

# The Laws of Noah or the Laws of Adam?



# Sanhedrin 56b

תנו רבנן שבע מצות נצטוו בני נח דינין וברכת השם ע"ז גילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים וגזל ואבר מן החי

§ Since the *halakhot* of the descendants of Noah have been mentioned, a full discussion of the Noahide mitzvot is presented. **The Sages taught** in a *baraita*: **The descendants of Noah**, i.e., all of humanity, **were commanded** to observe **seven mitzvot**: The mitzva of establishing courts of **judgment**; and the prohibition against **blessing**, i.e., cursing, **the name** of God; and the prohibition of **idol worship**; and the prohibition against **forbidden sexual relations**; and the prohibition of **bloodshed**; and the prohibition of **robbery**; and the prohibition against eating **a limb from a living** animal.

נ"ו בבב 56

רבי חנניה בן (גמלא) אומר אף על הדם מן החי רבי חידקא אומר אף על הסירוס רבי שמעון אומר אף על הכישוף

**Rabbi Ḥananya ben Gamla says:** The descendants of Noah are **also** commanded **concerning** the prohibition against consuming **the blood from a living** animal. **Rabbi Ḥideka says:** They are **also** commanded **concerning castration**, i.e., they are prohibited to castrate any living animal. **Rabbi Shimon says:** They are **also** commanded **concerning** the prohibition against engaging in **sorcery**.

רבי יוסי אומר כל האמור בפרשת כישוף בן נח מוזהר עליו (דברים יח, י) לא ימצא בך מעביר בנו ובתו באש קוסם קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף וחובר חבר ושואל אוב וידעוני ודורש אל המתים וגו' ובגלל התועבות האלה ה' אלהיך מוריש אותם מפניך ולא ענש אלא אם כן הזהיר

**Rabbi Yosei says:** With regard to **every** type of sorcery **that is stated in the passage about sorcery**, it is **prohibited for a descendant of Noah to engage in it**. This is derived from the verses: “When you come into the land that the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do like the abominations of those nations. **There shall not be found among you one who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, a diviner, a soothsayer, or an enchanter, or a warlock, or a charmer, or one who consults a necromancer and a sorcerer, or directs inquiries to the dead.** For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord; **and because of these abominations, the Lord your God is driving them out from before you**” (Deuteronomy 18:9–12). Evidently, the Canaanites were punished for these practices; **and since God would not have punished them for an action unless He first prohibited it**, these practices are clearly prohibited to gentiles.

רבי אלעזר אומר אף על הכלאים מותרין בני נח ללבוש כלאים ולזרוע כלאים ואין אסורין אלא בהרבעת בהמה ובהרכבת האילן

**Rabbi Elazar says:** The descendants of Noah were **also** commanded **concerning** the prohibition of **diverse kinds**. Nevertheless, it is **permitted for the descendants of Noah to wear diverse kinds** of wool and linen **and to sow diverse kinds** of seeds together, **and they are prohibited only with regard to breeding** diverse species of **animals and grafting** diverse species of **trees**.

מנהגי מילי אמר ר' יוחנן דאמר קרא (בראשית ב, טז) ויצו ה' אלהים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל

§ The Gemara asks: **From where are these matters**, the Noahide mitzvot, derived? **Rabbi Yoḥanan says:** It is from that **which the verse states: “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;** but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it, for on the day that you eat from it, you shall die” (Genesis 2:16–17).

'ויצו אלו הדינין וכן הוא אומר (בראשית יח, יט) כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו וגו'

The verse is interpreted homiletically as follows: With regard to the term **“and...commanded,” these are the courts of judgment; and so it states** in another verse: **“For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children** and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice” (Genesis 18:19).

ה' זו ברכת השם וכן הוא אומר (ויקרא כד, טז) ונוקב שם ה' מות יומת אלהים זו עבודת כוכבים וכן הוא אומר (שמות כ, ב) לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על האדם זו שפיכות דמים וכן הוא אומר (בראשית ט, ו) שופך דם האדם וגו'

With regard to the term **“the Lord,” this** alludes to **blessing the name** of God; **and so it states** in another verse: **“And he who blasphemes the name of the Lord...shall be put to death”** (Leviticus 24:16). **“God,” this** alludes to **idol worship; and so it states:** **“You shall have no other gods** before Me” (Exodus 20:2). **“The man,” this** alludes to **bloodshed; and so it states:** **“One who sheds the blood of man, by man his blood shall be shed”** (Genesis 9:6).

