

THE DIVINE CODE

*The Guide to Observing the Noahide Code,
Revealed from Mount Sinai in the Torah of Moses*

Fourth Edition

by

Rabbi Moshe Weiner
Jerusalem, Israel

Authorized English version of the original Hebrew:

SHEVA MITZVOT HASHEM
(SEVEN DIVINE COMMANDMENTS)

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❧ a project of ASK NOAH INTERNATIONAL ❧

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A note about our transliterations of Hebrew words:

The Hebrew letters ה (het) and ח (haf) (pronounced like the first sound in Hanukah/Chanukah) are typed herein as *h*. A more common spelling is *ch*; therefore, use *ch* if looking up a reference name or text.

In this edition, we have placed the Editor's notes as added footnotes marked by an asterisk (*); these include commentary or additional information.

Other publications from Ask Noah International:

Sheva Mitzvot HaShem (Second Edition, in Hebrew)

Seven Gates of Righteous Knowledge: A Compendium of Spiritual Knowledge and Faith for the Noahide Movement and All Righteous Gentiles

Prayers, Blessings, Principles of Faith, and Divine Service for Noahides (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian and Indonesian)

Go(o)d for You: The Divine Code of 7 Noahide Commandments

To Perfect the World: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Call to Teach the Noahide Code to All Mankind

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With thanks to the One Above
the Directors of Ask Noah International express their gratitude to:

Rabbi Moshe Weiner,
who has stood on the shoulders of giants to thoroughly elucidate the Torah-based Noahide faith, and to produce the first codification of the Noahide Commandments, in his work Sefer Sheva Mitzvot HaShem;

Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet, o.b.m.
who provided invaluable guidance, friendship, approbation and support to the Directors of Ask Noah International, along with expert contributions of explanations and daily prayers for Pious Gentiles, and to whom this book is dedicated;

the Schulman, Reisner and Weiner families,
who lovingly endured the unwavering commitment of the Directors of Ask Noah International to provide the Noahide movement with this book, as a foundation for faith and practical observance which is true to the Torah tradition extending back to Moses our teacher at Mount Sinai;

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger,
who believed in this project and helped establish its framework;

Rabbi Yosef Schulman,
who contributed the greatest amount of basic translation work;

Rabbi and Mrs. Berel Goldberg, *for their expert assistance;*

Laurel Tessmer *for the cover design and Part VII flowchart;*

Rabbis Shmuel Pollen and Eli Schulman *for their translation work.*



This Fourth Edition is dedicated to the blessed memory of

Howard (Chaim Menachem Mendel) Reisner ז"ה

yahrzeit 12 Nissan 5780 / April 6, 20'20

Founder and Co-Director of Ask Noah International;

and in loving memory of Jerry Brigham,
beloved and fondly remembered son, husband, father and grandfather;

and by Adam & Pamela Ficzeri, in blessed memory of Eric & Sheila Ficzeri:
may all people always fear G-d alone, for we receive His blessings, and what we have is on loan so we may share with others where and when it is needed.

[Abraham] planted an *eshel* in Beer-Sheba, and there he proclaimed the Name of God, God of the Universe. (Genesis 21:33)

“[Abraham] planted an *eshel* in Beer-Sheba” –

[What is this *eshel*? The Sage] Reish Lakish said: this teaches that he made an orchard and planted in it many types of fine fruit trees [to benefit the wayfarers]. [The Sage] Rabbi Nehemiah said: he built an inn [for the wayfarers, for lodging, food and drink].

“and there he proclaimed the Name of God, God of the Universe” –

Reish Lakish said: Do not read it as “he proclaimed;” rather, read it as “he caused to call.” This teaches that our forefather Abraham caused the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, to be called by the mouth of every passerby.

How? After [the wayfarers] ate and drank, they stood up to bless Abraham.

He would say to them, “Was it then of *my* food that you ate? You ate from the food of the God of the universe.

[Rather, you should] thank, praise and bless He Who spoke and caused the universe to come into being.”

They would ask, “What shall we say?”

He told them, “*Blessed is the God of the universe, from Whose bounty we have eaten.*”

So Abraham taught all people to recognize and call in the Name of God, God of the universe.

(Tractate *Sotah* 10a,b and Rashi;
Midrash Rabbah Genesis ch. 54)

RABBI Z. N. GOLDBERG Abbad Bies Horaa'h "Hayashar Vehatov" Member Of Supreme Rabbinical Court	הרב זלמן נחמיה גולדברג אב"ד בית התורה לדיני ממונות "הישר והטוב" חבר בית הדין הרבני הגדול
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ב"ה, יום יג כסלו תשס"ז

הנני דבר לבשר על תלמיד חכם ואוסף דברי
 חסד הו"ו ברה"ק חיים ויחי שלום
 ושלום ספרו "שולחן צדק" לפני נח" שבו דברי האסא
 של ז' מלאך דני נח ודולית (הוא) (פלווא) דני
 ופסוק דצדק שלם ואלו נחמי דבר דבר
 דספרו בפוסקים ואלו אפרין נחמי דבר דבר
 שהולין ספר ב"ה ואלו
 ואלו בקולת האספת דא"כ וקולת
 חיים
 ונח"ל וקדש נחמי ואלו דבר חיים ויום
 לחיים ואלו כולם אלו אלו נחמי ואלו
 חיים ואלו
 ב"ה ואלו חיים

Approbation (free translation)

Kislev 13, 5767 / December 4, 20'06

Behold, I am compelled to speak in praise of the great living scholar, the Rabbi *HaGa'on* Rabbi Moshe Weiner (may he live for many long and good days), and in praise of his book, a "*Shulhan Aruh L'Bnei Noah*," which is an elucidation of the Torah Laws of the Seven Commandments for the Children of Noah. He truly showed greatness in his clear explanations and Torah-law rulings in matters that were not discussed at length or elucidated in breadth in the works of the Rabbinical authorities. Therefore I give my appreciation to the above Rabbi who put out such a book into the world. And for the love of the holy words, I have added comments in a few places. Let us pray to God that "the earth will be as filled with knowledge of God as water covering the sea bed [Isaiah 11:9]," and "all will form a single band to carry out the will of God, blessed be He."* Amen.

