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The Noachide [Laws](law.html)

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

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[The Seven Noachide Laws 1](#_Toc454388920)

[Rabbinic Authority 3](#_Toc454388921)

[The Seven Laws 7](#_Toc454388922)

[Seven Turns Into Sixty-Six 10](#_Toc454388923)

[The Death Penalty 12](#_Toc454388924)

[A Novel Concept 12](#_Toc454388925)

[In The Nazarean Codicil 13](#_Toc454388926)

[Correlations 14](#_Toc454388927)

[In Seder Olam 15](#_Toc454388928)

[Appendix: 16](#_Toc454388929)

[Bibliography 16](#_Toc454388930)

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to take a close look at the unversal [laws](law.html) for mankind.

In the beginning [HaShem](hashem.html) established a set of rules, with [Adam](adam.html) and Eve in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html), to provide justice on the earth. These rules were given to [Adam](adam.html) and all subsequent men. In the days of Noach, [HaShem](hashem.html) expounded an additional rule. These rules were and are incumbent upon all men. These [seven](seven.html) rules make up the Noachide [laws](law.html).

**Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Pisqa** [**Twelve**](twelve.html)**:** R. The [first](one.html) man was assigned [six](six.html) religious duties, and they are: not worshipping idols, not blaspheming, setting up courts of justice, not murdering, not practicing fornication, and not stealing. And all of them derive from a single verse of Scripture: ***And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, You may freely*** [***eat***](eating.html) ***of every tree of the garden, [but of the tree of the*** [***knowledge***](knowledge.html) ***of good and evil you will not*** [***eat***](eating.html)***, for in the day that you*** [***eat***](eating.html) ***of it you will die]***.[[1]](#footnote-1) ***And the Lord God commanded the man, saying*:** this refers to [idolatry](idolatry.html), as it is said, ***For Ephraim was happy to*** [***walk***](walking.html) ***after the*** [***command***](cmds613.html).[[2]](#footnote-2) ***The LORD*:** this refers to blasphemy, as it is said, ***Whoever curses the*** [***name***](name.html) ***of the LORD will surely die***.[[3]](#footnote-3) ***God*:** this refers to setting up courts of justice, as it is said, ***God [in context, the judges] you will not curse***.[[4]](#footnote-4) ***the man:*** this refers to murder, as it is said, ***He who sheds the*** [***blood***](body.html) ***of man by man his*** [***blood***](body.html) ***will be shed***.[[5]](#footnote-5) ***saying:*** this refers to fornication, as it is said. ***Saying, will a man divorce his wife...***.[[6]](#footnote-6) ***You may freely*** [***eat***](eating.html) ***of every tree of the garden:***this refers to the prohibition of stealing, as you say, ***but of the tree of the*** [***knowledge***](knowledge.html) ***of good and evil you will not*** [***eat***](eating.html)***.*** Noah was commanded, in addition, not to cut a limb from a living beast, as it is said, ***But as to meat with its soul - its*** [***blood***](body.html) ***you will not*** [***eat***](eating.html).[[7]](#footnote-7)

# The [Seven](seven.html) Noachide [Laws](law.html)

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) delineates the [laws](law.html) of Noach:

***Sanhedrin 56b*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*:* [*seven*](seven.html) *precepts were the sons of Noah commanded: social* [*laws*](law.html)*;[[8]](#footnote-8) to refrain from blasphemy,* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*; adultery; bloodshed; robbery; and* [*eating*](eating.html) *flesh cut from a living animal.[[9]](#footnote-9)*

Thus we have the follwing list of [seven](seven.html) Noachide [commands](cmds613.html) which are incumbent on the whole [world](worlds.html):

1. Murder is forbidden.

2. Theft is forbidden.

3. Incestuous and adulterous relations are forbidden.

4. [Eating](eating.html) the flesh of a living animal is forbidden.

5. [Idolatry](idolatry.html) is forbidden.

6. Cursing the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) is forbidden (Blasphemy).

7. Mankind is commanded to establish courts of justice.

His Eminence Dayan Dr. Isidor Grunfeld,[[10]](#footnote-10) explains how these [laws](law.html) are derived:

*In order to understand how the* [*Talmud*](orallaw.html)*[[11]](#footnote-11) derives the* [*Seven*](seven.html)[*Laws*](law.html) *of Noach from the verse preceding the* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *not to* [*eat*](eating.html) *of the Tree of Good and Evil, we must have the full* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *Scriptural text and its translation in front of us:*

וַיְצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר:  מִכֹּל עֵץ-הַגָּן, אָכֹלתֹּאכֵלוּמֵעֵץ, הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע--לֹא תֹאכַל, מִמֶּנּוּ:  כִּי, בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָמִמֶּנּוּ--מוֹת תָּמוּת. *– “And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God commanded the man, saying: ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*; but of the tree of the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of good and evil, you will not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it; for in the day that you* [*eat*](eating.html) *thereof you will surely die’” (Gen. 2:16-17).*

*This is the Talmudical explanation of the* [*first*](one.html) *of the* [*two*](two.html) *verses –****Vay’tsav*** *–****הדינין אלו - ויצו ­*** *“And God commanded”: This refers to the administration of justice which is* [*one*](one.html) *of the general* [*laws*](law.html) *of morality to be observed by the whole of mankind.*

***Adonai******ה׳ ברכת זו - ה׳*** *-The* [*law*](law.html) *was given to man in the* [*name*](name.html) *of God (*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*) and man has a duty to keep the* [*name*](name.html) *of God holy. This implies the prohibition of blasphemy.*

***Elohim******זרה עבודה זו - א׳*** *– God (Elohim) is not only the Creator of the Universe but also the universal Lawgiver, which is implied in the* [*name*](name.html)***א׳****. Thereby the deification of any other being is automatically denied and forbidden as* [*idol*](idolatry.html) *worship.*

***Al HaAdam דמים שפיכות זו - על-האדם*** *- Human life is holy, as man was created in the image of God. Every human person is of irreplaceable value and the taking of human life is therefore a capital crime and a destruction of a micro-cosmos.*

***Lemor******עריות גלוי זו - לאמר*** *- The handing down of God's* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *from* [*generation*](toldot.html) *to* [*generation*](toldot.html) *presupposes an ordered family life which can only be guaranteed by the* [*purity*](purity.html) *of sexual morals. The word* ***לאמר*** *- which means handing down – therefore includes the prohibition of adultery.*

***MiKol Etz HaGan גזל ולו - מכל עץ-הגן*** *- Man was only to* [*eat*](eating.html) *from what was his property given to him by God. The words* ***מכל עץ-הגן*** *exclude therefore theft and robbery.*

