

Noahidism

Noahidism (/ˈnoʊə.haɪd.ɪsm/) or **Noachidism** (/ˈnoʊə.xaɪd.ɪsm/) is a monotheistic ideology based on the Seven Laws of Noah, and on their traditional interpretations within Rabbinic Judaism. According to Jewish law, non-Jews are not obligated to convert to Judaism, but they are required to observe the Seven Laws of Noah to be assured of a place in the World to Come (Olam Haba), the final reward of the righteous.^{[1][2]} The divinely ordained penalty for violating any of these Noahide Laws is discussed in the Talmud, but in practical terms that is subject to the working legal system that is established by the society at large. Those who subscribe to the observance of these commandments are referred to as *Bene Noach* (*B'nei Noah*) (Hebrew: בני נח), *Children of Noah*, *Noahides* (/ˈnoʊ.ə.haɪdɪs/), or *Noahites* (/ˈnoʊ.ə.haɪtɪs/). Supporting organizations have been established around the world over the past decades, by either Noahides or observant Jews.



The rainbow is a modern symbol of Noahidism.

Historically, the Hebrew term *Bene Noach* has applied to all non-Jews as descendants of Noah. However, nowadays it is also used to refer specifically to those non-Jews who observe the Noahide Laws.

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Noahic covenant

According to the Book of Genesis, Noah and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth survived the Flood aboard the Ark, along with their wives. When Noah's family left the Ark, God made a covenant with them (Genesis 9:8–10) and all the animals they had aboard the Ark that He would never again destroy the Earth with a flood, and He set the rainbow in the sky as a symbol of the covenant. The account in Genesis 9 had earlier referred only to a requirement for the eating of meat (Genesis 9:2–4) (that the animal must be dead before the meat is removed) and the prohibition and punishment of murder (Genesis 9:5–6), but according to the Talmud this covenant included all of the Seven Laws of Noah. Therefore, the B'nei Noah – all humans, as descendants of Noah – are subject to the Noahide laws. (Later, God established a separate and more detailed covenant with the Israelite people at Mount Sinai.)

Maimonides

Maimonides collected all of the Talmudic and halakhic decisions in his time (c 1135 AD) and laid them out in his work the Mishneh Torah; in addition to Jewish laws and their explanations, the Noahide laws were also collected with their explanation in Maimonides' Sefer Shoftim (Book of Judges) in the last section Hilchot Melachim U'Milchamot ("The Laws of Kings and Wars") 8:9–10:12.^[3] Some details of these laws are also found in the Midrashic literature.^[4]

The Seven Laws of Noah

The seven laws listed by the Mishnah in Sanhedrin 56a are: to have laws and courts for the society, and to refrain from blasphemy, idolatry, a set of six forbidden sexual relationships, murder, theft, and eating flesh that was removed from a living animal.^[5]

Historical movements

The Sebomenoi or God-fearers are an early example of non-Jews being included within the Jewish community.^[6] 30–32 Some consider that the Apostolic Decree originating from the Council of Jerusalem endorses something similar to the laws of Noah.

Modern Noahidism

Some Jewish religious groups have been particularly active in promoting the Seven Laws, notably the Chabad-Lubavitch movement (whose late leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson launched the global Noahide Campaign), groups affiliated with Dor Daim.

Small groups calling themselves the B'nei Noah (children of Noah) have recently organised themselves to form communities to abide by these laws.

There are two different concepts of Noahidism in Judaism:

1. Movement B'nei Noah that observes 7 Commandments (Seven Laws)^[7] only and remaining Commandments do not apply to them". This is the view of Chabad-Lubavitch and few other movements. This means that Noahides may not observe Sabbath, study Torah (except for Seven Laws), etc.
2. Movement B'nei Noah that includes a complete adherence to Judaism as a religion in order to learn from the Jews and together promote the world but without becoming a part of the Jewish people (i.e. without performing a giyur). After B'nei Noah assume the obligatory seven Commandments, they can, if desired, carry out the rest of the Jewish commandments, including studying the Torah, observing the Sabbath, celebrating Jewish holidays, etc. This view is held, for example, by Ravi Yoel Schwartz and Rav Uri Scherki

According to the first approach, the answer to the question "can a non-Jew observe the Sabbath and study the Torah?" Is negative, and according to the second one, it is positive.

In one place of his books, Maimonides writes "The goy must not observe the Sabbath and study the Torah," while in another place he says "If Noahide wants to observe additional commandments besides the 7 basic ones of B'nei Noah, he receives a reward from Heaven, and we (the Jews) must support him in this." Many people quote the first of his statements, not knowing about the existence of the second one. Rav Uri Scherki (and the rabbinical council of the Brit Olam organization) explain this contradiction in Maimonides by the fact that the goy and B'nei Noah are different halakhic concepts. Goy is a gentile who has not yet assumed the commandments of B'nei Noah. However, if he has already accepted Seven Laws, he ceased to be a goy and became a B'nei Noah, and as such can follow additional commandments, including keeping the Sabbath and teaching the Torah.^[8]

High Council of B'nei Noah

A High Council of B'nei Noah, set up to represent B'nei Noah communities around the world, was endorsed by a group that claimed to be the new Sanhedrin.^{[9][10]}