Rabbi Zalman Nehemiah Goldberg
 Supreme Rabbinical Court of Israel

*From the Rosh Hashanah liturgy.



Shlomo Moshe Amar
Rishon Lezion Chief Rabbi Of Israel
President of the Great Rabbinical Court

שלמה משה עמאר
הראשון לציון הרב הראשי לישראל
נשיא בית הדין הרבני הגדול

בס"ד, ו' תמוז, תשס"ח
18-1-505/ס"ח

אָזְרַת בְּרָכָה

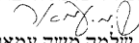
ראיתי האי ספרא טבא דמריה טב ששמו הטוב **"שבע מצות השם"** שערך וחיבר הרה"ג **משה ויינר שליט"א**.

וראיתי שמלאכה גדולה ורבה להסביר את כל עניני ד' מצות בני נח, ועוד זאת עשה לטובה שכתב הכל בשפה קלה וברורה למען ירוץ הקורא בהם.

ואברכהו שחפץ ה' בידו יציל להמשיך במלאכת הקודש להמשיך לחבר חיבורים בבריאות איתנה ונהורא מעליא.

ויהי רצון שיראה ברכה במעשה ידיו, שיכוננו לשם ה' ברוך הוא.

המצפה לישועת ה' ברחמים.


שלמה משה עמאר
הראשון לציון הרב הראשי לישראל



Approbation (free translation)

Shlomo Moshe Amar

Chief Rabbi of Israel and President of the Great Rabbinical Court

With the Help of Heaven

Tammuz 6, 5768 / July 9, 20'08

Letter of Blessing

I saw the good book, well-written and aptly titled “*Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*,” compiled and authored by the Rabbi and great scholar, Rabbi Moshe Weiner, may he live for many long and good days.

I have also seen the immense work that was required to explain all the matters of the Seven Commandments for the Children of Noah, and this was done very well, written in simple, clear language, so that the reader can easily comprehend it.

I bless him that God should send him success in all his endeavors, to continue in his holy work, and to author and publish more works in excellent physical health.

And may it be God’s will that he see blessing in the work of his hands, that it be for the sake of God, blessed be He.

Waiting for God’s salvation and mercy,

Shlomo Moshe Amar
Chief Rabbi of Israel

<p>BETH DIN ZEDEK</p> <p>BETH DIN ZEDEK ECCLESIASTICAL JUDICATURE OF THE CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL, INC. 2701 West Howard Street • Chicago, Illinois 60645 773/465-3900 • FAX: 773/465-6632</p> <p>הרב ישראל מאיר קרנו, ראב"ד מילניס RABBI ISRAEL M. KARNO <i>Av Beth Din Emeritus</i></p> <p>הרב חיים דוד ריגנברג, זצ"ל, מייסד הב"ד RABBI C. DAVID REGENSBURG, of blessed memory <i>Founding Av Beth Din</i></p>	<p>בית דין צדק דק"ק שיקגו והגליל דמועצת הרבנים דשיקגו</p> <p style="text-align: right;">בס"ד</p> <p>הרב גדלי' דוב שווארץ, ראב"ד RABBI GEDALIAH DOV SCHWARTZ <i>Av Beth Din</i></p> <p>הרב אלכסנדר מרדכי אברמסון RABBI ALAN M. ABRAMSON <i>Mentor</i></p>
<p>ב' לסדר וארא תשס"ח</p> <p>לכבוד הרב הג' ר' משה ויינר שיחי'</p> <p>אחדשה"ט</p> <p>נתכבדתי לראות ולעיין. בחיבורו הנקרא "ספר שבע מצוות השם". נרשמתי מאד על כל ציוני המקורות שהביא בספרו בבקאות ממקורות הש"ס ומפרשיו. השתלשלות הבעיות היוצאות מכל החומר הנ"ל מראה על עמל המחבר בהשתדלותו לפתח ולפתור אותם. ד' ית' יחזק חילי לאורייתא להמשיך עבודתו הק'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ברגשי ברכה.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p> <p style="text-align: right;">גדלי' דוב שווארץ</p>	

Approbation (free translation)

Monday, Tevet 22, 5768 / December 31, 20'07

To the Respected Rav, the *Ga'on* Rabbi Moshe Weiner,

I was honored to peruse and learn his compilation titled "*Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*." I was deeply impressed by the copious citations in the book, which display a great erudition in the Talmud and its commentaries. The detailed development of issues in the material reflects on the author's tremendous effort to solve them. May God strengthen him in his Torah studies and in continuing his holy work.

With great respect,
 Gedaliah Dov Schwartz
 Head of the Rabbinical Courts,
 Rabbinical Council of America
 and Chicago Rabbinical Council

LETTER FROM RABBI J. IMMANUEL SCHOCHET

Rabbi of Congregation Beth Joseph
Toronto, Canada

Cheshvan, 5768 / October 20'07

The world has undergone a fascinating revolution. For approximately three decades there has been an ever-growing interest in the *Sheva Mitzvot B'nei Noaḥ*, the “Seven Commandments for the Children of Noaḥ,” revealed in the Torah of Moses.¹ A great number of Gentiles throughout the world have committed themselves to observe this universal “Noahide Code.” Many of them are in touch with reliable Rabbis to learn about their religious obligations as “Righteous Gentiles.” Unfortunately, there was very little authoritative material to guide even these Rabbis.

Throughout most of post-Biblical history, the Noahide commandments could not be widely promoted, for the obvious reasons of the restraints of the Jewish exile, especially under the duress of the threats from non-Jewish religions who dominated the governments throughout the Diaspora. These circumstances made it difficult even to apply the comment of Rabbi Yomtov Lipman Heller that if we are ordained to promote observance of the Noahide Code, how much more so then to use friendly persuasion to lead the hearts of all to the Will of their Creator.² With few exceptions, this has led to “neglect” of this important aspect of Torah.

