

THE YESHIVA PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM SHULCHAN ARUCH LEARNING
PROJECT

The Noahide Laws

Epilogue



**Written by Rabbi Avraham Chaim
Bloomenstiel**

© Yeshiva Pirchei Shoshanim 2015

This shiur may not be reproduced in any
form without permission of the copyright holder.

164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344
164 Rabbi Akiva, Bnei Brak, 03.616.6340

Epilogue

I cannot express to you, collectively and individually, what a pleasure and honor it has been to research, write, and teach this course. I have made many wonderful friends and learned a lot along the way.

The purpose of this course was not to cover the entirety of the Noahism. To do so would take years. My intention was to explore the foundations and fundamentals of Noahism, discovering where it distinct from Judaism and where it has similarities. By doing so, I hoped to help those taking this course to find their “place” within the Torah.

All mankind has a “place” within the Torah and God wants every person to find his or her “place.” However, finding this “place” is a lifelong process of study and exploration. This is because both Judaism and Noahism are, at their cores, about building a relationship with Hashem. Any relationship requires work – hard work. This is an inviolable rule of being human: if we want productive relationships with our spouses, children, neighbors, and friends, then we must work to build those relationships.

Know this – Jews do not automatically feel closer to God or find it easier to build this relationship than Noahides. A Jew must struggle, study, endure, and work for a long time to bind himself to his Creator. It is no different for Noahides – we are all the same in our struggle to come close to God.

However, we are different in that the Jewish struggle is given its structure and shape by 613 mitzvos, while the Noahide struggle is shaped and directed by 7 categories of *mitzvos*. Many Noahides, though, often look at the Noahide laws, compare them to the Jewish laws, and conclude that the Noahide laws are somehow insufficient for their spiritual needs. As a result, they make the mistake of simply trying to imitate Judaism and find connection-to-God within the Jewish *mitzvos*.

This is a grievous error and one that is based on misperception and misinformation. It stems mostly from the fact that the Jewish path is clearly defined, while the Noahide path has suffered from centuries of neglect. Many areas of it are unclear. This lack of clarity is often mistaken for a sort of “incompleteness.” In short, the Noahide path requires rediscovery. This process can only happen by a commitment to study, work, and growth. You and your fellow students have made a major commit to this rediscovery, study, and growth of the Noahide path. May God bless you with continued success, inspiration, and a long fruitful bond with the Creator of all life and all souls!

What to Do Now?

There are basically three things to do going forward:

- 1) **Practice** – Live as a Noahide and identify as a Noahide. Embrace this identity and make it the motivation for your good works in this world. Pray regularly and look for opportunities to make the world better and to honor your Creator.
- 2) **Study** – this will be discussed below.
- 3) **Build the Noahide community** – This is incredibly important. The Noahide world has not existed as an identifiable community in over 1000 years. Today, it is a collection of individuals and a few organizations striving to discover their place within the Torah. Unity and cooperation are vitally important to bring that goal to fruition. See below for more info.

Torah Study

There are three areas of study that are important whether Noahide or Jew:

- 1) **Text** – Study of the original texts, whether Torah, Talmud, Midrash, or Mishneh Torah, that apply to Noahides,
- 2) **Practice** – Study of books on the actual living and fulfillment of *halacha*, practice,
- 3) **Faith & Inspiration** – It is vitally important to stay focused on the good in this world and the love, mercy, and kindness of Hashem. The study of works dealing with faith and inspiration remind us of these truths.

When studying Torah, the following advice will prove helpful:

- Create a learning schedule. Set aside fixed times to read and study. The amount is not as important as is the consistency and regularity. A lot of study inconsistently is not as beneficial as a little done regularly.
- Select a material from at least two of the areas mentioned above and try to keep two tracts of study going at all times.

- Any time you come across a *mitzvah* (commandment), *minhag* (custom), or a concept, always ask yourself: is this relevant to Noahides or to Jews? Until uniquely Noahide versions of all of these texts become available, Noahides have to adapt information from Jewish sources. In general, anything from Exodus 20 onwards is not relevant to Noahides.
- Is the topic a *mitzvas muskalos* – a logically compelled *mitzvah*? If so, it may be studied and practiced according to even its Jewish precepts. However, be on guard and question constantly whether any particular practice is uniquely a product of Jewish history (as a custom or institution of later sages), or if it stems directly from the concept behind the *mitzvah*. This is necessary because there are not yet specifically Noahide guidebooks on many of these topics. Therefore, you must become skilled at evaluating and adapting material from books written for Jews. Specifically Jewish details of the *mitzvos* are not relevant to Noahides. If you need assistance, email Noahide Nations.
- Logically compelled *mitzvos* include, but are not limited to:
 - Honoring parents,
 - Cruelty to animals,
 - Interpersonal relationships,
 - Many monetary laws today,
 - Charity,
 - Caring for the sick,
 - Prayer & blessings,
 - Educating children in the Noahide Laws

Suggested Material for Study:

**Chumash (Torah)
& Nakh
(Prophets &
Writings)**

Chumash (Artscroll Ed. Item# STOH) – Bilingual edition of the Torah with an anthology of the classic commentaries.