***Akol Tokel*** *-* ***החי מן אבר ולו - אכל תאכל*** *- Man's* [*food*](food.html) *must be such that it prevents base animal substances and instincts from being introduced into the human* [*body*](body.html)*. This refers especially to*

***Nefesh Behemah*** *­ the animal soul -which can never be assimilated to the human soul, whereas animal flesh can be assimilated to human flesh.* [*First*](one.html)*, however, the animal life must have departed before man is allowed to consume any part of the animal. Apart from this it would be most inhuman and barbaric to tear off part of a living creature for human consumption. The words* ***אכל תאכל*** *exclude therefore* ***Eber Min HaChai*** *- the cutting off for* [*food*](food.html) *of a part of a living animal.*

A [Gentile](gen-jew.html) who accepts these [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html), and observes them meticulously, is called a [Ger](aliens.html) Toshav, literally, *a stranger-settler*, (a Proselyte of the Gate). He is a resident [alien](aliens.html) of a different race and of a different religion, since he respects the [covenant](covenant.html) of the [law](law.html) made by [HaShem](hashem.html) with all the children of Noach. His obedience to these [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html), which form the elementary principles of civilized humanity, enable him to be a citizen enjoying all the rights and privileges of civil [law](law.html). Some would say that he is "semi-[convert](aliens.html)".[[12]](#footnote-12)

A [Gentile](gen-jew.html) who accepts these [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) and observes them meticulously will have a portion in the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), the [world](futures.html) to come, provided that he accepts and performs them *because* [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded so in the Torah. However, if his observance is based upon reason, he is *not* a resident [alien](aliens.html), he is *not* a pious [Gentile](gen-jew.html), and he is *not* even [one](one.html) of their wise men. It is not enough to obey these [laws](law.html) because they seem rational or reasonable. *He must do them because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *commanded them*!

It is the obligation of every [Jew](gen-jew.html) to [teach](teacher.html) the [Gentile](gen-jew.html) to begin with the [laws](law.html) of Noach! The Rambam explicitly rules:

*"Moshe Rabeinu commanded from the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of G-d to convince all the inhabitants of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *to observe the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *given to the Children of Noach."[[13]](#footnote-13)*

These Noachide [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) will be the [inheritance](inherit.html) of Israel.

Noachide theology is based upon the [covenant](covenant.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) made with Noach. That [covenant](covenant.html) embraced [seven](seven.html) categories of [laws](law.html).

Noach and his sons (and by extension, all of mankind, since there were no others after the flood) had a relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html) based upon the Noachide [covenant](covenant.html) and [Laws](law.html). Noach [knew](daat.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) as Adonai (Lord and Master), Shaddai (Almighty), and as Elohim (Creator and the Judge). Obedience to the [laws](law.html) of Noach was principally motivated by fear of judgment and punishment according to:

***Iyov (Job) 31:23*** *For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.*



It is incorrect to think that since the Children of Israel have 613 [commandments](cmds613.html) and the Children of Noach have [seven](seven.html) [commandments](cmds613.html), that the ratio of [spiritual](physical.html) worth is proportionally 613 to [seven](seven.html). The [Seven](seven.html) Noachide [laws](law.html) are general [commandments](cmds613.html), each containing many parts and details, whereas the 613 [Commandments](cmds613.html) of the Torah are specific, each relating to [one](one.html) basic detail of the Divine [Law](law.html). Therefore, the numerical disparity in no way reflects the relative [spiritual](physical.html) worth of the [two](two.html) systems of [commandments](cmds613.html).

# Rabbinic [Authority](authority.html)

Those who would keep the [covenant](covenant.html) of Noach must obey the [commands](cmds613.html) of the Rabbis. It is the Rabbis who [teach](teacher.html) us *how* to keep these [commands](cmds613.html). The rebellion of Korah and his followers, was a rebellion against Rabbinic [authority](authority.html). The [consequences](conseq.html) of theis rebellion are well [known](daat.html):

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:1-4*** *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel,* [*two*](two.html) *hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they* [*gathered*](gather.html) *themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every* [*one*](one.html) *of them, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*? 4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his* [*face*](body.html)*:*

Their rebellion against the [authority](authority.html) of Moses and Aaron ultimately brought about their complete destruction when the earth swallowed them alive along with their families and all of their possessions.

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:28-35*** *And Moses said, Hereby ye shall* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath not sent me. 30 But if* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *make a* [*new*](new.html) *thing, and the earth open her* [*mouth*](body.html)*, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her* [*mouth*](body.html)*, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that were round about them fled at the* [*cry*](mashal.html) *of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.35 And there came out a* [*fire*](fire.html) *from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and consumed the* [*two*](two.html) *hundred and fifty men that offered* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*.*

Thus we see that rebellion against the Rabbinic [authority](authority.html), the [authority](authority.html) of those [appointed](settimes.html) by [HaShem](hashem.html), is a very serious transgression.

The [seven](seven.html) Noachide [laws](law.html) are based on the oral [law](law.html) and the [authority](authority.html) of our Hakhamim, our Rabbis. The [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) are not spelled out in the Tanach[[14]](#footnote-14), though they are derived from the Tanach. This means that without the oral [law](law.html) there is no way to derive or understand the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) with all of their ramifications.

The [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) are spelled out in the part of the oral [law](law.html) called the [Talmud](orallaw.html), in a tractate called Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin, during [Temple](temple.html) days, was the highest court of Rabbinic [authority](authority.html). They provided justice for the people comparable to our Supreme Court. Additionally, we can find the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) in the Tosefta and the Nazarean Codicil[[15]](#footnote-15). Both of these works are codifications of Rabbinic rulings. In the Nazarean Codicil, for example, Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html) is the Rosh Bet Din of the Sanhedrin that adjudicates the questions of [circumcision](circumcz.html) for the [salvation](salvation.html) of the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). In this ruling, Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html) ([Jacob](israelja.html) the brother of [Yeshua](yeshua.html)) declares the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) to be the starting point for all [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) who are turning to [HaShem](hashem.html). He goes on to indicate that full conversion is the goal, but it requires that they “learn Moses in the [Synagogue](synagog.html) on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)”. After they have learned from Moses, in the [synagogue](synagog.html), they can choose to enter the Mosaic [covenant](covenant.html) with its 613 [commands](cmds613.html).

Without Rabbinic [authority](authority.html) and the oral [law](law.html) it is impossible to understand the scope of the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html). For example, [one](one.html) of the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) forbids stealing. Now we need to ask, “What is stealing”? Most [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) would tell us that stealing is taking something that does not belong to you. Our Hakhamim (Rabbis) give quite a different answer. Our Hakhamim define stealing as: Taking something that does not belong to you, and that permission would have been denied if the owner had been asked. For example: If a wife takes her husbands car keys to bring in the groceries from the car; by the [Gentile](gen-jew.html) definition, she just stole the keys. By the definition of our Hakhamim, no theft was involved because if she had asked her husband, he would surely have given her permission. Thus we see that without Rabbinic [authority](authority.html) it is impossible to [know](daat.html) or understand the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html), let alone define them!