Clearly, these restraints no longer apply, and this has been conducive to the development of the so-called Noahide movement. The search for clear information and guidance, however, is hampered by the lack of precise summaries of a Code for the Noahides. Thus, it is a tremendous merit for the organization *Ask Noah International*, directed by truly pious and responsible Jews, to be inspired to fill this vacuum.

¹ Maimonides, *Hilḥot Melāḥim (Laws of Kings)* 8:10. See also *Hilḥot Milah* 1:6, and the glosses of *Kesef Mishneh* and *Tzafnat Pane'ah*, ad loc.

² *Tosafot Yom-Tov* (Rabbi Yomtov Lipman Heller) on Tractate *Avot* 5:14, see there at length. Cf. *Tosafot*, Tractate *Ḥagigah* 13a, s.v. *ein mosrin*; *Sefer Ḥassidim*, par. 1124; R. Ovadiah Sforno, Commentary on Exodus 19:6; *Shu't Tashbatz* III:133; and *Shu't Ḥatam Sofer*, *Ḥoshen Mishpat*, no. 185. Note also *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* 6:5, and its variant version in *Midrash HaGadol* on Leviticus 5:1.

In November, 20'05, *Ask Noah International* brought together a team of highly qualified Torah-scholars to dedicate themselves to this goal. Rabbi Moshe Weiner of Jerusalem undertook to bring it to fruition. He devoted himself for two years to a thorough in-depth study of the Seven Noahide Commandments and succeeded in composing a historic text in Hebrew, *Sefer Sheva Mitzvot HaShem, Volume I*, in the style and format of the classic *Shulhan Aruh* [Code of Jewish Law], to serve as a guide for the practical application and observance of their detailed laws by Noahide individuals, families and communities. The significance of this project cannot be over-emphasized, as ever more Gentiles seek to follow a lifestyle conforming to the Divine commands incumbent upon them.

Needless to say, this is an extremely sensitive undertaking charged with great responsibilities. Thus, Rabbi Weiner's work, *Sefer Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*, was submitted for review by the world-renowned Rabbinical authority *HaGa'on* Rabbi Zalman Nehemiah Goldberg (may he live for many long and good days), member of the Supreme Rabbinical Court of Israel, who graciously examined the text, adding numerous comments throughout, and granted his approbation.

All the scholars consulted have praised this work as a major achievement, which brings an important but neglected area of Torah to the forefront of Rabbinic attention. They emphasize, though, that it is yet more important to make all people aware of it, in concise and easily readable format, as an authoritative guide for their daily lives. The translators and editor of the English version of the *Sefer Sheva Mitzvot HaShem* are thus bringing the project to its first milestone, which is now serving as the basis for translation into other languages.

Immeasurably great is the merit of all those who are involved with, and supporting, this extra-ordinary endeavor, which no doubt will hasten the fulfillment of the prophetic vision of "the earth will be as filled with knowledge of God as water covering the sea bed" (Isaiah 11:9).

J. Immanuel Schochet
Toronto, Canada

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Appointment of Judges and Enforcement Officers, and the Qualifications Necessary to be a Judge

The Law of a Judge Who Purposefully or Mistakenly Judges Incorrectly

The Jurisdiction of a Noahide Court, and How to Appeal the Decision of a Noahide Court

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

1. *The Noahide Code – a destination of convergent histories*
2. *Some background behind this effort*
3. *How the practical details of the Noahide Code are determined*
4. *How to use this book*
5. *How the past can be uplifted by disseminating this message*

1. The Noahide Code – a destination of convergent histories

1. *Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol Him, all you peoples.*
2. *For His kindness was mighty over us, and the truth of the Lord is everlasting; praise the Lord. (Psalm 117)*

This shortest Psalm consists of only two verses, which together encompass all humanity. Verse 1 encompasses all non-Jews, and verse 2 encompasses all Jews. These are the two intersecting vectors of the image of God within creation, and they are forever joined at a single point of unity, which is the simultaneously transcendent and indwelling Unity of God. This point of unity is not easily seen or felt, and that has been the case throughout most of the tumultuous history of the world. However, at one place, at one time, this point of unity was revealed, openly and miraculously, by our Creator Himself. He chose this in His wisdom, so that all of His children, the human race, could know and believe, remember and take it to heart, until the arrival of the Messianic Era. When that time arrives, it will happen because we will be ready – on God's terms – to receive Him as the King over the entire world. Such a fundamental revelation need only occur once, if it is unquestionably witnessed and recorded, and commanded by God to be preserved for posterity. That revelation took place at Mount Sinai, in the Hebrew year 2448 (1312 B.C.E.¹).

At that time, the voice of God, the Name of God, and the Unity of God were openly revealed. But God, in His wisdom, saw it better to withhold from the individuals of the witnessing nation, the Jewish

¹ B.C.E. is Before the Common Era; C.E. is the Common Era.

people, an ability to continue living with the intensity of the revelation. Instead, He appointed Moses (*Moshe* in Hebrew) as His prophet, to receive and transmit all of His commandments for the future generations (Deut. 21-28). This included the recording of God's encapsulation of His Divine wisdom into written words, which can be absorbed and integrated within the limited human mind. This document, the Five Books of Moses, God called the *Torah*, which means "instruction," and He bequeathed it, along with its explanations, to the Jews as an eternal inheritance (Deut. 33:4). Along with this gift came the entrusting of a great responsibility, because the Torah does not "only" specify the 613 Jewish Commandments (of which the "Ten Commandments" are only a fraction). It also contains the Seven Noahide Commandments for all non-Jews, which God commanded to Noah sixteen generations earlier.

With the ascent of the Jews to nationhood in the Land of Israel, the surrounding nations, and especially the people from those nations who chose to take up residence in the Holy Land, returned to an awareness of the Seven Noahide Commandments. As the Jews encountered national successes and failures over the 440 years preceding the construction of the First Holy Temple by King Solomon, and the 410 years during which it stood, the appeal of the Noahide Code among the surrounding nations waxed and waned.

