

המוסד למען קדושת חיי אדם



TORAH READING:

Noach: Genesis 6:9 - 11:32

This week's Torah portion, Noach: Genesis 6:9 - 11:32, opens with an introduction to Noach, the only righteous man of his generation. HaShem gives him an ark building project that lasts 120 years, during which time he is to call his people to repent from their murderous violent ways, that G-d might show mercy and cancel the flood. Noach gets the ark built, but fails to save one soul from wickedness. He and his family enter the ark along with the animals as per HaShem's instructions. The rain begins. The flood ensues. Exactly one year later Noach and his passengers disembark to build a new world. They should "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."

G-d establishes the rainbow covenant with Noach, promising never again to curse the earth with destruction because of man's evil thoughts and actions. He provides a few moral guidelines to follow the second time around - the Seven Noahide Laws. These guidelines provide simple rules that lead to successful living when followed.

- 1) Know G-d and acknowledge Him.
- 2) Respect the Creator.
- 3) Respect human life.
- 4) Respect the institution of marriage.
- 5) Respect the rights and property of others.
- 6) Respect G-d's creatures.
- 7) Maintain justice.

We are instructed to respect human life because it is sacred. Every human being is an entire world. To save a life is to save the entire world. To destroy a life is to destroy the entire world.

HaShem deems willful murder a capital crime punishable by death. If a human court fails to punish the murderer, G-d Himself will seek redress. "From the hand of each man, his brother, I will demand the soul of man. The word of HaShem is quite clear in Genesis 9:6: Whoever sheds the blood of man through man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of G-d He made man."

Judaism regards human life so precious that Jews are obligated to break the Sabbath mitzvot in order to save a fetus. Because Judaism recognizes the unborn entity as alive - a human life that is sacred - we must protect it.

Despite centuries old semantic arguments among Jews about the relative value of the unborn, the time of ensoulment, or the stages of development about which many erroneous conclusions have been reached, the truth remains and science now proves that the unborn entity is alive, sentient, responsive and very much human.

There are three [persons] who drive away the Shekkinah (indwelling of G-d) from the world, making it impossible for the Holy One, Blessed be He, to fix His abode in the universe and causing prayer to be unanswered.....{The third is} he who causes the fetus to be destroyed in the womb, for he destroys the artifice of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His workmanship.....For these abominations the Spirit of Holiness weeps. Zohar, Shemot 3b (written appr. 150 CE).