The Torah explicitly states this [authority](authority.html) in:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:8*** *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between* [*blood*](body.html) *and* [*blood*](body.html)*, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God shall choose; 9 And thou shalt come unto the* [*priests*](priests.html) *the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: 10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: 11 According to the sentence of the* [*law*](law.html) *which they shall* [*teach*](teacher.html) *thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*, nor to the left. 12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the* [*priest*](priests.html) *that standeth to minister there before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.*

In this pasuk (passage) **the Torah tells us that whatever the** [**Kohanim**](priests.html) **(**[**Priests**](priests.html)**) and the Hakhamim tell a person to do, that is what he will do.** This tells us that [HaShem](hashem.html) will follow whatever the Hakhamim declare. It is no good to tell these men to make decisions and give them to the people if [HaShem](hashem.html) does not superintend these men and then follow the decisions that they have rendered. To put it another way, if the Hakham is wrong in his decision, and the people follow it, then [HaShem](hashem.html) will vindicate the people and bring judgment on the judge.

Most Christian will initially rebel against Rabbinic [authority](authority.html) because they have been [taught](teacher.html) to do so by their pastors. Catholics will not have such trouble. This sect of Christianity has been [taught](teacher.html) to accept the [authority](authority.html) of the Pope. They are likely to already understand the benefits of Rabbinic [authority](authority.html).

For Christians who have never been [taught](teacher.html) to submit to the [authority](authority.html) of the judges of Israel (another way of saying Hakhamim), consider the following passages:

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 8:14*** *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.*

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 13:17*** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 13:24*** *Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.*

***1 Timothy 5:17*** *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

Most Christians [know](daat.html) that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will rule and reign over the whole earth, as we can see from the following pasuk (passage):

***Revelation 11:15*** *And the seventh* [*angel*](angels.html) *sounded; and there were great voices in* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, saying, The kingdoms of this* [*world*](worlds.html) *are become the kingdoms of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and of his* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

However, most have never stopped to consider and understand what this means. Most Christians think of a guy with a crown and scepter ordering his minions around to serve him. This is not the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) perspective of a ruler. A ruler of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) is a man who provides justice for his people. The primary task of a king is to provide justice. This is ultimately true for every king, prime minister, and president. The primary task of every ruler is to provide justice for his subjects. That is why they have the ultimate [authority](authority.html) to pardon and commute sentences. They mobilize armies to correct injustices wrought by other [nations](nations.html). They collect taxes in order to help the entire [nation](nations.html) to obtain justice by building roads and equiping the army.

The king does not provide justice on his own, however. He has minions to assist. He has congressmen, and several layers of judges to work with him to provide justice. That is why the highest courts have their judges nominated by the president. When we submit to any judge, we have submitted to the president. This is why every court room has a flag of the United States and a flag for the state where the court is located.

This perspective suggests that the Chief Justice (Rosh Bet Din in [Hebrew](hebrew.html)) of the supreme court of the Kingdom of [Heaven](heaven.html) is [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ([Messiah](mashiach.html)). This Chief Justice, like Moses before Him, has assigned subordinates to judge with Him. These subordinates administer the same [laws](law.html) as the Chief Justice. They take the easier cases and send Him the most difficult ones.

When the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David (The [Messiah](mashiach.html) who is the son of David) rules, He will rule with those who have been trained in His Torah ([law](law.html)). He will rule with those who have the proper training. It will be like all judges in civil courts have to be trained as lawyers [first](one.html). So, those who rule in the Kingdom of [Heaven](heaven.html) will have to be trained in the Torah which is the [law](law.html) of the Kingdom of [Heaven](heaven.html). In fact, I believe that the reason we have civil courts with their rules, is to [teach](teacher.html) us about the courts (Bate Dinae) of the Kingdom of [Heaven](heaven.html).

***Revelation 20:6*** *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the* [*first*](one.html)[*resurrection*](techiyat.html)*: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be* [*priests*](priests.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

The ones who rule Israel are called Hakhamim (Wise Ones) by Sefardi [Jews](gen-jew.html), and are called Rabbis (Great Ones) by Ashkenazi [Jews](gen-jew.html). Both are thoroughly trained in Torah [law](law.html). Both sit in a court (a Bet Din) and provide justice to [Jews](gen-jew.html) all over the [world](worlds.html). Thus we would say that Israel is ruled by our Hakhamim and Rabbis who are our judges. They are subservient to [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and He is subservient to [HaShem](hashem.html).

A little [known](daat.html) passage and its explanation can go a long way towards understanding how our Hakhamim rule. Consider what the following passages mean:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 82:1*** *<<A* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *of Asaph.>> God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. 5 They* [*know*](daat.html) *not, neither will they understand; they* [*walk*](walking.html) *on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. 7 but ye shall die like men, and fall like* [*one*](one.html) *of the princes. 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt* [*inherit*](inherit.html) *all* [*nations*](nations.html)*.*

***Yochanan (John) 10:33*** *The* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered them, Is it not written in your* [*law*](law.html)*, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

In the above passage, John tells us that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) calls the Pharisees *Gods* (Recall that neither Greek nor [Hebrew](hebrew.html) have the concept of capitals or lower case). How can [Mashiach](mashiach.html) possibly say that the Pharisees are *Gods*? Further, [Mashiach](mashiach.html) uses the fact that they *are* Gods to prove that He is the Son of God. How can this be?

If we examine the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for *God* used in Tehillim ([Psalm](psalms1.html)) 82, we see that it is the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *Elohim*. Our Hakhamim have [taught](teacher.html) us that this is the [name](name.html) that is used whenever justice is involved. It is used of [HaShem](hashem.html) and it is obviously used for men:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:1*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.*

Elohim is used of [HaShem](hashem.html) when He *judges* and it is used of men when they *judge*. Justice is an essential attribute of [HaShem](hashem.html). When we judge, as He judges, we are called by the same [name](name.html) He uses of Himself when He judges. I have written more on this subject in a [study](study.html) titled conundrum.

# The [Seven](seven.html) [Laws](law.html)

The [Seven](seven.html) Noachide [laws](law.html) are all prohibitory, with the possible exception of the injunction to establish courts of justice (which can be viewed as a prohibition against injustice).