During the time of the Second Holy Temple (350 B.C.E.-70 C.E.), a large movement of "Heaven Fearers" was active in the Roman Empire. These were Gentile adherents to the One God of Israel, who directed their religious loyalty to the Jewish Sages and the Holy Temple. It is nearly impossible to find any unbiased sources on this subject outside of the Talmud and Midrash, because after the Temple's destruction, these Torah-observant Gentiles became prime targets of the enforcers of the pagan Roman religion, and later of the missionizing activities of innovative new religions that began to challenge the Divinely appointed authority of the Torah tradition. The best non-Torah historical accounts of the "Heaven Fearers" are in the writings of Josephus.²

After the destruction of the Second Temple, and the Diaspora of the Jewish people among nations that were influenced by religions unfriendly to Judaism, it was necessary for the light and the eternal

² Josephus: *The Jewish War* 2:454,463 and 7:45; *Jewish Antiquities* 14:110 and 20:41; *Against Apion* 1:166,167 and 2:282.

promise of the Noahide Code to be preserved and guarded by the Jewish Sages within the writings of the Oral Torah tradition. Their Torah-law rulings and scholarly debates on the Divine obligations of the Gentile world would have been deemed purely academic over the centuries, were it not for the scriptural prophecies of universal peace and return to Torah observance that will occur in the Messianic Era.

Until Rabbi Elijah Benamozegh (18'23-19'00) in France, who used the title "Noahide" for observers of the seven commandments, there were no contemporary writings on the Noahide Code directed to the Gentile world. Although the seventh Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (19'02-19'94), began delivering talks about detailed points of the Noahide Code from the beginning of his leadership in 19'51, it was unexpected when, beginning in the 19'80's, he put forth an urgent calling to the nations of the world to fulfill their seven commandments, and to the Jewish people at all levels to inform and influence Gentiles concerning the importance of this observance.³

2. Some background behind this effort

In response to the Rebbe's call, many Gentiles around the world began to seek information about how to correctly fulfill the precepts of these seven commandments. Also in response to this calling, Mr. Chaim Reisner of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, founded the *Ask Noah* organization in the mid-19'90's. In 19'99, I joined *Ask Noah* to provide Torah-true Noahide outreach, starting as the web master of the web site *asknoah.org*. Since then, these efforts have reached tens of thousands of Gentiles, and growing numbers of Noahide communities.

We soon saw that to fulfill the call for the nations of the world to return to the Noahide commandments, it would be necessary to have organized learning at the local level. We also learned of the Rebbe's efforts for a project to codify the Noahide commandments, in the spirit of the classic *Shulhan Aruh* (Code of Jewish Law). To undertake this ambitious task, Mr. Reisner traveled to Israel in the summer of 20'04, and met with several leading Rabbis and Torah experts, to present them with our plan, and to request their advice. He received positive reactions from each one, as exemplified by this letter from Prof. Nahum Rakover, former Deputy Attorney General of Israel:

³ See *To Perfect the World: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Call to Teach the Noahide Code to All Mankind*, pub. Sichos in English, 20'16.

The Jewish Legal Heritage Society

B"H

תשס"ד-Elul-י"ג
8.31.2004

Mr. Chaim Reisner
Founder, Ask Noah
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Mr. Reisner,

I was very impressed to hear about the projects that you are planning in regard to the Seven Noahide Commandments.

It is very important to produce a "Torah Code of Noahide Law", written by qualified Torah scholars, so Noahides will know their true obligations in detail.

Your other project, to open Torah academies for Noahides to learn about their Mitzvot, sounds very interesting and innovative. The students of these academies will be well acquainted with their obligations, and can become qualified teachers to disseminate the Noahide laws among the nations.

Sincerely,



Prof. Nahum Rakover

With Rabbi Moshe Weiner's acceptance in 20'05 to produce the foundation for this effort, an in-depth codification of the Noahide precepts, the goal became a reality. Volumes I and II of his *Sefer Sheva Mitzvot HaShem* (*The Book of Seven Divine Commandments*),

were compiled in Hebrew during the next two years, with many points of scholarly advice from the renowned Torah authority, Rabbi Zalman Nehemiah Goldberg of Jerusalem. Volume I was published in 20'08, Vol. II was published in 20'09, and Vol. III in 20'12. These are the source texts that Rabbi Weiner used to produce this English edition.

3. How the practical details of the Noahide Code are determined

Gentiles are obligated to fulfill the Seven Noahide Commandments because they are the eternal command of God, transmitted through Moses our teacher in the Torah. Since the explanation of every commandment in the Written Torah is established according to the Oral Torah,⁴ as it was given over through Moses our teacher and transmitted from generation to generation through the Jewish Sages, it can thus be concluded that the rules which guide Torah-law decisions in regard to the 613 Jewish Commandments are the same rules which guide Torah-law decisions for Gentiles, aside from a few exceptions that are explained in this work. Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, or Maimonides, 11'35-12'04) was the first to codify these commandments, albeit in very concise form, and his rulings are known to be based on the same rules that guide the Oral Torah for the Jewish commandments, unless he stated a specific exception. This reasoning is born out by the numerous discussions in the Talmud that deal with the Noahide commandments.

In determining the Torah Law for Gentiles more comprehensively, Rabbi Weiner used the rulings in Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* as the main foundation, since Rambam is the principal Torah-law authority in this area. The importance of Rambam as a primary authority in the precepts of the Jewish people is well known. In the words of Rabbi Yosef Karo (14'88-15'75), author of the *Shulḥan Aruḥ* (the Code of Jewish Law): "For he [Rambam] is the most famous Torah-law authority in the world."⁵ Thus, on any issue for which Rambam differed from only one other Torah-law authority, the opinion that Rabbi Yosef Karo decided upon for his *Shulḥan Aruḥ* was Rambam's.

⁴ See the Introduction by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet to Part I of this work.

