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו**, indicate a sexual attack, and suggest that Ham either sodomized his father or castrated him!

When Noah returns to sobriety and realizes what his son Ham had done to him, Noah lashes out, uttering a profound curse not only upon Ham, but upon Ham's son, Noah's own grandson, Canaan. Canaan is condemned to live a life of profound slavery (see parasha commentary on [Noah 5782-2021](#)).

Aware of the fact that he had been rescued by Shem and Yafet, Noah blesses them and says (Genesis 9:27): **יִפְתָּ אֶ־לְלֵקִים לִיפְתָּ, וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאַהֲלֵי שֵׁם**. This verse is often translated as, May G-d enlarge, or broaden, Yafet and may He dwell in the tents of Shem. Not surprisingly, the meaning of this verse is not entirely clear. Literally, it means that Yafet, (which, in Hebrew, comes from the root of the word "beauty") shall be the source of Divine beauty, and may He, or it (the beauty), dwell in the tents of Shem. One of the more popular interpretations of this verse suggested by our rabbis is that the beauty of Greece (the descendants of Yafet) should dwell in the tents of the Jews (the descendants of Shem).

It's interesting to note that the concept of aesthetic beauty has never been a major feature of Judaism. The Torah itself has only a limited number of references to human beauty. Abraham acknowledges that Sarah was beautiful (Genesis 12:11), scripture notes that Rebecca was very beautiful (Genesis 24:16), Jacob is smitten by Rachel's beauty (Genesis 29:17), and Joseph is a man of extraordinary handsomeness (Genesis 39:6). But no one would ever argue that Judaism is obsessed, or even particularly concerned, with physical beauty. If Judaism is obsessed with anything, it is with the primacy of human life and the concepts of holiness and sanctity.

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Nevertheless, aesthetic beauty does play a significant role in Jewish worship. The Torah (Leviticus 23:40) speaks of taking the fruit of a beautiful tree on Sukkot (the citron or etrog). A major concept in Jewish worship is the idea of *הידור מצוה*--hiddur mitzvah, enhancing the beauty of a ritual or a commandment. Jews are instructed to make their synagogues and temples aesthetically pleasing, to buy the finest things to honor Shabbat and holidays, and to try to purchase the best quality Torah scrolls, mezuzot, and teffillin. But somehow, beauty remains the primary domain of Yafet, the Greeks, and, at best, is of only peripheral concern to the descendants of Shem.

In 1975, an extraordinary essay was published by the Israeli satirist and commentator, Ephraim Kishon, 1924-2005, entitled *Ha'kipphah Ha'serugah*, the Knitted Skullcap. Kishon, who himself was not an observant Jew, extolled the virtues of the generation of young people who wore the knitted yarmulke, suggesting that if a young person was seen being unusually courteous or helpful, he was bound to have a knitted kippah on his head. It was a wonderful tribute to that generation of religious young people, and well deserved.

Despite Kishon's generous observations, aesthetic beauty and possibly even courteous behavior are not the natural or primary province of the Jewish people. That domain is prophetically granted to the Greeks and the aesthetes. Jews have to work much harder at it. It doesn't come naturally.

Perhaps the reason that it doesn't come naturally is because Jews have higher existential callings than beauty and courtesy. There are many far more important values: charity, caring for the poor, the infirm, the widow, the orphan, visiting the sick, comforting the mourners, encouraging Jewish marriage. Beauty and courtesy are much like a tie--a fashion statement, sometimes without purpose or merit except possibly to enrich the designers, manufacturers and merchants. Failing to tip your hat may be discourteous. But, failing to pay the babysitter on time is considered cruel and sinful by Torah standards! Eating food using the incorrect fork and knife, or neglecting to wipe one's lips with a napkin, may be regarded as socially gauche, but failing to offer food to those who are hungry is seen as cruel and sinful according to Jewish law.

There is no question that seeing inconsiderate drivers double-park on the main shopping thoroughfares of religious Jewish neighborhoods is painful, and observant Jews who fail to sweep their sidewalks or haul-in their garbage cans in a timely manner are a source of embarrassment. But, we need to keep in mind that while cleanliness and courtesy are indeed important virtues, they are far from ultimate values. It is hoped that these ultimate values of Chessed are practiced faithfully and punctiliously by some of the most discourteous religionists.

If G-d has blessed the descendants of Shem to be influenced by the values of Yafet, then there must be a vital reason for that blessing, and it must be considered seriously by all Jews. But, let us always bear in mind that the sanctity of human life is the inherent and central theme of Judaism. We must continue to encourage and vigorously promote courtesies, but must not allow ourselves to be blinded by them, despite their importance, and mistake them for "ultimate" values.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald



“2026 Midterm Elections: Analysis & Perspectives”

**Discussion and Q & A with
Dr. Steven Puro, Professor Emeritus
SLU Department of Political Science**

Thursday, October 22, 2026

7:00 PM CST on Zoom

<https://bit.ly/4hEX5Li>

Passcode: 139722



*“Everything You
Need to Know
BEFORE
Your Loved One
Passes Away”*



Traditional Congregation Education Committee
presents a program with

Berger Memorial Chapel

Sunday, November 8, 2026

Light breakfast at 9:30 AM
followed by the presentation

Registration required:
traditionalcong@gmail.com

314-576-5230

with names of attendees



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PRAYER

Judaism demands recognition of human dignity on the strength of the exalted dignity of the Creator.

Every person is infused with a spark of the Spirit in whose image mortals were created.

To degrade a human being thus becomes tantamount to degrading God.

Because of this identification of human dignity with the image of God, the religious ethical spirit gained early ascendancy in Israel.

It became the mainspring of Jewish social ethics and of the legislation formed by it.

Over and over again, Judaic literature emphasizes that human beings have infinite value by virtue of their endowment with a spark of the Divine in whose image all mortals were created.

Wrong inflicted upon any person thus becomes a transgression against God, and "who sheds blood diminishes the likeness in which a human is made."

Lest one assume that God sorrows, as it were, only for the hurt inflicted upon the righteous, the Sages stress that God mourns also for the blood of the sinners for they, too, are "Children of God."

Other than God, human beings are the highest value of Judaism. The degradation of any person to the level of "an animated machine" is unthinkable in the Jewish setting.

To the Jew, every human life is sacred because every human partakes of the holiness of God.

Trude Weiss-Rosmarin (Adapted)

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Regret for the things we did can be tempered by time. It is regret for things we did not do that is inconsolable.

Sydney J. Harris