



## OLD NOAH'S ELEPHANTS

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*In this Israeli folktale, God advises Noah to put a stop to the misbehavior of two elephants by tickling a hyena.*

The ark was the only home that Noah, his family, and two of every creature on Earth knew for quite some time. *Old Noah's Elephants* presents its readers with a wonderful opportunity to consider and discuss the Jewish teaching of *shalom bayit* (peace within the home). Through *shalom bayit* we learn that every member of the household has an obligation to every other—from young children to elders or, in this case, from aardvarks to zebras!

### ASA COMMUNITY

When living together as a family—and, by extension, a community or citizens of the world—people cannot afford to think only of themselves and their own desires. Young children can come to understand that what each of us says and does affects others. If elephants must follow rules and learn consideration, so must we all!

### NOAH AND THE FLOOD

In the Biblical story of Noah and the Flood, we learn many specifics about how the ark is to be built, how the animals are to be chosen, and even what Noah's age was at the time of the flood, down to the day! What the fascinating account in the book of Genesis does not tell us, however, is anything about what life on the ark was

like on a day to day basis. How did people feel about their situation? Did they understand what was happening outside the ark and think about what life make be like post-flood? And what about all those animals?!

Enter the *midrash*, a marvelous literary creation that explains a briefly-told story or expands upon a character or tale from Torah (the first five books of the bible) or some other Jewish text. The narrative of Noah's life lends itself well to such an exploration. In *Old Noah's Elephants*, we are the beneficiaries of the authors playful consideration of what might have taken place with so many creatures living in a confined place. You can extend the *midrash* by creating ark scenarios of your own and delighting your children with them!

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