⁵ Quoted from Rabbi Yosef Karo's Introduction to his book *Beit Yosef*.

This holds even more so for the precepts of the Noahide commandments, for Rambam is nearly the only *Rishon*⁶ who took responsibility for authoritative teachings in this area. The other well-known classic Rabbinical works, such as *Tur* and *Shulhan Aruh*, did not provide explicit rulings on Torah Law for Gentiles. Instead, we must gather insight from different points that they wrote regarding observance of Torah precepts for Jews, and these in turn imply their opinions about observance of Torah precepts for Gentiles. Therefore, Rambam is the main Torah-law authority whose opinion is to be considered in these matters, and therefore his opinion is given more weight than any other single authority. Still, exceptions can be found, and in *Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*, Rabbi Weiner extensively researched and cited the broad spectrum of Rabbinical sources. In the few cases where a majority of the other *Rishon* authorities and the *Shulhan Aruh* all differ from Rambam, Rabbi Weiner decided the Torah Law according to their teachings, and not according to the opinion of Rambam.

In every case, Rabbi Weiner clearly explained the spectrum of sources, and the basis of his conclusions, in his footnotes for the text of *Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*. There are fewer footnotes in this English edition, and they are abridged, to limit the amount of technical Rabbinical discussion that is not relevant for most readers.

4. How to use this book

This edition has eight Parts; each Part has chapters with numbered topics. For example, “Part I, topic 6:1” refers to topic 1 of Chapter 6 in Part I. The listings of the main precepts in each Part have been edited (especially in Part VIII) to more closely follow the presentation in the book *Tishim Hukim (Ninety Precepts)* by Rabbi Moshe Weiner.

Please note that important information is included in many of the footnotes. Editor’s notes are presented as footnotes marked by an asterisk (*); these include commentary or additional information.

A number of points have been clarified, especially in Part I, Chapter 5, and Part II, Chapters 1 and 3. The Appendix on Torah laws that are specifically relevant for a Pious Gentile or a *Ger Toshav* who lives among Jews will be of particular interest to many people.

⁶ *Rishon* refers to leading Rabbis of 1000-1500 C.E. who succeeded the Talmudic Sages (200-500 C.E.) and Ga’onic Sages (589-1038 C.E.) in transmitting the Torah tradition. (See *Miraculous Journey*, by Rabbi Yosef Eisen.)

To make the citations of Rabbinic sources more meaningful, a nearly complete bibliography for the book has been provided on our Web site, with short historical information on the source texts and their authors.⁷ The sources are generally cited using our transliterations of their Hebrew titles. The exceptions are the citations of section titles in Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, which are translated into English for the benefit of those who wish to look up the citations in a translation of *Mishneh Torah*. For this purpose, these translated titles match, or nearly match, the titles as they appear in the *Mishneh Torah* volumes that have been published in English by Moznaim (Brooklyn, New York; translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger). This series has been a valuable asset for our translation of the topics in *Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*, many of which follow the wording of *Mishneh Torah*.

In Part I, Chapters 1-4 present basic principles of Torah-based faith in the One God. These include acceptance of the truth of the Torah and acknowledgment that Divine rewards accrue from observance of God's will, and that the opposite (God forbid) accrues from deliberate, or sometimes careless, transgressions of His will. Chapters 5-6 and 8-9 present a practical and reliable guide to subjects that are of prime importance in the daily life of pious Gentiles: **Torah Study, Prayer, Moral Conduct, and Repentance.**

A few chapters in this edition are shortened to one page: Chapter 7 in Part I, Chapter 4 in Part II, and Chapter 4 in Part V. This was done because detailed study of those subjects lacks practical relevance in our modern times. Those who are interested in further study are referred to the full chapters in the Second Edition or in the original Hebrew of *Sheva Mitzvot HaShem*. There, Gentiles who are interested will find more material from Torah sources, to learn more about how the general rules of the Noahide Code applied to those subjects, and about additional lessons and moral values that Torah teaches.⁸

Some topics in this book apply to both Jews and Gentiles, but it only comes to teach the Noahide Code. Thus, Jews should not use this text to determine their own obligations, which are more restrictive and numerous. Questions on Torah observance by any individual may be directed to observant Jewish Torah scholars, or sent to *AskNoah.org*.

⁷ <https://asknoah.org/wp-content/uploads/the-divine-code-bibliography.pdf>

⁸ For example, see the reference to the ancient idolatry of *Moleh* (Part II, ch. 4) in the Introduction to Part VI, on the Prohibition of Forbidden Relations.

5. How the past can be uplifted by disseminating this message

Finally, we need to address a point that arises in the minds of many Gentiles who accept and follow the truth of the Noahide Code. This is a question about Divine fairness: what can be said about Gentiles who never had access to awareness and information about the wellsprings of the Noahide Code, which is now finally being disseminated throughout the world? Surely many good people, who did many good deeds, passed on without having had the opportunity to know of, or much less observe, the Seven Noahide Commandments. Did they not deserve the opportunity to receive a portion in the future World to Come through faithful observance of the Noahide Code?

It is fundamentally important to recognize that God is fair and just, and therefore no deserving soul is denied the opportunity to earn a place in the World to Come.⁹ God's ways, including how He accomplishes this, are ultimately inscrutable and beyond the understanding of mortals. However, on such a fundamental question, there must be answers that we can relate to on a practical basis. The growth of the world population has accelerated greatly over the past few hundred years, from 791 million in 17'50, to 3 billion in 19'59, to 8 billion in 20'23. Thus, the world's population at this time, when the Noahide Code is finally being presented openly for all mankind, is surely more than able to contain the reincarnated souls¹⁰ of all good and deserving Gentiles who have lived in the past. This may be God's way to give a soul an extra opportunity it deserves, to make amends and to become righteous.