Tanakh (Artscroll Ed. Item# STGS) – Bilingual edition of the entire Hebrew scriptures with minimal commentary and reference.

Midrash Rabbah: Bereshis & Noach (Artscroll Kleinman Ed. Item# MRBR1) – Moral, ethical, and homiletic insights into the subtle nuances of the Torah's narrative. Lots of material relevant to Noahides.

Rashi's Commentary on the Torah (Artscroll Sapirstein Ed. Item# SRAHS) – Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki's commentary lays draws upon the entire corpus of

Midrash, Talmud, etc. to explain the events of the Torah. Although Rashi writes many times “I only come to explain the plain meaning of the text,” his commentary does much more than deal with “plain meanings.” Rashi is viewed as the “starting point” for any question on the Chumash.

Ramban’s Commentary on the Torah (Artscroll Ed. Item# SRBNS) – in the 13th century Ramban (Rabbi Moshe Bar Nachman, also called Nachmanides) wrote a commentary analyzing Rashi’s remarks and considering alternative explanations. Reading Rashi alongside the Ramban really conveys the “whole picture.”

The Torah Anthology: Beginnings [Beraishis & Noah] (Moznaim Item# 930153-2) – an 18th century commentary by Rabbi Yaakov Culi. Originally entitled *Me’am Loez*, it weaves together commentary, law, ethics, and mysticism to flesh out a practical understanding of the Torah. It is also very enjoyable to read.

Artscroll Tanach Series: Bereshis/Genesis, In 2 Volumes (Artscroll Item #BERH) - In depth commentary on the book of Bereshis/Genesis. Excellent for study.

Talmud

Tractate Sanhedrin (Artscroll Schottenstein Ed. Vol. 48 Item# DTSA2) – These pages contain most of the Talmud’s discussion of the Noahide laws. Remember that not all of the opinions brought in the Talmud are actual law. Knowing and deriving the Talmud’s conclusions is a skill that must be learned. It is important to learn this with a study partner or someone who has established skills in learning Talmud.

Mishneh Torah

Maimonides compiled the first complete statement of all Torah law from the Talmud, Midrashim, and other texts. It a monumental work, yet not without its flaws. Notably, Maimonides rarely quoted his sources or explained his rationales. Torah scholars have spent centuries reconstructing his reasoning and methods for understanding the Torah. Of course, this may be exactly what Maimonides wanted. Although the *halacha*, actual law, does not always follow Maimonides, his writings are essential for both Jews and Noahides desiring to know God’s expectations of them:

- **Vol. 1: Yesodei HaTorah – Foundatons of the Torah** (Moznaim Item# 963669-1) – The foundations of Torah belief.
- **Vol. 2: Hilchos Deos - Attributes** (Moznaim Item# 963669-2) – Human traits and qualities.

- **Vol. 3: Avodas Kokhavim – Idolatry & Idolaters** (Moznaim Item# 963669-3) – Laws of idolatry & idolaters.
- **Vol. 4: Laws of Teshuvah** (Moznaim Item# 963669-4) – Principles of repentance.
- **Vol. 26: Sefer Nezikin – Monetary Laws** (Moznaim Item# 963669-26) – Monetary and civil law.
- **Vol. 29: Sefer Shoftim – Kings & Judges** (Moznaim Item# 963669-29) – includes Maimnonides’s writings on the Noahide Laws.

**On Noahide
Halacha**

The Seven Laws of Noah by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein

The Divine Code Vol. I by Rabbi Moshe Weiner

The Divine Code Vol. II by Rabbi Moshe Weiner (in preparation)

Prayer

**Suggested Prayers for Noahide Community Services & Personal Worship
by Rabbis Moshe Weiner and J. Immanuel Schochet**

**Prayers, Blessings, Principles of Faith, and Divine Service for Noahides by
Rabbis Moshe Weiner and J. Immanuel Schochet**

**The Order: Noahide Prayers Book for Individuals, Communities, Holidays,
and Lifecycle Events (in preparation)**

Psalms (Artsroll Bilingual Full Size Ed. Item# TEHH; Pocket Sized Ed. Item#
TEPH)

**Faith, Belief, and
Thought**

The Handbook of Jewish Thought, Vol. 1 & 2 (Moznaim Item# 505075-1 &
505075-2) – Excellent compendia of the basics of Torah belief. Though geared
toward Jews, it contains much material relevant to Noahides as well.

