

בראשית - 9:1-7 Bereshit Chapter

- א וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים, אֶת-נֹחַ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו ;
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ, וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-
הָאָרֶץ.
- ב 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall
be upon all the wildlife of the earth, and upon
all the fowl of the heavens, and all that crawl on
the soil, and all the fish of the sea - into your
hand are they given.
- ג 3 All things crawling about that live, for you
shall they be, for eating, as with the green
plants, I now give you all of it.
- ד 4 however - flesh with its life, its blood, you
shall not eat.
- ה 5 And for your blood, of your own lives, I will
demand satisfaction – from all wild animals I
will demand it, and from humankind, from
every man regarding his brother, will I demand
satisfaction for human life.
- ו 6 Whoever now sheds human blood, for that
human shall his [own] blood be shed, for in
Elohim's image he made humankind.
- ז 7 As for you – bear fruit and be many, swarm
the earth and become many on it.
- ז וַיֹּאמֶר, פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ ; שְׂרָצוּ בָאָרֶץ, וּרְבוּ-
בָהּ.

בראשית Chapter 9:1-7

להשתמש בבעלי חיים ובעבודתם מותר לכם, להשתלט עליהם כדי שיהיו לעזר לכם בקיומכם אתם רשאים, אבל אין מן הראוי שתזלזלו בכוח החיים שבהם, ושתמיתו אותם כדי לאכול את בשרם; המאכל הראוי לכם יהיה מאכל צמחוני... כנראה כוונת התורה הרייה זו, שמבחינה פרינציפיונית מן הראוי היה לו לאדם להימנע מאכילת הבשר, וכשנתנה לנח ולבניו רשות לאכילתו (ט, ג) לא היתה זו אלא קונצסיה, קשורה בתנאי של איסור הדם. איסור זה פירושו חלוקת כבוד לעקרון החיים, ("כי הדם הוא הנפש") וגם מעין זכר לדבר, שאמנם כל הבשר ראוי היה להיות אסור, ויש להזהר מלאכול מקצתו, כדי לזכור את האיסור הסודם.

מ.ד. קסוטו, מאדם עד נח, ע' 30



You are allowed to use the animals and employ them for work, to rule over them in order to use them for your survival, but you must not hold their life cheap or kill them for food...

When Noah and his descendants were permitted to eat meat this was allowed as long as they didn't eat the blood. The law against eating blood was out of respect for life ("for the blood is the life") and hints that in reality all meat eating should have been banned. *Cassuto: From Adam to Noah, on Genesis 1:27*

Umberto Cassuto was also known as **Moshe David Cassuto** (1883–1951)
He was a rabbi and Biblical scholar born in Florence, Italy.

לאמור: אחרי המבול הותרו בני נח באכילת בשר, כי אחרי שמלאה הארץ חמס, אחרי ששרר חמס ושוד ורצח ושלטון האדם באדם לרע לו בעולם, לא נדרש האדם למאמץ מוסרי זה של ויתור גמור על הריגת בעלי חיים, כל זמן שעוד דרוש לו המאמץ הזה לבלי הרג איש את רעהו. והרי המשך דבריו:

Since the land had become filled with violence and man had allowed himself to do terrible things, man was no longer required to go without killing animals for food. It was far more important that he should control himself and hold back from killing other human beings, and respect the life of his neighbor.

Nehama Leibowitz -1905-1997, was a famous Israeli Bible scholar who developed a particular style of Bible study that was very popular around the world.



Nehama Leibowitz on Rav Kook

Whoever sheds human blood,
that human being, his blood shall be shed
by human beings shall his blood be shed..

שֹׁפֵךְ דַּם הָאָדָם, בָּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשָּׁפַךְ

בראשית 9:8-17 Chapter 9:8-17

- ח** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-נֹחַ, וְאֶל-בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר. **8** And God said to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying:
- ט** וְאֲנִי, הֲנִי מְקִים אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם, וְאֶת-זֶרְעְכֶם, אַחֲרֵיכֶם. **9** 'As for Me, here, I now establish my covenant with you, and with your seed [children] after you;
- י** וְאֵת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם, בְּעוֹף בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ אִתְּכֶם; מִכָּל יֹצְאֵי הַתֵּבָה, לְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ. **10** and with all living creatures that are with you, the fowl, herd-animals, and all the wildlife of the earth with you; with all those going out of the Ark, of all the living things on the earth.
- יא** וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם, וְלֹא-יִכָּרֵת כָּל-בָּשָׂר עוֹד מִמֵּי הַמַּבּוּל; וְלֹא-יְהִיָּה עוֹד מַבּוּל, לְשַׁחַת הָאָרֶץ. **11** I will establish my covenant with you; never again shall all flesh be cut off again by waters of a flood; never again shall there be a flood, to destroy the earth!
- יב** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, זֹאת אוֹת-הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, וּבֵין כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם--לְדֹרֹת, עוֹלָם. **12** And God said: 'This is the sign of the covenant which I set between me and you and all living creatures that are with you, for all ages to come:
- יג** אֶת-קִשְׁתִּי, נֹתַתִּי בָעָנָן; וְהָיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית, בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ. **13** My bow, I set in the cloud, so that it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.
- יד** וְהָיָה, בְּעָנְנִי עָנָן עַל-הָאָרֶץ, וְנִרְאָתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת, בָּעָנָן. **14** And when I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow is seen, in the clouds
- טו** וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי, אֲשֶׁר בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, וּבֵין כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, בְּכָל-בָּשָׂר; וְלֹא-יְהִיָּה עוֹד הַמַּיִם לַמַּבּוּל, לְשַׁחַת כָּל-בָּשָׂר. **15** I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and all living creatures of all flesh; so the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.
- טז** וְהָיְתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת, בָּעָנָן; וְרָאִיתִיהָ, לְזִכָּר בְּרִית עוֹלָם, בֵּין אֱלֹהִים, וּבֵין כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל-בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאָרֶץ. **16** When the bow will be, in the cloud; I will see it, and remember the covenant between God and all living creatures - all flesh that is on the earth
- יז** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, אֶל-נֹחַ: זֹאת אוֹת-הַבְּרִית, אֲשֶׁר הִקְמַתִּי, בֵּינִי, וּבֵין כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאָרֶץ. {פ} **17** And God said to Noah: 'This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.'
- יח** וַיְהִיו בָּנֵי-נֹחַ, הַיֹּצְאִים מִן-הַתֵּבָה--שֵׁם, וְחָם, וְיָפֶת; וְחָם, הוּא אָבִי כְנָעַן. **18** And the sons of Noah, that went out from the Ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan.

Leading Idea: Establishing and Maintaining

Establishing (מְקִים), remembering (לִזְכֹּר) and remembering in the future (זְכוּרָתִי)

In Verses 9:8-17 God turns his attention from Noah to himself. “As for me...” Within this passage he reflects on the act of *establishing* a covenant and remembering it – that is *maintaining* a covenant (keeping it over time), and the intention to keep it in the future (I will remember). God also reflects on the ‘sign’ (אוֹת), or rainbow, as *representing* the covenant (as a sign of the covenant), as a way of *showing us* of his intentions (it stands as a sign between me and you), and as a way of *reminding himself* of his covenant. These exercises and discussion plans explore these subtle yet very powerful distinctions.

Discussion Plan: starting something and remembering to keep it going once it is started

Is there a difference between these things, if so, what is the difference?

- Creating a rule that says "do not enter the room without knocking"
- Remembering to keep the rule that says "do not enter the room without knocking"
- Starting a friendship
- Keeping that person as a friend
- Earning a name for being fair
- Remembering to always be fair
- Keeping a name for being fair once you have it

What is the difference between...

- Putting a sign on the door to *show* visitors that they can't enter without knocking.
- Putting a sign on the door to *remind* visitors that they can't enter without knocking.
- Putting a sign on the door to *remind yourself* that you shouldn't let visitors in unless they have knocked on the door first.

When might you need to post each of these signs?

Intertextual Sources

Exploring the meaning of אוֹת

- Read together Shemot 12:13 (God telling the Israelite to mark their door frames during the plagues)
- Discuss the ways in which this is similar and different from the rainbow. (for example: What is the function of the אוֹת (to show? tell? remind? something else?). Who is doing the actions? Is this to help the Israelites also remember that they will be safe from God's actions - is this the same as the rainbow?)

Drama Activities: The meaning of אֹת

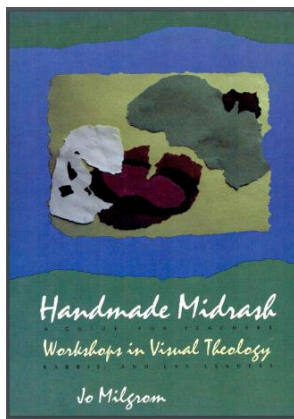
1. Divide into small groups – half the groups will work with the Exodus text and half the groups with the in the rainbow text – they should create a skit that shows what they think putting the sign up (on the door, in the sky) is about in light of their discussion.
2. Divide into small groups – create a skit that shows how you understand the rainbow text in light of some of the distinctions you explored in your community of inquiry / in these discussion plans

Activity: Handmade Midrash: 'This is the sign of the covenant'- UPS-A

יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, זֹאת אוֹת-הַבְּרִית
אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, וּבֵין כָּל-
נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם--לְדֹרֹת, עוֹלָם.
12 And God said: 'This is the sign of the
covenant which I set between me and you and
all living creatures that are with you, for all
ages to come:

יג אֶת-קִשְׁתִּי, נִתְּנִי בָּעָנָן ; וְהָיְתָה
לְאוֹת בְּרִית, בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ.
13 My bow, I set in the cloud, so that it shall
serve as a sign of the covenant between Me
and the earth.