Therefore, it will be a great service to every soul in the world today if we, together, will make this opportunity known and available. With God's help, through *your* help, we will accomplish this task, and very soon, with the coming of the Messiah, "the occupation of the whole world will be solely to know God,"¹¹ and "the earth will be as filled with knowledge of God as water covering the sea bed."¹²

⁹ For a text that teaches numerous fundamental spiritual topics within Torah as they relate to Gentiles, see *Seven Gates of Righteous Knowledge*, by Rabbi Moshe Weiner, pub. Ask Noah International, 20'17.

¹⁰ See *Soul Searching*, by Yaakov Astor, pub. Targum Press, 20'03.

¹¹ Rambam, *Laws of Kings* 12:5.

¹² Isaiah 11:9.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

by Rabbi Moshe Weiner

The Master of the universe commanded Adam, the first man,¹ on the day of his creation,² as it says (Gen. 2:16), “And the Lord God commanded ‘the man’ (*Adam*) ...” God commanded six precepts to Adam:

- 1) the prohibition against worshiping false gods;
- 2) the prohibition against cursing God's Name;
- 3) the prohibition against murder;
- 4) the prohibition against specific forbidden sexual relations;
- 5) the prohibition against theft;
- 6) the commandment to establish laws and courts of justice.³

The Creator added to these when He commanded Noah⁴ not to eat flesh that was removed from a living animal,⁴ as it says,⁵ “And God blessed Noah, ... But flesh, with its soul in its blood you should not eat.” These seven precepts are called the Seven Commandments for the *B'nei Noah* (“Children of Noah,” i.e. Gentiles, who are non-Jews).⁶

When Moses our teacher was called up on Mount Sinai, he received the Torah's commandments directly from the Holy One, blessed be He, together with their explanations. Moses received the entire Torah from God – both the Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses) and the Oral Torah. The Oral Torah is the explanation of all the commandments, which are very concisely recorded in those Five Books.⁷

¹ Tractate *Sanhedrin* 56b.

² It is explained in Tractate *Sanhedrin* 56b that all of the Noahide Commandments can be exegetically derived from Genesis 2:16, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ...,” which was stated to Adam in the Garden of Eden on the day of his creation; see Tractate *Sanhedrin* 38b.

³ *This includes an obligation for leaders to inform their communities about the Noahide precepts.

⁴ *Before the Flood, mankind was not permitted to kill animals for food or their other needs, nor to cut a limb from a living animal (Part IV, topic 1:1).

⁵ Gen. 9:1,4. This applies to land mammals and birds; see Part IV, Chapter 1.

⁶ Rambam, *Laws of Kings* 9:1.

⁷ Rambam, *Introduction to the Mishneh Torah*.

Included in the Torah, God also repeated and gave to Moses the Seven Commandments for the Children of Noah, along with their explanations and their details.

All the Gentiles of the world were henceforth eternally commanded to accept upon themselves and to fulfill these seven Divine precepts, because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah, and He made known through Moses our teacher that the descendants of Noah had previously been commanded to do them.⁸

These seven commandments have general rules and many details, and all of them are described in the Oral Torah, just as the 613 commandments (*mitzvot* in Hebrew; singular *mitzvah*) that the Jewish people were commanded to observe. The Jewish Sages and the faithful Rabbinical authorities in every generation are commanded to explain the Torah to the rest of the Jewish people. They are also commanded to explain the Noahide commandments to the Gentiles, and to teach them how these seven *mitzvot* should be fulfilled.⁹

We are not to rely on anyone else to provide explanations of any part of Torah, whether for Jews or Gentiles, aside from accepted Jewish Torah scholars, for they alone, as students of the earlier Torah Sages, are the authorities who explain the Oral Torah.¹⁰ (Rambam describes the Torah Sages of the Talmud as “the mainstay of the Oral Torah.”)¹¹

In addition to observing the Seven Noahide Commandments with their many details, a Gentile is commanded to act in the proper ways that human intelligence would compel him, whether these are obligations to God or to other people, or to society as a whole. Even

⁸ Rambam, *Laws of Kings* 8:11.

⁹ *Tosafot*, Tractate *Hagigah* 13a, states that it is an obligation for the Jews to teach and inform the Gentiles of the Seven Noahide Commandments. (Due to the extreme difficulties of the extended Jewish exile, this was not possible in most societies until our recent generations.)

¹⁰ *These are the Jewish Sages and faithful Orthodox Rabbis, whose responsa and teachings may be cited by laypersons.

¹¹ Rambam, *Laws of Rebellious Ones* 1:1. There were no drawn-out differences of opinion until the Supreme Sanhedrin ceased after the destruction of the Second Temple. Until then, a difference arose only about a matter (or a required degree of strictness) that was not received from Moses. When this arose, the Sages debated and established the Torah Law according to the majority in the Supreme Sanhedrin, and it was accepted by the Jewish people.

though Gentiles are not commanded in detail about these parameters of proper conduct, nevertheless, God carefully checks and judges all the ways of every person. There are actions for which the individual or the society is liable to be punished, since such behavior is not appropriate for the human race, even though it is beyond the scope of the Seven Commandments.¹² Societal morality is included in the commandment of “judgments” (*dinim*), by which the Children of Noah were commanded to set up courts of law, and judges who will supervise and warn society about prohibited behaviors. But God will look upon the ways of an individual and judge him for his every action, even if he is not under the jurisdiction of a court of law, or if the court is not able to judge him, or if the court does not know about his behavior.¹³

The purpose of this book is to explain these seven commandments according to Torah principles and Torah Law, including both their general rules and their details, and also the moral obligations that are intellectually incumbent. All of this is in order to teach faithful Gentiles the way of God and the path in which it is proper for them to go, until they will merit through this the distinctions and the spiritual beauty of “the pious of the nations of the world.”¹⁴

¹² *The true specialty of mankind is expressed in Tractate *Avot* 3:14: “He [Rabbi Akiva] used to say: Beloved is man, for he was created in the image [of God]; it is even a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image [of God], as it is stated [Genesis 9:6]: For in the image of God He made man.”