לאמר זו גילוי עריות וכן הוא אומר (ירמיהו ג, א) לאמר הן ישלח איש את אשתו והלכה מאתו והיתה לאיש אחר מכל עץ הגן ולא גזל אכל תאכל ולא אבר מן החי

With regard to the term **“saying,”** this alludes to **forbidden sexual relations; and so it states: “Saying, if a man sends his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s...will that land not be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers”** (Jeremiah 3:1). **“Of every tree of the garden”** alludes to the fact that one may partake only of items that are permitted to him, as they belong to him, **and** he may **not** partake of **stolen items**. **“You may freely eat”** alludes to the fact that one may eat fruit, **but not a limb from a living** animal.

# Does it really mean that? Torah Temimah

Why are they called laws of Noah?

בני נח ל"הר"ל אומות העולם. וכן בכל התלמוד נקראים אומות העולם בשם זה, וי"ל בטעם זה השם ע"פ הכתוב בבני נח כי מאלה נפצה כל הארץ, והוא מפני שכל אחד מבניו של נח קבע לו אומה מיוחדת בעולם, ולכן בשם בני נח כלולים כל האומות לתולדותם ולאומותם.

ונראה פשוט דאין הכונה דמפסוק זה ילפינן עיקר חיובים אלה בב"נ, שהרי אין במשמעות פשטות הכתוב כל ענינים אלה, אלא הענין הוא, שכל דין מאלה השבע מצות מקובל הי' לחז"ל שנוהגים בכל האומות שבעולם [וי"ל בטעם הדבר משום שהם נוגעים בעקרי ויסודי קיום העולם וחברת האדם, ובלעדיהם, כלומר בהפוכם, הרס ואבדן וקץ כל בשר, וע' מש"כ בפ' משפטים בפ' שור רעהו], והשכילו חז"ל לכללם כולם ולאחדם ולהסמיכם בלשון איזה פסוק בתורה כדי שיהי' הדבר לזכרון

# Laws of Noah. What's missing?

אַךְ-בְּשָׂר בְּנֶפְשׁוֹ דָמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:

You must not, however, eat flesh with its life-blood in it.

וְאֶךְ אֶת-

דַּמְּכֶם לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם אֲדַרְשׁ מִיַּד כָּל-חַיָּה אֲדַרְשֶׁנּוּ. וּמִיַּד הָאָדָם מִיַּד אִישׁ אֲחִיו אֲדַרְשׁ אֶת-נַפְשׁ הָאָדָם:

But for your own life-blood I will require a reckoning: I will require it of every beast; of man, too, will I require a reckoning for human life, of every man for that of his fellow man!

שִׁפְךָ דַּם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשָּׁפַךְ כִּי בְצַלְם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם:

Whoever sheds the blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image Did God make man.

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Whoever sheds the blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image Did God make man.



# What's implied?

וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס:

The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness.

(וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָתָה כִּי-הִשְׁחִית כָּל-בֶּשֶׁר אֶת-דַּרְכּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: 0)

When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth,

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When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth,

**RASHI:** [THE EARTH] WAS CORRUPT — It means lewdness and idolatry, as (Deuteronomy 4:16) פֶּן תִּשְׁחִיתוּן “lest ye deal corruptly” ...

חַמְסִים AND THE EARTH WAS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE — means robbery.

# Rav Yaakov Meidan adds...

וַיְהִי

עַל־הַעֲלֹת מִסְפֵּר כָּל־כֶּלֶם כִּי אָמַר אִיּוֹב אוֹלֵי חַטָּאוֹ בְּנֵי וַיְבָרְכוּ אֱלֹהִים בְּלִבָּבָם כִּכָּהֵן יַעֲשֶׂה אִיּוֹב כָּל־הַיָּמִים: (פכ

When a round of feast days was over, Job would send word to them to sanctify themselves, and, rising early in the morning, he would make burnt offerings, one for each of them; for Job thought, “Perhaps my children have sinned and blasphemed God in their thoughts.” This is what Job always used to do.

Based on Bava Batra 15b: מִיִּתְיָבִי חֲסִיד הָיָה בְּאֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם וְאִיּוֹב שְׁמוֹ וְלֹא בָּא לְעוֹלָם אֶלָּא כְּדִי לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָרוֹ הַבֵּיא הַקָּב"ה עֲלָיו יִסּוּרִין

The Gemara **raises an objection** from what is taught in a different *baraita*: **There was a certain pious man among the nations of the world and his name was Job, and he came into the world only to receive his reward.**

Idolatry: The snake?