***Sanhedrin 56a-b*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*:* [*seven*](seven.html) *precepts were the sons of Noach commanded: 1 social* [*laws*](law.html)*; to refrain from 2 blasphemy, 3* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*; 4 adultery; 5 bloodshed;6 robbery; and 7* [*eating*](eating.html) *flesh cut from a living animal.*

*R. Hanania b. Gamaliel said: Also not to partake of the* [*blood*](body.html) *drawn from a living animal. R. Hidka added emasculation. R. Simeon added sorcery. R. Jose said: The heathens were prohibited everything that is mentioned in the section on sorcery. viz., There shall not be found among you any* [*one*](one.html)*, that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the* [*fire*](fire.html)*, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them [sc. the heathens in Canaan] out from before thee.1 Now, [the Almighty] does not punish without* [*first*](one.html) *prohibiting. R. Eleazar added the forbidden mixture [in plants and animals]: now, they are permitted to wear garments of mixed fabrics [of wool and linen] and sow diverse* [*seeds*](flower.html) *together; they are forbidden only to hybridize heterogeneous animals and graft trees of different kinds.*

*Whence do we* [*know*](daat.html) *this? — R. Johanan answered: The Writ saith: And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*. And [He] commanded, refers to [the observance of] social* [*laws*](law.html)*, and thus it is written, For I* [*know*](daat.html) *him, that he will* [*command*](cmds613.html) *his children and his* [*household*](househld.html) *after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. The Lord-is [a prohibition against] blasphemy, and thus it is written, and he that blasphemest the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death. God-is [an injunction against]* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*, and thus it is written, Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. The man-refers to bloodshed [murder], and thus it is written, Whoso sheddeth man's* [*blood*](body.html)*, by man shall his* [*blood*](body.html) *be shed. Saying-refers to adultery, and thus it is written, They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and became another man's. Of every tree of the garden-but not of robbery. Thou mayest freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*-but not flesh cut from a living animal.*

*…* *Surely it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Just as the Israelites were ordered to set up* [*law*](law.html) *courts in every district and town, so were the sons of Noach likewise enjoined to set up* [*law*](law.html) *courts in every district and town!*



Our Hakhamim[[16]](#footnote-16) derive from the Torah the [six](six.html) broad categories of [laws](law.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) forbids all of humanity:

1. Killing

2. Stealing

3. Committing Sexual Immorality

4. [Eating](eating.html) the flesh of a living animal

5. Serving idols

6. Blaspheming against [HaShem](hashem.html)

They also derived [one](one.html) positive category of [laws](law.html):

7. Establishing a system of legal justice

This gives rise to the common expression of [*seven*](seven.html) [laws](law.html). According to the standard computation, these break down into sixty-[six](six.html) [laws](law.html) that non-[Jews](gen-jew.html) are obligated to observe. According to the Rambam, in order to [merit](merit.html) the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), the [World](futures.html) to Come, [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) must observe these obligations specifically because they were commanded by [HaShem](hashem.html) through the Torah (see Bereshit chapter [nine](nine.html)).[[17]](#footnote-17) The Rambam thus regarded anyone who observed these [laws](law.html) as [one](one.html) "assured of a portion in the [Olam HaBa](futures.html)."

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also speaks of the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XVI:6*** *AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN, SAYING: OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN THOU MAYEST FREELY* [*EAT*](eating.html) *(II, 16). R. Levi said: He gave him* [*six*](six.html) *precepts1: AND HE COMMANDED (WAY-YEZAW) alludes to 1* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*, as you read: Because he willingly walked after zaw-i.e. idols (Hos. V, 11). THE LORD alludes to 2 blasphemy, as you read, And he that blasphemeth the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord (Lev. XXlV, 16). GOD alludes to the 3 [*[*authority*](authority.html) *of] judges, as you read, Thou shalt not revile God-i.e. the judges (Ex. XXII, 27). THE MAN: this alludes to 4 bloodshed, as you read, Whoso sheddeth man's* [*blood*](body.html) *(Gen. IX, 6). SAYING alludes to 5 incest, as you read: Saying: If a man put away his wife, etc. (Jer. III, 1). OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN THOU SHALT FREELY* [*EAT*](eating.html)*: here He commanded him against 6 theft.3 The Rabbis interpreted the whole passage thus: AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED. He said to him: ‘What am I? God, [and I* [*command*](cmds613.html)*] that I be treated as a God and not cursed.’ How do we* [*know*](daat.html) *[that* [*Adam*](adam.html) *was forbidden] incest? [From the passage], And cleave unto his wife (Gen. II, 24), which implies, but not to his neighbour's wife, nor to a* [*male*](male+female.html)*, nor to an animal. OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN THOU MAYEST FREELY* [*EAT*](eating.html)*. R.* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *of Kefar Hanan said: When does [an animal] become* [*food*](food.html)*, and when is it fit to be* [*eaten*](eating.html)*? When it is ritually slaughtered. Thus He intimated [the forbidden character of] a 7 limb torn from a living animal.4 BUT OF THE TREE OF THE* [*KNOWLEDGE*](knowledge.html) *OF GOOD AND EVIL, THOU SHALT NOT* [*EAT*](eating.html) *OF IT; FOR IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THERE OF THOU SHALT SURELY DIE (MOTH TAMOTH) (II, 17): [this intimated] death for* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, death for Eve, and death for his descendants. 5*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) also speaks of the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html):

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshith, Section 1, Page 35b*** *AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED. According to our teachers, the word “commanded” here contains a prohibition of 1* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*; “the Lord”, of 2 blasphemy; “God”, 3 of the perversion of justice; “the man”, 4 of murder; “saying”, 5 of adultery and incest; “from all the trees of the garden”, 6 of robbery; “thou mayest freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*”, 7 of* [*eating*](eating.html) *flesh from a living animal; and so we agree.*

The Tosefta also speaks of these [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html):

***TOSEFTA ABODAH ZARAH 8:4*** *Concerning* [*seven*](seven.html) *religious requirements were the children of Noah admonished: setting up courts of justice,* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*, blasphemy [cursing the* [*Name*](name.html) *of God], fornication, bloodshed, and thievery.*

*Concerning setting up courts of justice — how so? Just as Israelites are commanded to call into session in their towns courts of justice. Concerning* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html) *and blasphemy —how so? Concerning fornication — how so?*

