

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road  
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



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Noach — Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan

1 Cheshvan, 5785

## Murder - Prohibited By G-D

It seems almost banal to write anything about the security situation in Israel. What is left to be said? What has been taking place is outright murder and nothing less.

Survival of the fittest is a core part of the Theory of Evolution which explains the fundamental driving force behind the evolutionary process. Assuming this is so, survival of the fittest has been the singular force responsible for producing the highly sophisticated human beings we are today, the greatest success of history.

Why, then, should we not allow for the thinning of the human "herd" by sanctioning murder, thereby accelerating the evolutionary process? Wouldn't that be the prudent and moral (because morality is based on prudence, isn't it?) thing to do? In fact, this rule continues to reign supreme in the animal kingdom, as does capitalism in the economic sphere (in the opinion of certain politicians!) just ask Bernie Sanders!

In fact, we find the rejection of this reasoning in the Torah portion of Noach.

After the devastation of the Great flood, G-d permitted Noah and his family to hunt animals for human consumption, thereby demonstrating that man's superiority justifies the taking of animal life for the purpose of furthering human life. Following this reasoning to its logical conclusion would lead to justifying the taking of "weaker" human life for the purpose of furthering a stronger, superior human race.

The Torah (Genesis 9:6) anticipates and unequivocally rejects this reasoning by stating in no uncertain terms that murder is prohibited: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, his blood shall be shed by man; for in the image of G-d He made man."

Note that the Torah not only categorically rejects murder but also, uncharacteristically, gives a reason for this prohibition: "For in the image of G-d He made man."

In subsequent portions of the Torah, a distinction is made between the act of murder and killing. Killing under judicial authority or as a matter of defensive warfare is acceptable. Murder – which is defined as premeditated and not defensive – is never acceptable.

However, some might postulate that since an exception is already granted to the judiciary to take human life, an exception should also be granted for murder in the name of religion. In order to refute such an argument the Torah states, "For in the image of G-d He made man." Since man is a reflection of G-d Himself, the murder of a human being to "protect" the honor of G-d is contradictory and illogical.

Perhaps if this argument were made based not on perceived human morality, but on the word of G-d which the majority of civilization accepts, it would have some impact on the haze impeding the moral vision of those who incite and lead others to the dastardly and cowardly acts of murder.

*(by Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan)*

## The Truly Good, the Mediocre... and the Evil

"These are the products [children] of Noach; Noach was a righteous man, pure in his generation, and Noach walked with G-d... And G-d said to Noach, the end of all flesh comes before me, for all the earth is filled with Hamas because of them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." [6:9,13]

In the Torah Hamas means theft and other wrongdoing, but the shoe certainly fits. We have arrived at a moment where simple decency demands a particular stance and attitude, yet all too many people, including not a few Jews, are failing that test.

Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, quotes Talmudic sources that offer two ways to understand what the Torah is telling us, when it describes Noach as pure "in his generation." Some say that this praises him as pure and righteous even in such a terrible era, for had he lived in a generation of righteous people, he would have been still greater. Others, however, view this as a harsh criticism: compared to his generation, he was deemed righteous – but "had he lived in the era of Avraham, he would have been considered a nothing."

*(continued on the other side)*

Rabbi Dovid Mayer notes that this is not just harsh, but extraordinary. Let us accept that Noach would not have measured up to Avraham. Fine – but even so, how could he be considered nothing?

The answer, he said, is found in Rashi's next comment, on the words "and Noach walked with G-d." Concerning Avraham, Avraham, G-d says that "he walked before Me" [24:40] – and that is the difference. Rashi explains that Noach needed support, whereas Avraham strengthened himself and maintained his righteousness by himself. Noach could not have been who he was without help.

Imagine, said Rabbi Mayer, a champion marathon runner who finishes a race in just over two hours. Another, much less experienced runner, takes nearly four hours – but that allows us to make a comparison between the faster and slower runner. The slower runner is not as good, but we can credit him with finishing the race.

But, by contrast, imaging the guy who wants to finish quickly, so he goes through the race riding a bike. He threads his way through the runners (ringing that little bell on the handlebars), and finishes in no time at all. Do we give him a prize? Obviously, there's simply no way to compare the champion runner with the cyclist on his Schwinn.

That, said the Rabbi, is the difference between Avraham and Noach. Noach would be considered "nothing" because he's simply not in the same league. Avraham was who he was despite a series of trials that would have broken any lesser person – including Noach. And yet he "walked" on his own.


But although it may be true that Noach did not compare to Avraham, he was still sufficient to be saved from the flood. He exemplified decency in his generation. Those who supported, backed, or justified Hamas, however, were totally lost. They were less than humanity demands... and that has not changed.

*(by Rabbi Yaakov Menken from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)*

<p>Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by the <b>Brothers of Nechemiah Gertner</b>  in honor of <b>Mr. Nechemiah and Dr. Alysa Gertner</b>  and in honor of their ongoing efforts for the shul.</p>	
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<b>Yahrzeits This Week:</b>			
Dr. Allan Genut	6 Cheshvan - Wednesday night / Thursday	for father	Yisroel ben Boruch

<b>SHUL DIRECTORY</b>	
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<b>DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE</b>	
<p><b>Friday, 11/1— Rosh Chodesh — 30 Tishrei</b>  Shacharit —6:40 a.m.  Candles — 5:46 p.m.  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Shabbat, 11/2 — Rosh Chodesh — 1 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:11 a.m.  Minchah — 5:35 p.m.  Shiur — after Minchah  Shkiah — 6:04 p.m.  Ma'ariv — 6:46 p.m.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Sunday, 11/3 — 2 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. <b>E.S.T.</b>  Minchah / Maariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Monday, 11/4 — 3 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, 11/5 — 4 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 7:00 a.m..  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Wednesday, 11/6 — 5 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Thursday, 11/7 — 6 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Friday, 11/8 — 7 Cheshvan</b>  Shacharit —7:00 a.m.  Candles — 4:39 p.m.  Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.</p>