# Another view! Sanhedrin 56b

דתנא דבי מנשה שבע מצות נצטוו בני נח ע"ז וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים גזל ואבר מן החי סירוס וכלאים

**As the school of Menashe taught: The descendants of Noah were commanded to observe seven mitzvot:** The prohibitions of **idol worship, and forbidden sexual relations, and blood-shed, and robbery, and eating a limb from a living animal, and castration, and diverse kinds.**

רבי יהודה אומר אדם הראשון לא נצטווה אלא על ע"ז בלבד שנאמר ויצו ה' אלהים על האדם רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר אף על ברכת השם ויש אומרים אף על הדינים

**Rabbi Yehuda says: Adam, the first man, was commanded only with regard to the prohibition of idol worship, as it is stated: "And the Lord God commanded the man" (Genesis 2:16). Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: He was also commanded concerning blessing the name of God. And some say that he was also commanded concerning establishing courts of judgment.**

Why would you think the laws would be in Noah or Adam's time?

# Are the Laws of Noah...

Are the Laws Covenantal or Basic Laws?

Look at the types of laws

# Rashi: Did Noah know the laws of today?

הטהורה CLEAN—It means those cattle which will in future be permitted to Israel as clean; we thus learn that Noah studied the Torah.

# R. Meidan: Similarities to Sinai...

40, Sivan..

וַיְהִי הַגֶּשֶׁם עַל-הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה:

The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.)

Rashi

AFTER THE END OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DAYS they began to decrease: that was on the first day of Sivan. How so? The rains ceased to fall on the twenty-seventh day of Kislev — you have three days left in Kislev, and the 29 days of Tebeth make 32, and Shebat, Adar, Nisan and Eyar have together 118, making altogether 150.



# Does that imply covenant or natural law?

שִׁפְךָ דַם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפַךְ כִּי בְצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם:

Whoever sheds the blood of man, By man shall his blood be shed; For in His image Did God make man.

(וְאִתְּם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ שְׂרָצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּרְבוּ־בָהּ: (ס)

Be fertile, then, and increase; abound on the earth and increase on it.”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ וְאֶל־בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר:

And God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מִקְיָם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם:

“I now establish My covenant with you and your offspring to come... rainbow..

# Rambam 9, Melachim

על

מִשָּׁה וְהַתְּפִלָּה עֲרַבִית. וּבְמִצְרַיִם נִצְטוּהָ עַמָּרִם בְּמִצּוֹת יִתְרוֹת. עַד שֶׁבָּא מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ וְנִשְׁלְמָה תּוֹרַה עַל יְדוּשׁ

Adam, the first man, was commanded with six commandments: 1) idolatry, 2) “blessing” (euphemistically) the Name (of G-d), 3) murder, 4) illicit sexual relations, 5) thievery and, 6) establishing a system of justice. Even though all of these have been received as a Tradition from Moses our Teacher and we can understand the rationale for them, nevertheless, from (verses in) the Torah (we learn that) it was these that they were commanded. A seventh commandment forbidding the eating of a limb torn from a live animal was added for Noah, as it says, “*Even flesh, life is in the blood, do not eat of it*” (Genesis 9:4). These commandments were universally applicable - until Abraham. With Abraham, circumcision was also commanded and he prayed Shacharis (the Morning Prayer). Isaac separated out a tithe and added another prayer in the afternoon and, with Jacob, the prohibition against eating the sciatic nerve was added, as was the Maariv (Evening) Prayer. In Egypt, Amram was commanded with other precepts<sup>82</sup> *I do not know which.* and, with Moses our Teacher, the Torah was completed.

# A Noahide's relation to other mitzvot: Rambam

תה לעניי ישראל. הואיל והוא נזון מישראל ומצוה עליהם להחיותו. אבל העכו"ם שנתן צדקה מקבלין ממנו ונותנין אותה לעניי עכו"ם

A non-Jew<sup>113</sup>*One who had accepted the Seven Commandments, i.e. a Resident Convert.* who wishes to perform another Torah Commandment<sup>114</sup>*Other than learning Torah or observing Shabbos.* (merely) in order to receive a reward is not prevented from so doing in the Halochically correct way. Thus, if he brings the Olah (burnt) offering, we accept it from him. If he gives charity, we accept it from him. It appears to me, however, that we give these monies to the Jewish poor since he (the Resident Convert) is sustained by Israel, and they have a commandment to keep them (the Jews) alive. However, if a non-Jew<sup>115</sup>*One who didn't accept the Seven Commandments.* gives charity, we take it and give it to the non-Jewish poor<sup>116</sup>*We take for the "sake of peace", but give it back to them since it is a disgrace for Jews to have to receive charity from non-Jews..*