*“On account of any form of prohibited sexual relationship on account of which an Israelite court inflicts the death-penalty, the children of Noah are subject to warning,” the words of R. Meir. And sages say, “There are many prohibited relationships, on account of which an Israelite court does not inflict the death-penalty and the children of Noah are [not) warned. In regard to these forbidden relationships the* [*nations*](nations.html) *are judged in accord with the* [*laws*](law.html) *governing the* [*nations*](nations.html)*. “And you have only the prohibitions of sexual relations with a betrothed maiden alone.”* ***8:5*** *For bloodshed—how so? A* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *[who kills] a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *and a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *who kills an Israelite are liable. An Israelite [who kills) a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *is exempt. Concerning thievery? [If]* [*one*](one.html) *has stolen, or robbed, and so too in the case of finding a beautiful captive [woman), and in similar cases: a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *in regard to a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html)*, or a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *in regard to an Israelite — it is prohibited. And an Israelite in regard to a* [*gentile*](gen-jew.html) *— it is permitted.* ***8:6*** *Concerning a limb cut from a living beast — how so? A dangling limb on a beast, [which] is not [so connected] as to bring about healing, is forbidden for use by the children of Noah, and, it goes without saying, for Israelites. But if there is [in the connecting flesh sufficient [*[*blood*](body.html) *supply] to bring about healing, it is permitted to Israelites, and, it goes without saying, to the children of Noah. [If]* [*one*](one.html) *took a bird which is not of the volume of an olive’s bulk and* [*ate*](eating.html) *it— Rabbi declares exempt. And R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon declares liable. Said R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon, “Now if on account of a limb from a bird [which is alive]* [*one*](one.html) *is liable, for the whole [bird] should not* [*one*](one.html) *be liable?” [If]* [*one*](one.html) *strangled it and* [*ate*](eating.html) *it, he is exempt. R. Hananiah b. Gamaliel says, “Also on account of* [*blood*](body.html) *deriving from a living beast,” R. Hidqa says, “Also on account of castration.”*

*R. Simeon says, “Also on account of witchcraft.” R. Yosé says, “On account of whatever is stated in the pericope regarding the children of Noah are they subject to warning, “as it is said, There shall not be found among you any* [*one*](one.html) *who burns his son or his daughter as an* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*, any* [*one*](one.html) *who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer. or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer (Deut. 18:10—Il).* ***8:7*** *“Is it possible, then, that Scripture has imposed a punishment without imparting a prior warning? But it provides a warning and afterward imparts the punishment. This* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that he has warned them* [*first*](one.html) *and then punished them.* ***8:8*** *R. Eleazar says, “Also as to ‘mixed* [*seeds*](flower.html)*’” it is permitted for a child of Noah to sow* [*seeds*](flower.html) *[which are mixed species] or to wear garments which are of mixed species [wool and linen]. It is prohibited to breed a hybrid beast or to graft trees.*



**How do we derive these** [**seven**](seven.html)[**laws**](law.html) **from the Torah?**

These categories are felt to be implicit in [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [commandment](cmds613.html) to [Adam](adam.html) and Eve in Genesis (Bereshit) 2:16-17.

1. The following verse is a reference to the prohibition against murder. [HaShem](hashem.html) explicitly [commands](cmds613.html) Noach:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 9:6*** *If* [*one*](one.html) *sheds the* [*blood*](body.html) *of the man (HaAdam), by man shall his own* [*blood*](body.html) *be shed.*

2. The following is an implicit reference to the prohibition against theft. It shows that permission is needed to take something that is not explicitly yours.

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:11*** *You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with* [*one*](one.html) *another.*

3. The below verse refers to sexual misconduct or adultery, as the prophet says,

***Yeremyahu (Jeremiah) 3:1*** *Saying (laymor), if a man divorces his wife...*

Additionally, sexual misconduct includes the [laws](law.html) of Niddah. Having [sex](marriageact.html) with a woman who is Niddah is forbidden:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:19*** *Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.*

4. The following verse implies that there are things which may not be [eaten](eating.html) (the limbs of a live animal and meat with the [blood](body.html) still in it):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 9:4*** *You must not, however,* [*eat*](eating.html) *flesh with its life-*[*blood*](body.html) *in it.*

5. The following verse is a reference to the prohibition against [idolatry](idolatry.html); for it says in:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 20:3*** *You shall have no other gods before me.*

6. The following verse implies the prohibition against blasphemy.

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 24:16*** *He who blasphemes the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shall die.*

7. The [laws](law.html) of justice are clearly understood from:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 18:19*** *For I have* [*known*](daat.html) *him so he will* [*command*](cmds613.html) *(Yitzaveh) his children after him to keep the way of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and righteousness and justice.*

Besides the [Seven](seven.html) Noachide [laws](law.html), the Children of Noach have traditionally taken it upon themselves to fulfill the [commandment](cmds613.html) of honoring mother and father, and the [commandment](cmds613.html) of giving charity.

# [Seven](seven.html) Turns Into Sixty-[Six](six.html)[[18]](#footnote-18)

From these [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) our Sages derived the following 66 [laws](law.html):

**1. MURDER:**

(1) against anyone murdering anyone. [Some say that this also prohibits Lashon HaRa, evil speech.]

**2. THEFT:**

(1) against stealing;

(2) against committing robbery

(3).against shifting a land mark;

(4) against cheating;

(5) against repudiating a claim of money owed;

(6) against overcharging;

(7).against coveting;

(8) against desiring;

(9) a laborer shall be allowed to [eat](eating.html) of the fruits among which he works (under certain conditions);

(10) against a laborer [eating](eating.html) of such fruit (when certain conditions are not met);

(11) against a laborer taking of such fruit home;

(12) against kidnapping;

(13) against the use of false weights and measures;

(14) against the possession of false weights and measures;

(15) that [one](one.html) shall be exact in the use of weights and measures; and

(16) that the robber shall return (or pay for) the stolen object.

**3. ILLICIT** [**INTERCOURSE**](marriageact.html)**:**

(1) against (a man) having union with his mother;

(2) against (a man) having union with his sister; (3) against (a man) having union with the wife of his father;

(4) against (a man) having union with another man's wife;

(5) against (a man) copulating with a beast;

(6) against a woman copulating with a beast;

(7) against (a man) lying carnally with a [male](male+female.html);

(8).against (a man) lying carnally with his father;

(9) against (a man) lying carnally with his father's brother; and

(10) against engaging in erotic conduct that may lead to a prohibited union.

[Some have suggested that this list should also forbid [intercourse](marriageact.html) with a woman who is Niddah. The Shulchan Aruch also has a chapter about adulterous thinking and discharging [one](one.html)'s [seed](flower.html) in vain, which is also forbidden.]

**4. LIMB OF A LIVING CREATURE:**

(1) against [eating](eating.html) a limb severed from a living animal, beast, or fowl; and

(2) against [eating](eating.html) the flesh of any animal which was torn by a wild beast, which, in part, prohibits the [eating](eating.html) of such flesh as it was torn off an animal while it was still alive.

