



# DVAR TZEDEK VOICES

Torah commentary featuring **globalvoices**

## Parashat Noach 5773

October 20, 2012

**Welcome to Dvar Tzedek Voices!** Produced bi-weekly, Dvar Tzedek Voices is a new feature that links this week's *parashah* to an article from Global Voices, the blog of American Jewish World Service. A short *dvar* Torah precedes the article to spark critical thinking about a theme that's present in both the *parashah* and the blog. We hope that this format will offer you new insights and serve as a gateway to different areas of AJWS's work and thought.

Stay tuned for next week's standard Dvar Tzedek format.

Please take two minutes to tell us what you think of Dvar Tzedek Voices by completing this [feedback form](#).

### Introduction

The Torah tells us that waters raged on the earth for 150 days, as Noach and his family and the pairs of animals tossed and turned in their wooden ark. Until finally, the text says: "*Vayizkor Elohim*—God remembered" Noach and all of the creatures on the ark and caused the waters to subside.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on this first mention of the verb "to remember" in the Torah, the medieval commentator Radak explains that "remembering" isn't actually what happened, because remembering implies forgetting—and since God does not forget, neither does God remember. Rather, the word is used simply because the Torah is written in language that humans can relate to.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, forgetting is something that we know all-too-well and remembering a goal that we strive for. Unlike Radak's conception of God, we cannot hold all knowledge in our consciousness, so we have all kinds of tricks to ward against forgetting and encourage our brains to remember what matters—we set alarms on our phones, wear bracelets for different causes, display photos of loved ones as the wallpaper on our computers.

We also have days designated for remembering. Last week, October 11 was one such day, as people around the world celebrated the first annual "International Day of the Girl," designated by the UN as a day to raise awareness of the situation of girls around the world.<sup>3</sup>

The following blog post describes some of the challenges girls face and includes links to more information about AJWS partners that are empowering and investing in girls. May we keep the work of these inspiring organizations and the girls they support at the front of our consciousness—this week and beyond.



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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 8:1.

<sup>2</sup> Radak on Genesis 8:1.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/170](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/170)

# Commemorating the UN's International Day of the Girl

By Jordan Namerow

Last week on October 11th, the United Nations commemorated the very first [International Day of the Girl](#). My colleagues and I were still reeling from the tragic shooting of Malala Yousafzai, the 14-year-old Pakistani activist who was unjustly targeted for going to school and speaking up for her right to get an education. But we were grateful for the outpouring of support for the UN's decision to dedicate a day to advancing the status of girls worldwide.

AJWS is committed to promoting girls' rights, preventing gender-based violence and improving access to education and healthcare for girls in the developing world.

A few sobering facts:

- Two-thirds of the world's children who receive less than four years of education are girls. Girls represent nearly 60% of the children not in school.
- Child marriage is a threat to the fundamental human rights of girls, and to the health of communities.
- Ten million girls every year become child brides.
- One in seven girls in the developing world marries before she turns 15. These young girls are forced into motherhood before their bodies are ready, and too many die giving birth as a result.
- Every year, some 14 million adolescent girls give birth. They are two to five times as likely to die owing to pregnancy-related complications than women in their twenties, and their babies are less likely to survive.

To learn more about AJWS's work to support the rights of girls in the developing world, check out our policy brief [Empowering Girls to End Violence: On-the-Ground Lessons from India for U.S. Development Policy](#) and our recent publication [Girls at the Center: Lessons from Kenya on Investing in a World Free of AIDS](#). Also, be sure to watch our new video featuring some of the girls' rights activists supported by AJWS, available at [blogs.ajws.org](http://blogs.ajws.org).

*Jordan Namerow, senior communications associate at AJWS, is committed to building an inclusive Jewish community that is deeply engaged with the world. She works on myriad communications and social media initiatives for AJWS. A graduate of Wellesley College, she holds a Master's in Strategic Communications from Columbia University. She loves writing and running, the mountains and the moon, and can effortlessly recite the alphabet backwards.*

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Inspired by Judaism's commitment to justice, **American Jewish World Service (AJWS)** works to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world.