

Noahide Commandments

by Rabbi Yoel Schwartz

Translated by Yitzhak A. Oked Sechter

Reviewed and corrected by Yechiel Sitzman in consultation with Rabbi Yoel Schwartz

Introduction

This book deals mainly with the effort of defining the commandments that the non-Jewish nations should fulfill or make an effort to do so. In addition to the seven basic commandments, there are several other active commandments that have not been clarified and explained in depth in the scriptures and subsequent Torah literature. Just the same, according to what is written in the Torah the Talmud and the Midrash, we are able to learn something from the actions of those that existed before the Torah was given to Israel. According to the Talmud (Yomah 28b), the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob upheld more commandments than what the children of Noah were called upon to do. Even commandments that the sages turned into laws many generations later were kept by the Patriarchs.

According to these same sources, Jacob already upheld all of the 613 commandments of Judaism. This is why Jacob's children are no longer called children of Noah but children of Israel. Just the same, we can learn from some of their actions and from their expectations from those that lived during their generation regarding the ways that any person who wants to come closer to G-d and attain spiritual fulfillment, should act.

The matters that we are trying to explain in this book are not in any way an effort to try and establish a new religion. It is rather an attempt to look at the Scriptures and other Torah literature and reach conclusions concerning what a person should do or try to do. Our prayers are that this modest beginning will bring others to write a more complete book and that it should cover a greater scope. In order to help all those among the nations who are looking for ways to come closer to G-d.

Judaism forbids establishing a new religion, as explained by the Rambam (II Kings 10, 5:6-9): "The principle of the matter: You cannot allow them to establish a new religion or to carry out commandments from this knowledge..." Anyway, what we are doing here in connection with the Children of Noah is not the establishment of a new religion. Since a foreigner (Gentile) is not ordered in writing to fulfill them, but only, if by his own free will, he wishes to carry out such commandments as the Rambam wrote: "We are not allowed to stop a child of Noah that seeks to be compensated by fulfilling the (some of those) laws of the Torah (that were only commanded to the Jews)." So it seems that the establishment of a new religion occurs only when a person comes and says that he has been ordered by G-d to fulfill such and such a law and not when he is trying to reach a degree of spiritual perfection by fulfilling the commandments that the children of Israel have been ordered to carry out.

Foreword

On The Importance Of Doing (Fulfilling and Carrying Out)

“We will fulfill and we will hear” (Shabbat 88a).

Here we will try to explain the importance of spiritual fulfillment and its effect on the personality of the person. We will also see why it is not enough to feel this spiritual fulfillment in the heart, but that it must be accompanied by concrete actions. All this has been explained in the Torah and was understood as something quite simple by many intellectuals of the world like Soren Kirkegard (In “A Jew, Who Is He, What Is He?” page 22) who said, “A belief that does not bring in its wake a fulfillment and a change, is a false one. The greatest believer, who carries out his belief with great enthusiasm, but shows no sign of a complete change in his life, proves that his belief is simply part of his own imagination only. The influence and recognition of a belief in a human being depends on the way he carries out his day-to-day life and manages to control and suppress his desires, stops doing evil and the actions he takes to carry this out.”

The Greek philosophers, who did not believe in a practical religion, but believed that human perfection comes from recognizing and studying the truth, believed just the same, that a person must carry out and fulfill deeds that will teach him spiritual perfection: In his Kuzari, Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi thus wrote (Article A, Part A), “Question the truth on the things that you want to know, in order that your brain will act and not be acted upon. Talk to the point and in truthful ways. This will help you seek and recognize the truth. Then you will demand less, be more humble and accumulate good measures.”

The Philosophers did not recognize G-d or the need to act accordingly to His commandments. This is why they believed that human beings can act in any way suitable that will bring them to fulfillment of their goals. Just the same, these intellectuals understood that it was not enough for a person to acquire education and knowledge but that he also needed to carry out and act in order that his internal thinking could turn into a reality. Which is exactly what the Torah tells us to do, and we will bring several examples here.