**5.** [**IDOLATRY**](idolatry.html)**:**

(1) against entertaining the thought that there exists a deity except [HaShem](hashem.html);

(2) against making any graven image (and against having anyone else make [one](one.html) for us);

(3) against making idols for use by others;

(4) against making any forbidden statues (even when they are for ornamental purposes);

(5) against bowing to any [idol](idolatry.html) (and not to [sacrifice](korbanot.html) nor to pour libation nor to burn [incense](ketoret.html) before any [idol](idolatry.html), even where it is not the customary manner of worship to the particular [idol](idolatry.html));

(6) against worshipping idols in any of their customary manners of worship;

(7) against causing our children to pass (through the [fire](fire.html)) in the worship of Molech;

(8) against practicing Ov;

(9) against the practice of Yiddoni [Sorcerer, Soothsayer, Magician]; and

(10) against turning to [idolatry](idolatry.html) (in word, in thought, in deed, or by any observance that may draw us to its worship).

**6. BLASPHEMY:**

(1) to acknowledge the existence of [HaShem](hashem.html);

(2) to fear [HaShem](hashem.html);

(3) to [pray](prayer.html) to [HaShem](hashem.html);

(4) to sanctify [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [name](name.html) (in [face](body.html) of death, where appropriate);

(5) against desecrating [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [name](name.html) (even in [face](body.html) of death, when appropriate);

(6) to [study](study.html) the Torah;

(7) to honor the scholars, and to revere [one](one.html)'s [teacher](teacher.html); and

(8) against blaspheming.

**7. JUSTICE:**

(1) to appoint judges and officers in each and every [community](community.html);

(2) to treat the litigants equally before the [law](law.html);

(3) to inquire diligently into the testimony of a witness;

(4) against the wanton miscarriage of justice by the court;

(5) against the judge accepting a bribe or gift from a litigant;

(6) against the judge showing marks of honor to but [one](one.html) litigant;

(7) against the judge acting in fear of a litigant's threats;

(8) against the judge, out of [compassion](jonah.html), favoring a poor litigant;

(9) against the judge discriminating against the litigant because he is a sinner;

(10) against the judge, out of softness, putting aside the penalty of a mauler or killer;

(11) against the judge discriminating against a stranger or an orphan;

(12) against the judge [hearing](mashal.html) [one](one.html) litigant in the absence of the other;

(13) against appointing a judge who lacks [knowledge](knowledge.html) of the [Law](law.html);

(14) against the court killing an innocent man;

(15) against incrimination by circumstantial evidence;

(16) against punishing for a crime committed under duress;

(17) that the court is to administer the death penalty by the sword;

(18) against anyone taking the [law](law.html) into his own [hands](fourteen.html) to kill the perpetrator of a capital crime (this point is disagreed upon by different writers: "The Noachides are not restricted in this way but may judge singly and at once.");

(19) to testify in court; and

(20) against testifying falsely.



In addition to these sixty-[six](six.html) [laws](law.html), there is evidence to suggest several more [laws](law.html) that also apply to the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). Since the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html) was a house of [prayer](prayer.html) for all of the [nations](nations.html), it follows that the [Ger](aliens.html) Toshav would also have a siddur (prayerbook) to follow along during the [prayers](prayer.html).

Since the [Ger](aliens.html) Toshav was forbidden to [eat](eating.html) the limb of a living creature, it stands to reason that he must [eat](eating.html) kosher. As we will shortly see, the Nazarean Codicil forbade “[blood](body.html)” to the [Ger](aliens.html) Toshav. This suggests that the animals must be slaughtered according to the [laws](law.html) of kashrut and that the meat must also be salted and soaked. Additionally, since Noach was forbidden to [eat](eating.html) [blood](body.html) (Bereshit 9:3-4), it follows that this was the beginning of kosher meat.

***Bereshit (Genesis 9:3-4*** *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the* [*blood*](body.html) *thereof, shall ye not* [*eat*](eating.html)*.*

# The Death Penalty

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) also states the penalty for disobedience:

***Sanhedrin 57a***[*One*](one.html) *additional element of greater severity is that violation of any* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*laws*](law.html) *subjects the Noachide to capital punishment by decapitation.*

# A Novel Concept

In this essay, I would like to propose a novel concept in the understanding of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html)’s role. I would like to propose that the earliest written mention of the Noachide [laws](law.html) is in the Nazarean Codicil, in II Luqas (Acts) 15:19-21:

***II Luqas 15:19-21[[19]](#footnote-19)*** *Wherefore my judgment is that we trouble not them which from among the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *turn to God: but that we enjoin on them to abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from* [*blood*](body.html)*: and that whatsoever they would not should be done to them ye do not to others.**For Moses from* [*generations*](toldot.html) *of old has in every* [*city*](city.html) *them that proclaim him, being read in the* [*synagogues*](synagog.html) *every* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*.*

In this passage we can clearly see the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) of Noach:

|  |
| --- |
| **2 Luqas 15[[20]](#footnote-20)** |
| Courts[[21]](#footnote-21) |
| Blasphemy[[22]](#footnote-22) |
| [Idolatry](idolatry.html) |
| Adultery[[23]](#footnote-23) |
| Bloodshed[[24]](#footnote-24) |
| Robbery[[25]](#footnote-25) |
| Flesh of a living animal[[26]](#footnote-26) |

Some are more clearly stated than others. For example the requirement to establish courts of justice is implied from the fact that a court is handing down this sentence. The prohibition from [blood](body.html) is seen as relating to murder and [eating](eating.html) the limb of a live animal. Theft is understood as a minimum of ethical conduct for those who live in [community](community.html). However, theft is also understood from the [command](cmds613.html) to abstain from idols which are clearly a theft of that which belongs to [HaShem](hashem.html) alone.

That this is the earliest codification of these [laws](law.html) is confirmed by Aaron Lichtenstein in his book, “The [Seven](seven.html) [Laws](law.html) of Noah”, when he states under the title, “ABSENCE OF TEXT”, on page 11:

*“That we* [*know*](daat.html) *anything at all about the Hammurabi, Hittite, or Assyrian Codes is due to the preservation of the ancient cuneiform tablets and stones upon which the statutes of these codes were engraved. However, there exists no original text of the Noahide code, and never was the existence of such a text ever reported. The earliest sources to give systematic treatment to Noachide* [*Law*](law.html) *are talmudic, and the earliest book of the Halakha which undertakes to deliniate the* [*Seven*](seven.html)[*Laws*](law.html) *is the Tosefta, attributed to Hiyya bar Abba, born circa 160.”*

Aaron Lichtenstein, in his scholarly treatise, could find only Talmudic sources for his earliest codification. An analysis of the II Luqas 15 suggests that the [seven](seven.html) [laws](law.html) of Noach were codofied even earlier than the [Talmud](orallaw.html).

