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## THE RAINBOW CONNECTION: RAINBOW DAY AND CREATION

*“I have set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the Earth.” (Genesis 9:13)*

Millennia before Kermit the Frog sang about the Rainbow Connection, the very first Rainbow Day marked the connection between God and all animals. The biblical flood began on the 17th of the second month, exactly one lunar year and 10 days – or one complete solar year – before Noah, his family, and all the animals that were with them left the ark, on the 27th day of the second month. But just before they left, God made a covenant with them that there would never again be a flood of water to destroy life on Earth. And just as today we sign contracts with our signatures, God signed our covenant with a rainbow.

Rainbow Day, which falls on the 42nd day of the counting of the omer, and the day after Yom Yerushalayim – Jerusalem Day – is a time to celebrate the diversity of life on Earth, and to remember our role in God’s covenant. It is a time to remember that the first covenant was not with human beings but with all living things, and it’s a chance to reflect on the deep spiritual and religious meaning of diversity, creation and our role as part of Creation and partners with God. This is a special time in human civilization when we need to reflect on the rainbow covenant and our place in sustaining a world where sowing and reaping, cold and hot, summer and winter will not stop.

The Torah teaches that God has promised never to flood the Earth again. But that doesn’t mean humanity can’t “flood the Earth” and harm life. We live in a time when many species have gone extinct or are threatened with extinction. Our civilization is using so much of the world’s land and resources that we don’t always leave room for the other creatures. Global climate change is already putting so many species and ecosystems at risk. As the African-American spiritual goes, “God gave Noah the rainbow sign, no more water, the fire next time!”

The story of Noah and the flood teaches us that we have a responsibility to care for all Creation and all creatures, and that caring for all species is a mark of righteousness. There’s so much we can do to remember our responsibility and reflect on how we use our power to change the world, for good and for bad. Rainbow Day is pregnant with possibilities for activities for all ages, from learning the rainbow blessing to planting a rainbow garden. It’s a great occasion for fun art and science projects about rainbows, for prayer and action. Anything related to protecting species and ecosystems is connected to Rainbow Day. For example, our dependence on fossil fuels is connected to so many environmental issues. A thin film of petroleum on water is enough to poison it, but it also makes beautiful twisty rainbow colors. Is it possible to twist, bend or destroy the rainbow?

There’s no single way to celebrate Rainbow Day – add your own celebration so that we can pass on something better to the next generation.

Source: Rabbi David Seidenberg