

DEBAR TORAH by RABBI ROHDE

Noah's Universal Obligation to Establish States and Governments

I have continued to ponder our Sages' and Maimonides' understanding that establishing and enforcing a system of government and justice in all societies is a Scripturally-mandated universal obligation given to all the descendants of Noah, as the centerpiece of the so-called Seven "Noahide" commandments. At the beginning of this week's Parashah, we read:

6¹¹ The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with violence. ¹² When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth, ¹³ God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth.

Later on, after end of the Flood, we read:

9⁵ And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal, and from the hand of Man, every Man from the hand of his fellow, I will demand an accounting for the life of Man. ⁶ "Whoever sheds Man's blood, by Man shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made Man.

The "Image of God" here means that Man will serve as a judge, like Elohim, like the name of God which signifies being a judge and sitting in judgment. God brought about the Flood to bring needed retribution and justice to a world which had become permeated with violence. But after Noah's work and sacrifice, God had decided that, despite man's Evil Inclination which would inevitably lead to violence again, God Himself would no longer interfere directly to bring retribution and justice upon earth. God would hereafter delegate His governmental and judgmental authority to Noah's descendants, who would now be responsible for keeping justice upon Earth. That is what is meant by "Whoever sheds Man's blood, by Man shall their blood be shed:" Man is now made responsible for prosecuting, judging and exacting retribution for all violence against mankind, in place of God's having to do so.

According to Maimonides, Man's responsibility to curb violence and keep law and order is so fundamental to postdiluvian humanity that it can necessitate "extra-judicial" enforcement and punishment by a king or executor of justice, for the sake of establishing law, order, and harmony, and thereby curb violence in society. He almost seems to set up a kind of two-tiered justice system, an "official" justice system and an "executive decree" or "enforcement" system aimed at practically preventing and curbing violence and establishing order, which need not abide by the strict rules of the justice system. This applies across-the-board for all societies, for Israel, whose idealized Torah system of law is most legalistically rule-bound, as well as for all non-Jewish societies, which are considered less law-abiding and less orderly and whose less-idealized systems of law must be concerned with the basics of establishing and enforcing the most-primitive levels of law and order. Should societies and leaders not live up to their responsibility to enforce justice and allow a culture of violence to take root, that society can and should be held responsible. Societies and polities with a "failed state," incapable of administering and executing justice, are guilty of the most heinous and fundamental crime, for which they will inescapably be held culpable, bringing inevitably upon themselves their own destruction, although in the postdiluvian world this punishment too will likely be at the hand of man. For Maimonides, the Noahide Code and the universal requirement for all human polities to establish law and order by setting up systems of rulership and enforcement is at the very heart of the story of Noah and the flood: It is the main resolution to the perpetual problem of violence which the Flood had sought to remedy.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Noah-Rosh Hodesh

Shabbat of Hope

November 1-2, 2024 | 1 Marheshvan, 5785

SCHEDULE

Kaplan: p. 26 | Haftarah: p. 1266

Hertz: p. 26 | Haftarah: p. 41

Candle Lighting | 5:34 pm

Evening Services | 5:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

SEASON PREMIERE: Friday Night Lights | Rabbi Soloveichik | after services | *5785 Season sponsored by the Julis Romo Rabinowitz family*

Zemirot | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

Shahrit | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Youth Groups & Junior Congregation | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

Hatanim Luncheon | after services | Levy Auditorium | *for registered guests*

Shabbat Afternoon Class | 4:45 pm | Rabbi Soloveichik

Teen Shiur | 4:45 pm | Baruch-Lev Kelman

Evening Services | 5:30 pm

Habdala | 6:20 pm

Remember to turn your clocks back 1 hour on Saturday night!

Weekday Service Times

Mornings

Sunday | 8:05 am

Monday-Friday | 7:05 am

Evenings (Arbit Only)

Sunday-Thursday | 6:30 pm

THIS SHABBAT: SHABBAT OF HOPE

SEASON PREMIERE

Friday Night Lights with Rabbi Soloveichik

Friday evening, November 1, Shabbat Noah | after 5:30 pm Evening Services

5785 season sponsored by the Julis Romo Rabinowitz family

To sponsor future sessions, please go to shearithisrael.org/sponsor-a-class.

Honoring our 5785 Hatanim

Hatanim Luncheon, Shabbat, November 2 | For Registered Guests

Congratulations to **Adam Hurwich**, Hatan Torah and **Aaron E. Nathan**, Hatan Bereshit!

COMING UP

Sign up at shearithisrael.org

Spirit of Triumph's Virtual Reality Tour of Auschwitz

A Pre-Kristallnacht Immersive Experience

THIS Thursday, November 7 | Following Evening Services

We welcome adults and mature teens (with parent authorization) to share this powerful experience

Not all of us are able to travel to the haunted grounds of Auschwitz and have the visceral experience of seeing the camp with our own eyes and honoring the martyrs of the Shoah. Recognizing the practical and financial limitations that hinder many from traveling to Poland, Spirit of Triumph used state-of-the-art virtual reality technology to create a portable, fully immersive experience that transports you directly into the heart of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps.

The VR tour is led by Rabbi Yisrael Goldwasser, a Holocaust educator, and includes exploration of the camp's barracks and landscapes. Following the tour, we will remove the VR headsets, "return" to the Synagogue, and spend some time processing our experience.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to the **Sisterhood** for once again lavishly and lovingly decorating our Elias Room Succah, as well as sponsoring the daily kiddushim and breakfasts throughout the holiday. A special thanks this year to their Stitch & Fix crew, who created two new Torah mantles that were inaugurated at the Women's Hakafot.

Thank you as well to **John Quinones and our tireless maintenance staff**, for putting up the two Succot and keeping everything running seamlessly.

Congratulations to **Janet Kirchheimer**, upon producing the film "AFTER: Poetry Destroys Silence," in which contemporary poets confront the Shoah. The film will be screened in Manhattan from November 1-7. For more info, visit www.after.film.

Condolences to **Alexander (Muriel) Seligson** and **Eve (Ilan) Mor**, upon the passing for their father, Aaron Seligson.

COMING UP

If registration required, sign up at shearithisrael.org

Co-sponsored by the Shearith Israel League

Shabbat Dinner & Conversation with Author Ross Perlin *in conversation with Louis Solomon, Parnas*

Friday night, November 22 | Following evening services

The first 100 households/registrants will receive a free signed copy of the book

EARLY BIRD PRICING: Through Thursday, November 7

In his fascinating new book, *Language City: The Fight To Preserve Endangered Mother Tongues in New York*, author and linguistics expert Ross Perlin documents a race against time to map overlooked and dying languages across New York City. Professor Perlin, a Lecturer at Columbia University, will share his fascinating insights about the languages many of us care most about. Attendees will have opportunities to interact in the many languages spoken by members of our linguistically rich and eclectic Congregation.

Early Bird Deadline: November 9!

Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner

Friday Night, November 15 | Ages: 21-35

Evening Services: 4:30 pm | Dinner: approx. 6:00 pm

Special Shabbat Morning Shiur With Rabbi Soloveichik

Shabbat Morning, November 16 | Following services

At the conclusion of morning services, we will head down to Levy Auditorium, where Rabbi Soloveichik will give a lively interactive class. Light refreshments will be served.

Follow our emails for details.

Annual Thanksgiving Pack-A-Thon

in partnership with the Jewish Center, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, West End Church, and Masbia

Thursday, November 28 | 9:00 am | Paved Paradise Pavilion

At this annual event, we will pack over a thousand nutritious food packages for those in need, and Masbia will distribute them to those who need them.

Help us feed thousands of struggling families!