Rabbinical Council for the Noahide Movement

The Rabbinical Council for the Noahide Movement is composed by the rabbis of the Noahide Academy of Jerusalem: Rabbi Moshe Weiner, author of the Divine Code, the complete compilation of the Noahide Code of Law, in the same style that of the Jewish Code of Law, Rabbi Moshe Perets, Executive Director of the Noahide Academy of Jerusalem, Dr Michael Schulman, Rabbi Shimon Cowen, Rabbi Ytshock Dubovick, Rabbi Assaf Studnitz, Rabbi Zalman Notik and Rabbi Assi Harel.^[11]

Acknowledgment

Rabbi Meir Kahane organized one of the first Noahide conferences in the 1980s.^[12] In 1990, Kahane was the keynote speaker at the First International Conference of the Descendants of Noah in Fort Worth, Texas.^[13]

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement has been the most active in Noahide outreach, believing that there is spiritual and societal value for non-Jews in at least simply acknowledging the seven laws, and even more so if they accept or observe them. In 1991, they had a reference to these laws enshrined in a Congressional proclamation: Presidential Proclamation 5956,^[14] signed by then-President George H. W. Bush. Recalling Joint House Resolution 173, and recalling that the ethical and moral principles of all civilizations come in part from the Seven Noahide Laws, it proclaimed March 26, 1991 as "Education Day, U.S.A." Subsequently, Public Law 102-14 formally designated the Lubavitcher Rebbe's 90th birthday as "Education Day, U.S.A.," with Congress recalling that "without these ethical values and principles, the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos," and that "society is profoundly concerned with the recent weakening of these principles, that has resulted in crises that beleaguer and threaten the fabric of civilized society"^[15]

In April, 2006, the spiritual leader of the Druze community in Israel, Sheikh Mowafak Tarif, met with a representative of Chabad-Lubavitch to sign a declaration calling on all non-Jews in Israel to observe the Noahide Laws as laid down in the Bible and expounded upon in Jewish tradition. The mayor of the Galilean city of Shefa-'Amr (Shfaram) — where Muslim, Christian and Druze communities live side-by-side — also signed the document.^[16]

In March, 2007, Chabad-Lubavitch gathered ambassadors from six different countries to take part in a gathering to declare, in the name of the states they represent, their support of the universal teachings of Noahide Laws. They represented Poland, Latvia, Mexico, Panama, Ghana, and Japan. They were part of a special program organized by Harav Boaz Kali.^[17]

In April, Abu Gosh mayor Salim Jaber accepted the seven Noahide laws as part of a mass rally by Chabad at the Bloomfield Stadium in Tel Aviv. In May, the newly elected president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, met with a Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi, Dovid Zaoui, who presented him with literature on the universal teachings of the Noahide Laws.^[18]

In 2016 Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef taught that Jewish law requires that the only non-Jews allowed to live in Israel are Noahides: "'According to Jewish law, it's forbidden for a non-Jew to live in the Land of Israel – unless he has accepted the seven Noahide laws.'" The Anti-Defamation League issued a strong denunciation of Yosef's comments, and called on him to retract them.^[19]

Ten Commandments

Judaism does not require non-Jews to keep all of the Ten Commandments. Some within Orthodox Judaism view the keeping of certain of the Ten Commandments as being forbidden to non-Jews.^{[20][21]}

The Ten Commandments are actually only 10 from among the total number of 613 Jewish commandments in the Torah. Some of this disagreement arises from the English translation of the Hebrew term for the Ten Commandments. In Biblical Hebrew, the ten commandments that were inscribed by God on the tablets at Mount Sinai are called עשרת הדברות, meaning "the ten sayings," because of the 613 Jewish commandments ("Mitzvot"), those 10 are the only ones that were spoken openly by God to the entire Jewish nation when they were assembled at Mount Sinai.^[22] The rest of the 613 Mitzvot were taught to Moses by God, and Moses taught them to the rest of the Jewish people. Mitzvot is the Hebrew term for commandment.^[23]

See also

- Ger toshav

- [Haredi Judaism](#)
- [Hasidic Judaism](#)
- [Judaizers](#)
- [Proselyte](#)
- [Righteous among the Nations](#)
- [Righteous gentiles](#)
- [Sons of Noah](#)
- [Shituf](#)
- [Subbotniks](#)

References

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External links

- [The First Covenant Foundation](#)
- [Ask Noah International and "The Divine Code" – Shulchan Aruch \(Code of Torah Law\) for Gentiles](#)
- [Wikinoah: Online resource of history halacha, publications, and websites concerning Bnei Noah](#)
- [OU Radio show on Bnei Noah — The Jew The Minister and The Bnei Noah](#)
- [Noahide Nations](#)
- [Noahide.org](#)
- [7for70.com](#)
- [The Laws of Bnei Noah at Yeshiva.co](#)
- [A Noahide talks](#)
- [Noahide World Center](#)
- [Bene Noach Society](#)
- [Teachings for Bnei Noah \(Noahides, Righteous Gentiles\)](#)

Noahide communities

- [Noahide community of the United Kingdom](#)
- [Noahide community of Oklahoma](#)
- [New York, NY Center](#)
- [Community of The First Covenant Foundation](#)
- [Bnai Noah of Toronto](#)
- [Virtual Bnai Noah Community](#)
 - [The New Dharma Noahides Brotherhood of India](#)

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