



Torah for Turbulent Times

"A Prayer for the Election"

A friend reached out to me over the weekend to say she was anxious and stressed out about the upcoming election. She asked if I knew of any prayers to say. I affirmed first that yes, with all that we're living through plus the upcoming election, many of us feel uneasy, distressed, disturbed, concerned, scared, and worried about our future. And then, I shared a prayer written by a colleague to say before, after, or even on a daily basis during this pre- and post-election season.*

This past Shabbat we studied the story of Noah and the Flood. Most commentators say it wasn't an easy ride for Noah, his family, and all the animals. They were shut in the ark in isolation while the raging waters around them wiped out creation. In a flood of emotions it's noted that interpersonal tensions among family members were heightened. They had no place to flee, not to mention the challenge of keeping the peace among the animal kingdom. In fact, the traditional commentator Rashi suggests that Noah was wounded by the lion when he happened to be late with his supper. A mystical commentary teaches that when Noah entered the ark he really learned to pray deeply with the words of prayer (the Hebrew, *teva*, can mean "ark" as well as "word/letter.") Literally, sink or swim, Noah and his family could only hold onto each other in order to weather the storm around them. Life as they knew it had disappeared. G-d vowed not to do *that* again and as a sign provided a rainbow. "When the rainbow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures. That will be the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all on earth." (Genesis 9:16-17)

The rainbow is a powerful symbol of calm after the storm, of light after dark, and of hope following despair. May our land be one where all our dreams really can come true and where trouble really can melt like lemon drops.

-Rabbi Mark

*“Behold, I am intending through my vote / through my prayer to seek peace for this country, as it is written ([Jeremiah 29:7](#)): “Seek the peace of the city where I cause you to roam and pray for her to G-d, for in her peace you all will have peace.” May it be Your will that votes be counted faithfully, and may You count my vote as if I had fulfilled this verse with all my power. May You give a listening heart to whomever we elect and may it be good in Your eyes to raise for us a good government that will bring healing, justice, and peace to all living in this land and to all the world, and upon [Jerusalem](#), a government that will honor the image of G-d in all humanity and in Creation.

Just as I have participated / Just as I will participate in the election, so may I merit to do good works and to repair the world through all my efforts on behalf of all living creatures, *in remembrance of the covenant of Noah’s waters to protect and to not destroy the earth and her plenitude.*

Give to all the peoples of this country the strength and the will to pursue righteousness and to seek peace as a unified force to uproot racism and violence, and to make healing, good life and peace flourish here and throughout the world, and fulfill for us the verse ([Psalm 90:17](#)): “May the pleasure of G-d be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; make the work of our hands endure.”

(Rabbi David Seidenberg)