¹³ Tractate *Sanhedrin* 104b relates the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though idol worship and forbidden sexual relations were rampant there, in outright rebellion against God, His decree of their total destruction came because they punished any performer of charity and kindness with torturous execution. Hence it is obvious that God demands moral conduct from mankind, even though it is not explicitly commanded. Ramban on Gen. 6:2 explains why the Generation of the Flood was punished specifically because of theft, even though they violated all their commandments, because of theft is a logical prohibition that no one can negate by saying, “we did not know we were commanded.” In Part I, see topics 3:8-9 and 4:6, and their footnotes.

¹⁴ *These are Gentiles who earn eternal spiritual reward by accepting upon themselves to fulfill the Seven Noahide Commandments and being careful in their observance, specifically because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah, and informed us through Moses our teacher that Noah’s descendants had been previously commanded to fulfill them.

The Basis for Fulfillment of the Noahide Code

Rambam explains in *Laws of Kings* 8:11: "...The Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them [the Seven Noahide Commandments] in the Torah, and informed us through Moses our teacher that Noah's descendants had been previously commanded to fulfill them."

This means that even though Noah's descendants were previously commanded to fulfill them – and this Divine command was not nullified in legal terms, and Gentiles are still obligated by the power of the original commands – nevertheless, there were more details added by God through Moses at the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Clearly, the Noahide Commandments were commanded to Moses, because even though they were commanded previously to Adam and Noah, they were never written down as Torah before Mount Sinai. Their recording in the Written Torah was through Moses, and their explanations and details as transmitted in the Oral Torah were given to Moses, as will be explained.

According to his above-cited ruling, Rambam explains that (a) the descendants of Noah are obligated to observe their Seven Commandments because these were commanded to them by God through Moses, and (b) when the Torah was given by God through Moses, there was a spiritual dimension that He added for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. The explanation of this spiritual dimension of the Noahide Code, which was added by God through Moses at Mount Sinai, is given by Rambam in *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah*, Chapter 8.

Rambam explains that we do not believe in Moses as a prophet because of the miracles he performed, since a prediction and a sign could be accomplished through sorcery, and thus it could be doubted. Rather, we believe in Moses and God's true Torah – against which there will never be a real challenge – based on the true testimony of what the entire Israelite nation saw and heard at God's giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. They all witnessed with absolute surety that Moses heard his prophecies directly as the open speech of God, and that God gave Moses the Torah from Heaven. Therefore, if a subsequent "prophet" arises to challenge, change or nullify any prophecy of Moses, or any part of the Torah of Moses, we can know without any doubt that this person's words are false, as is well explained by Rambam. Therefore, the obligation to keep the Torah's

commandments (the *mitzvot*)¹⁵ is absolutely true, without doubt.

This is not known as a private tradition as were the earlier prophecies up to the time of Mount Sinai. Before the giving of the Torah, it was possible to think that perhaps another prophet could come and contest or deny the prophecy and words of an earlier prophet. Therefore, also in regard to the Seven Noahide Commandments, their existence is not absolute because they were commanded to Adam and Noah personally from God. For it is possible that a later prophet could come and deny any of those commandments, and perform wonders and miracles to show his abilities, and thereby convince others that those earlier commandments had become nullified or changed. Rather, the absolutely true existence of the Noahide commandments, like the rest of the Torah, is only that they were commanded eternally by God Himself at Mount Sinai through Moses, as a true testimony.

Even though the testimony from Mount Sinai was directed to the entire Jewish people who heard and saw it directly, and the Gentile nations did not experience it directly, nevertheless, such a unique testimony to a group of millions of people is impossible to refute, and there never was again any occurrence of public Divine speech to an entire nation. All of the previous and later prophets received private prophecies (see Rambam's *Guide to the Perplexed*, Part II, ch. 35).

According to this, we can understand the words of Rambam in *Laws of Kings* 8:11, that "wise ones" of the Gentiles may be found who are keeping aspects of the Noahide *mitzvot* according to their intellect and their knowledge, or even because of the command to Adam and Noah, but not because these commandments were reiterated and renewed by God at Mount Sinai. As Rambam writes in *Laws of Kings* 9:1, logic and wisdom dictate these precepts; i.e., it is possible to observe them on an intellectual basis without belief in the Divine command, or not because they were commanded to Moses, but rather because they were previously commanded. A Gentile who does so is called "wise," but he is not called "pious" (a "*hassid*" in Hebrew). Rambam teaches that if a Gentile observes these only from an intellectual standpoint, but not

¹⁵ *There are 248 obligations and 365 prohibitions commanded for the Jews, and seven *categories* of prohibitions commanded for the rest of mankind. Beyond these seven categories of prohibitions, there are also fundamental and *universal* positive obligations, including: belief, faith and trust in God; turning to Him for one's needs; and creating a civilized world.

because of God's command to Moses, he will receive reward for his good deeds; but he has not earned a part in the ultimate spiritual reward of the future eternal World to Come, because that is obtained only by virtue of submitting one's actions to the will of God that He revealed in His eternal Torah of Moses, the "Tree of Life."¹⁶

However, the Divine command of the Noahide Code to Adam and Noah stands and has not been nullified on a Torah-law basis, for, as Rambam states in *Laws of Kings* 8:11, Moses informed us in the Torah that the descendants of Noah were previously commanded in them. Moses was commanded that mankind must be informed about this.¹⁷

Therefore, Rambam says clearly in *Laws of Kings* 9:1, "Six precepts were commanded to Adam ... it was added for Noah ...," and these commands still stand. Therefore it is obvious that the primary commanding of the seven Noahide *mitzvot* was to Adam and Noah. Beyond this, God added three new dimensions through Moses:

- (a) The Torah's details of the Noahide commandments that were not revealed before Mount Sinai, as we will now explain.
- (b) Their new strength as absolute and eternal commandments, which did not exist before Mount Sinai, as explained above.
- (c) After Mount Sinai, it is impossible to add, subtract or change any of the Noahide Commandments forever, as will be explained below.