A) The Precepts (Mitzvot) connected to prayers: These precepts connected to prayers are done through the heart as it is stated in Ta’anit 2, “and to labor for him with all your heart - what is the service of the heart - it is prayer.” Anyway it is not enough to pray from the heart. If a person has some thoughts that stem from his heart but does not utter them out with his lips, then he has not fulfilled the commandment as it is stated in Berachot 20, “Thoughts are not the same as an utterance.”

B) Repentance: The precepts connected to repentance are also connected to the heart: Nevertheless, “A person repenting must confess with his lips and say the things he has decided to do through his heart” (Rambam, Repentance, Chapter 2).

C) Ownership: When ownership is transferred, the most important part in this transaction is that the heart of the original owner agrees with the action. But all of this

is not legal until some sort of action of transference is performed, such as that a deed or legal paper is signed or changes hands or the transfer of ownership done according to the Jewish religion (Halacha). (This includes an action which is accepted as a valid transference of ownership by the society where the transaction is taking place.)

D) Marriage: It is not enough for both sides to agree to marry and to live like a family, but a legal action must also be carried out for this agreement to be formal.

From all these examples we have learned that it is not enough for the heart to tell you to do something. There is a need for some sort of act to carry out the will of the heart. For this reason the spiritual fulfillment of a person is not reached unless it is carried out by action. The belief and the desire to be close to G-d and the actions connected with it must be according to the precepts (Mitzvot) that G-d set forth in the Torah.

There is, sometimes, an opposite process when outside actions (not connected or controlled by the person) influence the internal thinking of a person as it is explained in Sefer Ha'Chinuch #16, explaining why the Torah has so many practical precepts: "Know that a person is governed by his actions. His heart and all his thoughts are influenced by the actions that he is involved in be they good or bad. Even a wicked man whose thoughts are concentrated on doing evil all day, if he should start studying Torah and Mitzvot, even if he is not doing it for G-d's sake, he will start acting in a more positive manner. This is because the heart goes after the deeds. The same holds true, concerning a righteous man, who lives according to the Torah and Mitzvot, but makes a living from dubious transactions, or if for example he is forced by the King or ruler to deal in such dubious matters, he will eventually be transformed from a righteous man to an evil one."

In Mesilat Yesharim (Chapter 7), it is written, "Alacrity is brought about by the internal enthusiasm of a person. But even if a person lacks this internal enthusiasm, he should carry out and do things in an accelerated pace, this will bring about an internal enthusiasm. Since external actions brings about internal ones."

The Rambam, in his commentary to Avot, wrote, "If a person wants to give a certain sum to charity, it is worth while to divide this charity into several portions and give it away at different intervals and not at one time. By doing so, it has a greater effect on a person, than if he would give the sum to charity all at one time. This, despite the fact that to do so, he must invest more time and effort."

The actions of a person should be done in order to fulfill and carry out the commandments of the Creator, since these are the things that elevate a person. As the Maharal from Prague wrote in Tiferet Yisrael (Chapter 4), "The commandments of the Torah can be likened to a rope by which a person is drawn out of a hole or a well. The person is drawn from the lowest levels to the higher levels of the world. The more he does, the more he removes materialism from himself, which then enables him to sit next to the Lord of Hosts."

The meaning of the word Mitzvot in Hebrew comes from the root Unite and Bind. Which means that each mitzvah unites and binds the person to the Creator of the world (see Tanya). In Tanna d'bei Eliyahu (Chapter 9), it is written, "I testify before

heaven and earth, Israel and the nations, man and woman between a servant and handmaiden, the Holy Spirit rests upon a person according to his actions.”

The fulfillment of the commandments in the Torah, builds the character of a person and raises him to a level of perfection, as it is written in Deuteronomy 4:14, “And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances, that *la’asot’chem* – you might do them...” [The Hebrew *la’asot’chem* also means “you shall make (i.e. build) yourselves.”]