# In The Nazarean Codicil

In II Luqas (Acts) 15, the Sanhedrin is asked to resolve the question: “Do [Goyim](gen-jew.html) ([Gentiles](gen-jew.html)) have to be [circumcised](circumcz.html) to be saved?” This question is also the crux of the difference between [Jew](gen-jew.html) and the [Goy](gen-jew.html):



The decision of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) shows that he is clearly making a distinction between [Jew](gen-jew.html) and [Goy](gen-jew.html) and that he sees a progression from [Goy](gen-jew.html) to [Jew](gen-jew.html) through conversion and [circumcision](circumcz.html):

***II Luqas (Acts) 15:19*** *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *are turned to God:*

*20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and fornication, and things strangled, and* [*blood*](body.html)*.*

*21 For Moses of old* [*time*](time.html) *hath in every* [*city*](city.html) *them that preach him, being read in the* [*synagogues*](synagog.html) *every* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day.*

In Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html)’s decision, the [Goyim](gen-jew.html) clearly have a court of justice, which just happens to be the Bet Din Gadole, the Sanhedrin. The [command](cmds613.html) to abstain from [blood](body.html) includes the [command](cmds613.html) against [eating](eating.html) meat with [blood](body.html) in it. Additionally, abstaining from [blood](body.html) suggests that the [Goyim](gen-jew.html) are obligated to observe the [laws](law.html) of Niddah.

There are [three](three.html) kinds of [commandments](cmds613.html) contained in the Torah: *mishpatim*, *eidot* and *chukim*. *Chukim* ("decrees") are [laws](law.html) which transcend our understanding and which we obey simply because they are the word of [HaShem](hashem.html). *Eidot* ("testimonies")can be rationally explained, but they are not *necessitated* by rational considerations: had [HaShem](hashem.html) not commanded them, man would not have invented them. Finally, *mishpatim* ("[laws](law.html)")are [laws](law.html) which reason would have compelled man to devise even if they had not been Divinely revealed; as the Hakhamim say, "If the Torah had not been given, we would have learnt modesty from the cat and honesty from the ant."

**This decision of Hakham** [**Yaaqov**](israelja.html) **makes sense only if we see this as the** [**first**](one.html) **formal detailing of the eidot that apply to the** [**Goyim**](gen-jew.html)**. This is the** [**first**](one.html) **delineation of the Noachide** [**commandments**](cmds613.html)**!** If a previous court had already rendered such a decision, then the responsa from that decision would have been disseminated and well [known](daat.html). That fact that Hakham Shaul (a Torah giant) is here asking for a decision, suggests that it was NOT [known](daat.html). This makes the Nazarean Codicil come alive as we realize that this is an historical decision for the [Goyim](gen-jew.html). Never before in history had the [Goyim](gen-jew.html) an opportunity to have a portion in the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) without [circumcision](circumcz.html) and becoming full converts!

Thus we begin to understand why this historical decision is being rendered by the Bet Din Gadole and not a lesser court.

For those who see this decision as falling short of delineating the Noachide [commandments](cmds613.html), consider that there is no need to detail the mishpatim in this judgment because all rational men adhere to them without a [command](cmds613.html). Thus we see that Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html) had no need to [command](cmds613.html) against murder, theft, or the establishment of courts of justice.

Few people realize that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave the Hakhamim of Israel His [insight](insights.html), and therefore Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html), explanations of, and methods for, deriving His will from the written Torah. This is [known](daat.html) as the Torah shebaal Peh, the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html). There is a fundamental principle in Torah Judaism that every part of the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) can be found hinted at in the written Torah. Using these methods of exegesis, the [Mishna](orallaw.html)[[27]](#footnote-27) derives the [six](six.html) Noachide [commandments](cmds613.html) given to [Adam](adam.html) from Bereshit 2:16, as we have seen previously.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:16*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*:*

The Seventh [Law](law.html) is commanded outright to Noach in Bereshit 9:4:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 9:4*** *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the* [*blood*](body.html) *thereof, shall ye not* [*eat*](eating.html)*.*

These [seven](seven.html) [commands](cmds613.html) are formalized by the Rambam in his monumental Codification of Torah [Law](law.html), Mishneh Torah[[28]](#footnote-28). The derivation of these [laws](law.html) is as follows:

And [HaShem](hashem.html) God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely [eat](eating.html).

[*Idolatry*](idolatry.html): TSAV ([command](cmds613.html)). As evident from Hoshea 5:11, TSAV is an allusion to the worship of idols. There, the word TSAV is used directly in reference people doing the [command](cmds613.html) (TSAV) of idolatrous [priests](priests.html) (Rashi) and the [wicked](wicked.html) kings (Radak).

*Blasphemy*: [HASHEM](hashem.html). The word develops an association between this verse and the prohibition against cursing [HaShem](hashem.html) mentioned in the verse Vayikra 24:16, which explicitly uses the [name](name.html) [HaShem](hashem.html).

*Murder:* AL HAADAM (To the Man). The words refer to the [command](cmds613.html) against murder as mentioned in Bereshit 9:6 where the word [ADAM](adam.html) is also used to describe man.

*Sexual Immorality:* LEIMOR (saying). The word LEIMOR establishes a [connection](connection.html) between this verse and Yeremyahu 3:1, which starts with the word LEIMOR. Yeremyahu 3:1 discusses acts which are sexually immoral.

*Theft*: This is derived from the plain meaning of the verse to granting license to [eat](eating.html) from the trees of the garden for otherwise [Adam](adam.html) would have been forbidden to do so, because the property did not belong to him.

*Courts of Justice:* ELOHIM (God). Shemot 22:27 uses that [Name](name.html) in reference to judges and the judicial process.

Hakham [Yaaqov](israelja.html) clearly sees the Noachide [commands](cmds613.html) as being a beginning point, for they will learn the [laws](law.html) of Moses in the [synagogue](synagog.html) on [Shabbat](sabbath.html).

The following chart lends credence to the understanding given me by my [Teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai, that abstaining from [blood](body.html) includes Niddah, the [blood](body.html) of menstruation. The chart associates the [eating](eating.html) of an animal’s limb with the sexual [organs](body.html).

