

Notes: Shabbat – October 29, 2011

Start: 10 AM

### Order of service:

1. Meet and greet
2. Introduction
3. Announcements
4. Liturgy – Ma to vu, Sh'ma
5. Music
6. Message
7. Time of prayer
8. Aaronic Blessing
9. Kiddush
10. Oneg

The Search for Self and its ever consuming trappings of Humanism

In today's parshah, we read of a people united with the purpose to make a name for themselves, controlling their outcome so not to be scattered throughout the earth.

Torah Blessing.

**Gen 11:1** The whole earth used the same language, the same words.

**Gen 11:2** It came about that as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shin`ar and lived there.

**Gen 11:3** They said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them in the fire." So they had bricks for building-stone and clay for mortar.

**Gen 11:4** Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city with a tower that has its top reaching up into heaven, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth."

**Gen 11:5** Adonai came down to see the city and the tower the people were building.

**Gen 11:6** Adonai said, "Look, the people are united, they all have a single language, and see what they're starting to do! At this rate, nothing they set out to accomplish will be impossible for them!

**Gen 11:7** Come, let's go down and confuse their language, so that they won't understand each others speech."

**Gen 11:8** So from there Adonai scattered them all over the earth, and they stopped building the city.

**Gen 11:9** For this reason it is called Bavel [*confusion*] — because there Adonai confused the language of the whole earth, and from there Adonai scattered them all over the earth.

Torah Blessing.

Through our transgression, in acquiring the knowledge of good and evil, we have become like our creator:

**Gen 3:22** Adonai, God, said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, to prevent his putting out his hand and taking also from the tree of life, eating, and living forever — "

Because of this knowledge we continue to rebel against the one who created us.

An act of hubris:

1. Excessive pride or self-confidence.
2. (in Greek tragedy) Excessive pride toward or defiance of the gods, leading to nemesis

We think we know more than the one who created us...in so doing we now have labels for these things.

What is Humanism:

American Humanist Society - Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism and other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

British Humanist Association:

- trusts to the scientific method when it comes to understanding how the universe works and rejects the idea of the supernatural (and is therefore an atheist or agnostic)
- makes their ethical decisions based on reason, empathy, and a concern for human beings and other sentient animals
- believes that, in the absence of an afterlife and any discernible purpose to the universe, human beings can act to give their own lives meaning by seeking happiness in this life and helping others to do the same.

Leading an ethical life?

By who's standards?

Just in the first few chapters of Genesis as we have started a new cycle of reading, we have already seen that doing things in our own way have already led to expulsion, elimination and separation.

Our very nature battles with the knowledge we have acquired.

Even within Humanism there are varying sects...

**Cultural Humanism** is the rational and empirical tradition that originated largely in ancient Greece and Rome, evolved throughout European history, and now constitutes a basic part of the Western approach to science, political theory, ethics, and law.

**Modern Humanism**, also called Naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism and Democratic Humanism is defined by one of its leading proponents, Corliss Lamont, as "a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all super-naturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion." Modern Humanism has a dual origin, both secular and religious, and these constitute its sub-categories.

**Secular Humanism** is an outgrowth of 18th century enlightenment rationalism and 19th century free thought. Many secular groups, such as the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism and the American Rationalist Federation, and many otherwise unaffiliated academic philosophers and scientists, advocate this philosophy.

**Philosophical Humanism** is any outlook or way of life centered on human need and interest. Sub-categories of this type include Christian Humanism and Modern Humanism.

**Christian Humanism** is defined by Webster's Third New International Dictionary as "a philosophy advocating the self-fulfillment of man within the framework of Christian principles." This more human-oriented faith is largely a product of the Renaissance and is a part of what made up Renaissance humanism.

..is the position that universal human dignity and individual freedom are essential and principal components of, or are at least compatible with, Christian doctrine and practice. It is a philosophical union of Christian and humanist principles

Some teach that it is possible to be a Christian without a belief in God.

**Religious Humanism** emerged out of Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, and Universalism. Today, many Unitarian-Universalist congregations and all Ethical Culture societies describe themselves as humanist in the modern sense.

Humanism in general (secular humanism specifically) contends that instead of God creating the cosmos, the cosmos, in the individualized form of human beings giving rein to their imagination, created the “gods”

Secular Humanism, then, can be defined as *a religious worldview based on atheism, naturalism, evolution, and ethical relativism*. But this definition is merely the tip of the iceberg. Secular humanism uses ten disciplines to promote its position: theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics and history.

Atheism – God doesn't exist

Naturalism - the doctrine that all religious truth is derived from a study of [natural](#) processes and not from revelation.

Evolution – Humans and this world evolved from a single cell.

Ethical relativism - is the position that there are no moral absolutes, no moral right and wrongs. Instead, right and wrong are based on social norms. (prohibition, abortion)

We see these very views and influences creeping into congregations that place

The people were united, but was it towards Adonai?

Adonai came down...in order to judge man.

Adonai's judgment:

The pride of man desiring to be like God and still not willing to accept subordination to their creator.

He saw that their unity was extremely powerful.

**Gen 11:6** Adonai said, "Look, the people are united, they all have a single language, and see what they're starting to do! At this rate, nothing they set out to accomplish will be impossible for them!

This is where we get our definition for babel – a confused noise.

Babel – Babylon

A demonstration of pride, in that we try to be like God in building a tower to the top of the sky (beginning of heaven)

The nature that came out of Babylon and existed in identifying its culture.

Isaiah 14:13 – 14 – In relation to a king of Babylon at the time of Isaiah.

**Isa 14:12** "How did you come to fall from the heavens, morning star, son of the dawn? How did you come to be cut to the ground, conqueror of nations?"

**Isa 14:13** You thought to yourself, 'I will scale the heavens, I will raise my throne above God's stars. I will sit on

the Mount of Assembly far away in the north.

**Isa 14:14** I will rise past the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.'

**Isa 14:15** "Instead you are brought down to Sh'ol, to the uttermost depths of the pit.

A vain attempt to be god-like is mocked by Adonai

If unity was an imposing force, where Adonai needed to break it up, imagine what unity amongst believers in Messiah would ultimately accomplish.

The same Adonai who confused their tongues is the same Adonai that brought understanding during Shavuot:

**Act 2:5** Now there were staying in Yerushalayim religious Jews from every nation under heaven.

**Act 2:6** When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered; they were confused, because each one heard the believers speaking in his own language.

**Act 2:7** Totally amazed, they asked, "How is this possible? Aren't all these people who are speaking from the Galil?

**Act 2:8** How is it that we hear them speaking in our native languages?

**Act 2:9** We are Parthians, Medes, Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Y'hudah, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia,

**Act 2:10** Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome;

**Act 2:11** Jews by birth and proselytes; Jews from Crete and from Arabia. . . ! How is it that we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things God has done?"

Separating the people because their unity was

Today, obtaining unity in a denominational based is a similar aspect of contract negotiations.

Offer

Consideration

Counter offer

Acceptance

Until you have acceptance - believers who are of a like mind with a unified understanding of Adonai and the scripture He inspired, there won't be unity amongst believers.

Does one compromise for the sake of unity?

When you throw in the aspect of some form of humanism that influences our faith and what we believe, the focus towards Adonai is redirected towards His creation...ultimately not what He instructed, but what we think works for us.

Example - Karen

Tail wagging the dog