Make a 'Handmade Midrash' that draws on how you understand this text in light of the distinctions you explored in your community of inquiry. Make your midrash from colored construction paper by tearing forms out of the paper and sticking them onto a background sheet of paper.



Handmade Midrash is a process of interpretation developed by **Jo Milgrom**. Her process has a number of stages:

1. Text Study
2. Creation of an artwork
3. Discussion in small groups
4. Reflective writing on what you can learn through looking at what you created more carefully.
5. Return to the text

- The artwork is created through tearing paper and attaching it to a background. It is not about creating a realistic kind of picture, but capturing ideas and representing them – often through symbolic representation –the torn paper represents ideas in relation to one another. It doesn't require you to be 'good at art' as you can represent ideas through abstract shapes, a blob, color, etc.
- After you have created your midrash, divide into small groups to share what you have done and what it means. Here what other people see in what your midrash. Describe what was the hardest and easiest elements to do, what role color plays in your midrash, why you placed things where you did, how the parts relate to one another, etc.
- After the discussion, take some time to do some reflective writing. You might like to think about some of the following prompts: Did anything surprise you in what you constructed? In what people saw in it? How did the ideas come together? How does what is happening in the picture relate to your own feelings and thoughts about the world you live in? How does it relate to your own feelings and thoughts about the Divine human connection?

Leading Idea: Caring for our world

This section of text about the Keshet comes after the flood – after God in his anger almost completely destroys the world. The Keshet is a reminder to God to avoid global destruction in the future. This raises a larger question about our relationship to the world and our care for it. The following poem can invite discussion around our sensory experiencing of the world and our care for it. You might like to create your own poem that draws on the way your students' own experiences of connecting to the world through their senses.



Molly Cone was a well known children's author, having published over 45 books.

She was a founding member of Temple Beth Am in Seattle.

Picture:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/seattletimes/obituary.aspx?pid=179415367>

Look upon This Land – Molly Cone

*Look upon this land—
Touch it.
Sand under your bare feet,
The squish of mud,
Silky coat of cat,
Soft rose petals,
A smooth round rock,
Rain on your face.*

*Touch it with your eyes.
Cherry trees blossoming pink,
Lake of blue and summer sky,
The green of life,
Purple grapes and apples red,
Moon rising yellow,
Orange sun going down.*

*Touch it with your ears.
Splatter of rain,
Crack of thunder,
Wind whispering,
Birds singing,
The crying of babies and puppies,
Kittens and ducklings.*

*Touch it with your nose.
Pine-scent of woods, lilacs blooming,
new-mown grass, smoke of chimneys,
strawberries in the sun.*

*Touch it with your tongue.
Lick of sugar,
Tang of lemon, ginger, or spice,
Bite of cold snow,
Gulp of pure water.*

Look upon this land—

*Touch it.
Touch it in every way you can,
For this land is part of you,
And you are part of it.*

*Given into your care is this earth.
See how beautiful it is.
Be careful not to spoil it,
For if you destroy the world,
There will be no one after you to restore it.
(Kohelet Rabbah 7:28)*

(Molly Cone, Listen to the Trees [New York: UAHC Press, 1995], pp. 42-43)

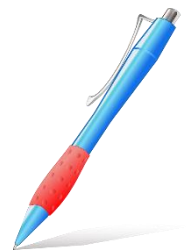
Kohelet Rabbah, 7:28

“Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world, for if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you”.

Activity



Create a class poem or artwork that draws on the way your students' experience their connection to the world through their senses.



Intertextual Exploration: Caring for our world

Deuteronomy 20:18-19

19 When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them, for you may

יִטְכִּי תַצּוֹר אֶל עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים
לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ לֹא תִשְׁחִית

eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Is the tree of the field a man, to go into the siege before you?

אֶת עֵצָה לִנְדֹחַ עָלָיו גֶּרֶזָן כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ
תֹאכַל וְאֵתוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ
הַשָּׂדֶה לִבָּא מִפְּנֵיךְ בַּמָּצוֹר:

20 However, a tree you know is not a food tree, you may destroy and cut down, and you shall build bulwarks against the city that makes war with you, until its submission.

כִּרְק עֵץ אֲשֶׁר יִדְעַע כִּי לֹא עֵץ מֵאֲכָל
הוּא אֵתוֹ תִּשְׁחִית וְכָרְתָּ וּבְנִיתָ מְצוֹר
עַל הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הוּא עוֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ
מִלְחָמָה עַד רִדְתָּהּ:

When in your war against a city you have to lay siege on it in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human, able to move into the city you are seeking to capture? Only trees which you know do not yield food may be destroyed... (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)

While the verses themselves deal specifically with cutting down trees during war, the Sages extended their meaning to cover all forms of wasteful destruction. They taught that anyone who deliberately wastes our resources, either natural or man-made, violates the law.

Harriet M. Levine, Woodlands Community Temple, White Plains, NY

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/shoftim/protect-trees-protect-our-world>