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Shabbat Shalom.

I want to start by thanking Rabbi Rosenwasser, not just for inviting me to speak today, but for being such a tremendous champion of the Red Tent Fund and its mission. Your support means more than I can express.

This week, we read Parshat Noach, and while you might expect me to discuss the upcoming election - or even the usual themes of the flood, the ark, and the rainbow - I'd like to give us all a much-needed respite today. Instead, I want to draw our attention to something that might be easy to miss: the unnamed women of this story. The Torah tells us "Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives came into the ark." Noah's name we know. Shem, Ham, and Japheth - we know their names too. But the women who helped preserve humanity? They remain unnamed in our text.

This strikes particularly close to home for me, because my daughter's name is Naama - sharing a name with Noah's wife, according to midrashic tradition. The midrash gives her this name, which means "pleasant" or "beautiful," suggesting she brought light and grace to a dark world. But in the Torah itself, she remains unnamed, as do her daughters-in-law who, along with her, helped ensure humanity's survival.

What does it mean to be unnamed in our stories? In Jewish tradition, names carry profound significance - they represent identity and destiny. When we don't name women in our texts, we risk erasing not just their identities but their autonomy, their power to shape their own stories. Our midrashic traditions try to fill these gaps, telling us that Noah's wife was called Naama, that she was righteous in her own right, that she helped gather food for the animals and sustained life during those long days in the ark. Some say she even challenged Noah at times, bringing her own wisdom to their shared journey.

But even these attempts to reclaim her story remind us of a painful truth: when we deny people their names, we often deny them their choices. This erasure of women's agency echoes through history, and we see it today in the continued assault on reproductive rights across our nation.

I think about Amber Thurman, a 28-year-old Black mother from Georgia, whose story I've shared before. We know Amber's name, we know her dreams of becoming a nurse, we know about her young son. We know that she died - needlessly - because Georgia's abortion laws denied her necessary medical care. But for every Amber whose story we know, how many others remain unnamed? How many women suffer in silence, their stories untold, their choices taken away by laws that treat them as less than full human beings?

Just as Noah's wife and daughters-in-law were essential to preserving life yet remain unnamed in our Torah, countless women today face life-altering and sometimes life-ending situations while their stories go untold. They are denied agency over their own bodies, their own futures, their own lives - much like their biblical counterparts, they are reduced to their relationships with men: someone's wife, someone's mother, someone's daughter.

This is why I founded the Red Tent Fund. Our organization exists to help restore that agency, to ensure that people seeking reproductive healthcare can write their own stories, make their own choices. We provide funding for procedures to those seeking abortion care, recognizing that legal rights - where they still exist - mean little if economic barriers prevent access to those rights.

Some of you may know that my journey to founding the Red Tent Fund came after facing antisemitism in progressive spaces following October 7th. Like many others, I found myself forced to choose between my Jewish identity and my commitment to reproductive justice. But false choices are no choices at all. Just as our midrashic traditions work to give voice to the unnamed women in our texts, we must work to ensure that every person has the ability to speak for themselves, to make their own choices about their bodies and their futures.

The story of Noah's ark is often told as a story of destruction and renewal. But it's also a story about choice and agency - about who gets to make decisions that affect not just individual lives but the future of humanity. Today, we face our own flood of restrictive laws and policies that threaten to drown out individual autonomy and choice. The Red Tent Fund serves as our modern ark - a vessel of protection and preservation, ensuring that the fundamental right to choose remains accessible to all.

As we read Parshat Noach this year, I urge you to think about the unnamed women in the story, and then think about all the unnamed women in our world today who need our support. Consider how you can help ensure that their stories are told, their choices respected, their lives valued. Whether through supporting the Red Tent Fund, advocating and voting for reproductive rights (I'm looking at you, Maryland), or speaking out against injustice, each of us has the power to help restore agency to those who have been denied it.

May we work together to create a world where every person has the right to write their own story, to make their own choices, to have their own name. Shabbat Shalom.