It is obvious that Moses explained the Torah's seven *mitzvot* that are for the Gentiles, and that the details they previously did not know were commanded to them by God with their explanations through Moses, at Mount Sinai. For example, after the Torah was given, a deliberate transgression of a specific Noahide commandment carries liability not only to punishment by God, but also to capital punishment by an

¹⁶ *For observing the Noahide Commandments based only on intellect, a Gentile's reward may be received during his life in this world, or in his after-life after the end of his physical life, or both. The eternal World to Come will begin with the general resurrection of the righteous who attached themselves to the Torah of Moses, which is called God's "Tree of Life" (Prov. 3:11-18).

¹⁷ *This was a direct command from God, in the same sense as (Leviticus 6:1-2): God spoke to Moses, saying, "Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law ..." Thus, no group can validly claim that they may bypass acceptance of the Noahide Code from the Torah because their religion pre-dates Mount Sinai.

“authorized court” (see Part VIII, topic 1:11). But this is not commanded in Genesis as the definitive punishment for transgressions other than murder, in Genesis 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of man ..., his blood shall be shed ...,” which was commanded to Noah.

Another example is the command regarding adulterous relations with a married Jewish woman. This was related in the Torah (Leviticus 18:6) as “*ish ish* ...” (any man), which Tractate *Sanhedrin* 57b explains as including Gentiles in the command prohibiting adultery with a married Jewess. This obligated Gentiles to take care in regard to the many Torah regulations and precepts that determine if a Jewess is considered married, and they have liability before an authorized court for these additional stringencies, even though Gentiles were originally commanded through Adam regarding adultery only as it applies to Gentile marriage. Hence, the cited command in Leviticus is to Gentiles (as a detail of their forbidden sexual relations), as well as to Jews.

These examples prove that the Torah that was given through Moses included the Noahide commandments, and also additional details that had not been commanded up to that point as part of a Noahide Code.

More so, it was also added through Moses for all mankind that the Noahide commandments will not change forever, and there will be no additions or subtractions. Until Moses, it was possible that God would let a prophet know that one of the commandments was nullified, or that a new commandment could be added (as God commanded the additional prohibition to Noah of eating flesh that was severed from a living animal, and He commanded the additional precept of circumcision to Abraham).¹⁸ But once Moses arose as the greatest prophet for

¹⁸ Rambam teaches in *Laws of Kings* 9:1, “Thus, there are seven precepts [which were commanded to Noah]. These remained the same throughout the world until Abraham, who arose and was commanded regarding circumcision, and he also ordained morning prayers. Isaac separated tithes and added a prayer service in the afternoon. Jacob added [a prohibition against eating] the sciatic nerve, and he also ordained evening prayers... Ultimately, Moses came and the Torah was *completed* by him.” Thus, there were additions in the commands of God to His early prophets – first to Noah and then to the three Patriarchs. The Patriarchs also added precepts from their own logic and for their own family, yet they violated no prohibition in doing so. This possibility did not continue after Moses completed the Torah, since also for the Children of Noah, a prophet cannot add anything to the Torah, or create a new commandment or a new religion after Mount Sinai.

all time, and God commanded the precepts of the Torah through him, including the Noahide commandments, no true prophet will ever arise to change, or add to, or subtract from them, forever.

This concept is because of the special status of the “Torah of Moses,” as Rambam describes and explains in *Laws of Foundations of the Torah*, Chapter 9. God sealed the Divine Commandments when He commanded mankind with the giving of the Torah to Moses, and He established that He will never send or command a prophet to alter any one of the Torah’s commandments. This point, which God also commanded to Moses at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 13:1), established the Torah of the Jews as the source for His sealed commandments. This is true also in regard to the Seven Noahide Commandments, but only because of the unique transmittal of His commands to mankind through Moses at the public national revelation at Mount Sinai, as explained above. Without God’s sealing of the Seven Noahide Commandments in the Torah, they would not truly be His eternal word, because of the possibility that they might be changed or added to.

This is the depth of Rambam’s words (*Laws of Kings* 8:11): “Any Gentile who accepts the seven commandments and is careful to observe them is of the ‘pious of the nations of the world’ and will have a portion in the World to Come. **This is so provided that one accepts them and observes them because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah and informed us through Moses our teacher** that the descendants of Noah were originally commanded about them.”

The true cleaving of a person to God can only be in a way that accords with the will of God, Who has given mankind a path of connection to Himself, and to a spiritually higher level of eternal existence that is inconceivable by natural means. This can only be achieved because God Himself, in His unlimited kindness, bestows this possibility to mankind. If one rationalizes the observance of these seven precepts and observes them based only on that reasoning, he may indeed be an intelligent person, and he may do many good deeds. But if one’s observance is based only on human intellect, which is limited, it is definitely not connected with the eternally existing Divine Truth. Therefore, such an approach lacks the essential element of

binding to God's will,¹⁹ and, as the world has seen from tragic experiences, the person who follows that approach will be at increased risk of rationalizing an actual transgression.

Without proper explanation, a person may not automatically appreciate the special blessings that God has made available to mankind, nor how those blessings may be secured in the manner that Rambam shared: "provided that one accepts them and observes them because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah and informed us through Moses our teacher ..." This is an eternal truth that God, in His infinite kindness, gifted to mankind at the event of *Matan Torah* (the "Gift of Torah").

¹⁹ *In the Torah, there are statements by God to Moses, prohibiting Jews to do specific things that are prohibited in a general way for Gentiles. We cite such verses as sources or explanations for details of the Noahide commandments, but these are not intended to imply that Gentiles are commanded about any prohibition that God commanded to the Jews. Thus, particular prohibitions or directives, derived from an explanation on a Torah verse, can be understood as relating to Gentiles as God's will in general. This is the intention in this book – to cite verses from the Hebrew Bible as sources for Torah concepts and to provide their authentic explanations. This is a general point throughout the book, but there are exceptions when a verse actually relates directly to a commandment for Gentiles (see for example Part II, topic 1:1; Part III, topic 1:1; Part IV, topic 1:3). Usually in these cases, the author explains in the main text that this is an explicit scriptural commandment for Gentiles.