# Correlations

The following chart by Rabbi [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Ginsburgh shows the relationship between the Sefirot and the Noachide [laws](law.html), matched to the appropriate [body](body.html) part:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***sefirah*** | [**Commandment**](cmds613.html) |  | [**Body**](body.html) **Part** |
| ***chesed*** "loving-kindness" | prohibition against adultery | Blue | right arm |
| ***gevurah*** "might" | prohibition against murder | Red | left arm |
| ***tiferet*** "beauty" | prohibition against theft | Yellow | torso |
| ***netzach*** "victory," "eternity" | prohibition against [idol](idolatry.html) worship | Green | right leg |
| ***hod*** "splendor," "acknowledgment," "thanksgiving" | prohibition against blasphemy | Orange | left leg |
| ***yesod*** "foundation" | prohibition against [eating](eating.html) flesh torn from a live animal or drinking its [blood](body.html) | Violet | organ of procreation |
| ***malchut*** "kingdom" | establishing a legal system | Indigo | [mouth](body.html) |

# In [Seder](haggada.html) Olam

In chapter 5 we find that the author of [Seder](haggada.html) Olam gives a derivation of the Noachide [laws](law.html) from Bereshit (Genesis) 2:16-17. This breakdown is interesting.

From the Reed Sea they travelled to [Marah](stages.html) as it is said (Ex*.* 15:23): "they came to [Marah](stages.html)"; and it is said (Ex*.* 15:25): "there He gave them ordinances and [laws](law.html) and there He tried them". There Israel received 10 [commandments](cmds613.html), [seven](seven.html) of those had already been given to all of mankind as it is written (Gen*.* 2:16-17): "There commanded the Eternal, God, to Man, saying: From any tree of the Garden you may certainly [eat](eating.html)". "There commanded" refers to a system of [laws](law.html), and so it says (Gen*.* 18:19): "For I [knew](daat.html) him so that he should [command](cmds613.html) his descendents after him to exercise justice and [law](law.html) in the land". "Eternal" refers to blasphemy as it is said (Lev*.* 24:16): "He who blasphemes the [name](name.html) of the Eternal shall certainly die". "God" refers to [idolatry](idolatry.html) as it is said (Ex*.* 20:3): "You shall not have other gods before Me". "To Man" refers to murder, as it is said (Gen*.* 9:6): "He who spills the [blood](body.html) of a man, by man his [blood](body.html) shall be spilled". "Saying" refers to adultery as it is said (Jer*.* 3:1): "Saying: If a man send his wife away and she went and became another man's, could he return to her again? Would not the land be filled with immorality? But you committed harlotry with many friends, nevertheless return to Me, pronouncement of the Eternal". "From any tree of the Garden" refers to robbery as it is said (Lev*.* 5:24): "About anything that [one](one.html) would swear falsely about, he should pay its capital and at its fifths to it". "You may certainly [eat](eating.html)" refers to [eating](eating.html) limbs of a still living animal as it is said (Gen*.* 9:4): "But meat, when its life is still in its [blood](body.html), you shall not [eat](eating.html)". Israel added to these at that [time](time.html) [Sabbath](sabbath.html), the Procedural [Law](law.html), and Honor of Father and Mother.

# Appendix:

The oral [law](law.html) lists these [seven](seven.html) [commands](cmds613.html) in various orders depending on the genre of the oral [law](law.html)**:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2 Luqas 15[[29]](#footnote-29)** | [**Talmud**](orallaw.html) | [**Midrash**](orallaw.html) | [**Zohar**](orallaw.html) | **Tosefta** |
| Courts[[30]](#footnote-30) | Courts[[31]](#footnote-31) | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) | Courts |
| Blasphemy[[32]](#footnote-32) | Blasphemy | Blasphemy | Blasphemy | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) |
| [Idolatry](idolatry.html) | [Idolatry](idolatry.html) | Courts[[33]](#footnote-33) | Courts[[34]](#footnote-34) | Blasphemy |
| Adultery[[35]](#footnote-35) | Adultery | Bloodshed | Bloodshed[[36]](#footnote-36) | Adultery |
| Bloodshed[[37]](#footnote-37) | Bloodshed | Adultery[[38]](#footnote-38) | Adultery[[39]](#footnote-39) | Bloodshed |
| Robbery[[40]](#footnote-40) | Robbery | Robbery | Robbery | Robbery |
| Flesh of a living animal[[41]](#footnote-41) | Flesh of a living animal | Flesh of a living animal | Flesh of a living animal | Flesh of a living animal |

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**“The** [**Seven**](seven.html)[**Laws**](law.html) **of Noach”** *By Aaron Lichtenstein.* The Rabbi [Jacob](israelja.html) [Joseph](joseph.html) School Press, [New](new.html) York. 1981.

[**Seder**](haggada.html) **Olam,** The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology, translated and with commentary by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer.

\* \* \*

This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

Return to The WATCHMAN home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. Bereshit (Genesis) 2:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hoshea (Hosea) 5:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Vayikra (Leviticus) 24:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shemot (Exodus) 22:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bereshit (Genesis) 9:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Yirmyahu (Jeremiah) 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Bereshit (Genesis) 9:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I.e., to establish courts of justice, or, perhaps, to observe social justice (Nahmanides on Gen. 34:13): Hast. Dict. (s.v. Noachian precepts) translates ‘obedience to authority’. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. These commandments may be regarded as the foundations of all human and moral progress. Judaism has both a national and a universal outlook in life. In the former sense it is particularistic, setting up a people distinct and separate from others by its peculiar religious law. But in the latter, it recognises that moral progress and its concomitant Divine love and approval are the privilege and obligation of all mankind. And hence the Talmud lays down the seven Noachian precepts, by the observance of which all mankind may attain spiritual perfection, and without which moral death must inevitably ensue. That perhaps is the idea underlying the assertion (passim) that a heathen is liable to death for the neglect of any of these. The last mentioned is particularly instructive as showing the great importance attached to the humane treatment of animals; so much so, that it is declared to be fundamental to human righteousness. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Grunfeld, I. (1972), The Jewish Dietary Laws, London: The Soncino Press, vol, I, pp. 41-44 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Sanhedrin 56b [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Av. Zar. 64b; Maim. Yad, Melakhim 8:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Code, Kings 8:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Old Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. in [Sanhedrin 56b](orallaw.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. R' Shlomo Riskin, R' Nathan Cardozo Torah, Masorah, and Man, and Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim 8:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Aaron Lichtenstein in his book, *The Seven Laws of Noach*, published by Z. Berman Books, gives a full treatment of these other laws and details that complement the seven major categories [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Court is held in the synagogue by the bench of [three](three.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Derived from Idolatry [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Would also include incest as well as the fornication specifically mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. in Sanhedrin 56a [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Section Hilchot Melachim (The Laws of Kings), 9:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Court is held in the [synagogue](synagog.html) by the bench of [three](three.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Social [laws](law.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Derived from Idolatry [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Authority of judges [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Perversion of justice [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Would also include incest as well as the fornication specifically mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Murder [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Incest [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. An altar is the place of sacrifices = [food](food.html) where we connect with [HaShem](hashem.html). This would include incest. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Varient reading based on Codex Bezae [↑](#footnote-ref-41)