The Universal Garden of Emunah by Rabbi Shalom Arush

Restore My Soul (Moznaim Item# 58620) – Rav Nachaman of Breslov’s writings
on repentance translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

Outpouring of the Soul (Moznaim Item# 61578) – Rav Nachaman of Breslov’s
writings on prayer translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

Our Amazing World (Artscroll Item# WOWH) – Seeing God’s wonders in the world around us.

Our Wondrous World (Artscroll Item# AMAH) – Sequel to **Our Amazing World**.

Other Laws and Practices

Interpersonal

- **The Laws of Interpersonal Relationships** (Artscroll Item #JTVH)

Proper Speech

- **Chofetz Chaim Lesson a Day** (Artscroll Item# LADH)
- **Chofetz Chaim: The Family Lesson a Day** (Artscroll Item# FLADH)
- **Positive Word Power** (Artscroll Item# PWPH)

Business

- **Money in Halacha** (Feldheim Item# 6980)
- **Halachos of Other People’s Money** (Feldheim Item# 3721)
- **Cases in Monetary Law** (Artscroll Item# CAM1H)

Blessings

- **The Laws of Brachos** (Artscroll Item# LOBH)

Family

- **The Fifth Commandment: Honoring Parents** (Artscroll Item# FIFH)
- **My Father, My Mother & Me** (Artscroll Item# MFMMH)

Sickness

- **Visiting the Sick** (Artscroll Item# VTSH)

Charity

- **The Laws of Tzedakah & Maaser** (Artscroll Item# LOTH)
- **The Tzedakah Treasury** (Artscroll Item# TZTH)

Teshuvah/Repentance

- Returnity, by R' Tal Zwecker (Menucha Publishers)
- The Power of Teshuvah, by R' Heshy Kleinman (Artscroll Item# POTP)
- A Touch of Purity, by R' Yechiel Spero (Artscroll Item# TPUEI)

Polemics

- **26 Reasons Jews Don't Believe in Jesus** (Feldheim Item# 4412)
- **Permission to Believe by Lawrence Kelemen** (Menucha Publishers)
- **Permission to Receive by Lawrence Kelemen** (Menucha Publishers)
- **The Real Messiah by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan** (Artscroll Item# U-REMP)

Learning Hebrew

- **HaYesod** (Feldheim Item# 1734)

Building Community

Every faith community really needs three things to truly have an identity:

- **Ethic** – a sense of what constitutes correct behavior and expectations for man. The Noahide laws clearly have this.
- **Ethos** – a worldview and philosophy. This is also part of the Noahide laws and is, generally, the same as the Jewish worldview. However, this is a topic that is not as easy to grasp as the “thou shalls” and “thou shalt nots” of practice. Study and practice together form and shape this aspect.
- **Ethnos** – a sense of community, commonality, and fellowship. This is what is lacking the most in the Noahide world today and what must be developed. The following are actions points that, to me, seem to be where more work is needed.

Action Points

Worship

There is no official Noahide liturgy. Noahide Nations and Ask Noah International and have each developed liturgies for Noahide communities and individuals. However, these are only starting points. As the Noahide community grows and

develops, their prayers must change to suit the needs of the community. Certain prayers still need to be written. For example:

- Selichos, penitential prayers, for the repentance season.
- Prayers for the festivals expressing the Noahide relationship to these festivals.

Services It is important to develop regular communal prayer services based upon the liturgies mentioned above. Special holiday services should also be part of this.

Music Music for Noahide worship is vital. It allows everyone to participate in worship and creates a sense of elevation. It also makes worship fun!

Food Feeding people is the most powerful way to build communities and peaceful relationships. Communal meals are ABSOLUTELY essential to building fellowship and community.

Community Torah study In addition to individual Torah study, it is important to come together and study Torah as a community. This includes regular study sessions as well as scheduling special events & speakers.

Chesed Noahide communities should arrange *chesed*, “kindness projects” for members of the community needing assistance. For example:

- When family has a birth, organize meals for the family for a week or two. Similarly, when a family experiences a tragedy, or a parent goes into the hospital, meals and basic needs should be arranged by the community.
- Regular prayer gatherings for the sick.
- Volunteerism for good causes.
- Fundraisers for those in need.
- Food drives
- Arrange a lending organization for baby supplies, medical needs, etc.