# Rambam ch. 8- What does it mean to ACCEPT them?

אִשָּׁה רַבָּנָה שֶׁבָּנִי נָח מִקִּדְּם וְנִצְטוּ בָּהֶן. אֲבָל אִם עָשָׂאן מִפְּנֵי הַכֹּרַע הַדַּעַת אֵין זֶה גֵר תּוֹשֵׁב וְאִינוּ מַחֲסִידֵי וְאִינוּ מַחֲסִידֵי אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם וְלֹא מַחֲמִיָּהֶם

Anyone who accepts upon himself and carefully observes the Seven Commandments is of the Righteous of the Nations of the World and has a portion in the World to Come. This is as long as he accepts and performs them because (he truly believes that) it was the Holy One, Blessed Be He, Who commanded them in the Torah, and that is was through Moses our Teacher we were informed that the Sons of Noah had already been commanded to observe them. But if he observes them because he convinced himself logically<sup>81</sup>*By his own intellect and conscience, but he does not agree that they were commanded by G-d.*, then he is not considered a Resident Convert and is not of the Righteous of the Nations of the World, but merely one of their wise.

# You are not even wise?

Mss.

וְאֵינוּ מִחֲסִידֵי אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם אֲלָא מִחֲכָמֵיהֶם

He is not among the righteous gentiles rather among their wise

Are the Laws Covenental or Basic Laws?

# Moses Mendelson writes to R. Yaakov Emden

these words harder than flint. Shall all the inhabitants of the earth from east to west, except for us, be cast into a pit of annihilation and be abhorrent to all flesh if they do not believe in the Torah, which was given as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob alone? [This is] particularly [difficult] in the case of a matter that is not explicitly stated in the Torah at all, but rather comes by way of tradition to the most treasured among the nations, or is expounded by their sages from the words of the Torah—from the verse “and the Eternal God



# Why do we have two sets of law? Based on Elijah Benamozegh's writings in Israel and Humanity

radical complementarity. It is God's design that the life of Jews be anchored in the Law of Moses, and the life of Gentiles in the Law of the Sons of Noah, based on the covenant that God established with surviving humanity after the Flood (Gn 9). But the two laws are doubly interlocking—the Noachide Law is part of the Mosaic Law (though it was of course given to all men earlier), *while the Mosaic Law as a whole has as a primary object the preservation and propagation of Noachism among the Gentiles*. That is to say, there is but a single fundamental “Law,” or essential ethico-religious system, for all men, and it is distilled in the Noachide *mitzvot*. If the Jews are bound not by “seven” but by “613” *mitzvot*—the traditional numbers are perhaps in some sense arbitrary or emblematic, and the seven Noachide laws are really expansible categories—this is in significant measure because God wants to hedge round Jewish identity with such elaborate and inviolable particularism that Jewish group survival will be ensured, enabling the Jewish mission to be accomplished. The Jews are, as it were, the priests of mankind, and not only their Mosaic Law but their very group existence and survival have as their object the guarding and disseminating among men of the essentials of true religion and morality. And the divinely proposed role of the Gentiles—that is, “humanity”—in this cosmic

# A priestly system

THE VERY EXISTENCE of a dual religious code among the Gentiles is itself quite instructive. The differences between the two laws are no less than the differences between Mosaism and Noachism, and seem to demonstrate firmly that there is a tendency in human culture for lay law and priestly law to exist simultaneously. Even in Mosaism itself, alongside the common law of the Israelites there is another, which is especially for the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron; and even in this priestly law there is still another, more particularized yet, for the high priest, which sets him apart from the other priests of Israel just as the entire Mosaic Law sets off the Jews as priests of mankind. So symmetrical and harmonious a structure can scarcely be the result of chance.

# The Stages of Humanity according to the simple reading.

The Garden: A positive command and a negative command.

Any laws? Basic, not covenantal...

Post Garden: No laws

Murder, destruction

Post flood: Negative Laws, covenant

Avraham: Positive laws, reward, covenant

Sinai: Positive and negative, covenant



# The Stages of Humanity according to the Sages.

The Garden: A positive command and a negative command. Implication of all 7(6)

Any laws? Basic.

Post Garden: No laws other than the 6/7 already in play

Murder, destruction

Post flood: Negative Laws, covenant

Avraham: Positive laws, reward, covenant

Sinai: Positive and negative, covenant