This word *la’asotchem* teaches us here that the statutes and ordinances, the mitzvot, build the person and it does not merely mean that a person must carry them out. This is why it is written in this special way. A person must be trained on the way he should build his life, starting from early childhood. Anyone reading books dealing with child-care can find many examples there. But even as a grownup, a person must take a grip on himself, if he wants to “discover himself” and find a real meaning to his life. The Noahide laws are logical. Many intelligent people will even agree that there is a need for them, but this is not enough. We must remember that we must carry out these ordinances and statutes because we have been ordered to do so by the Creator. They were given to Adam and Noah, then again given on Mount Sinai. Part of the Torah was given on Mount Sinai to the Israelites as a Holy Nation of Priests (Exodus 19:2). The remaining part is intended for entire human race. The Rambam wrote in *Melachim-Kings* (8:11),

Every person that agrees to carry out the seven Mitzvot of the children of Noah, and does this in a careful manner, is a righteous gentile, and has part in the world to come, meaning that he carries this out because G-d has ordered him to do so in the Torah, through Moses. But if these seven mitzvot are carried out just because he feels a necessity to do so, then he is not a Ger Toshav (Gentile resident in Israel), nor a righteous gentile or one of its sages.

The Mitzvot have been handed down to us in the form of an order, but just the same we are called to accept them gladly. A person must accept the Mitzvot with love. Despite the hardships in fulfilling them, he must carry them out. This also has an educational value.

A person who wants to do only those good deeds that he feels impelled to perform without being ordered to do so stresses his own importance. He thinks that he is the focus of everything. But when a person decides to carry out the Mitzvot because he has been ordered to by G-d, then he feels the importance of the G-d that orders. It is only then that he manages to discover and find all his hidden powers in order to carry out these mitzvot. These hidden powers cannot be tapped to their utmost if a person carries out the mitzvot simply because he has the sudden urge or mood to do so. This decision is strengthened even more when the person announces it before three learned and wise Jews. This act transforms the person into a Ger Toshav. Even today, when, since all of the Israelites have not yet returned to their land, the laws concerning a Ger Toshav are not applicable – in reference to the special privileges which would otherwise apply to a non-Jew who has made such a declaration – such a declaration made before three observant Jews nevertheless still enhances the status of the non-Jew.

This declaration should include: belief in the principles of the existence of the one true G-d, who is everlasting, the Creator of all things, guides all of his creations, is the One that gave the Torah on Sinai for all of humanity, and oversees all the actions of the human beings to reward and punish them for their deeds. Then the person should state that he is willing to fulfill the seven mitzvot that were given to Noah. (There are some authorities who believe that this announcement should be accompanied by submersing in a pool of at least 660 liters of water, like the sea, spring or a man-made pool built in the earth.)

Commandments Dealing With Matters Between Man and G-d

Introduction

The basis of all commandments is the belief that G-d who is the creator of all things, and capable of doing everything, has commanded us to fulfill them. Habakkuk summed it up by stating that a righteous person shall live through his belief. Also in Chapter 9:23 of Jeremiah it is stated: “But let he who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the L-rd who exercises loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the world: for it is these things that I desire, says the L-rd.”

The Gaon, Rabbi Shmuel Ben Hafni, stated that the important commandment for the people of other nations is the belief that the L-rd our G-d is the Creator and director of the world, that He is actively involved in the lives of every person and that He is One.

The Rambam writing to Rav Hasdai stated: “Quoting from our sages, the righteous people from other nations have a place in the world to come, if they have acquired what they should learn about the Creator.”

In the category of the belief in the one true G-d, the seven commandments to the children of Noah include the prohibitions against worshiping other gods and against blasphemy (which includes professing atheism). There are, of course, many commandments connected with the belief in the one true G-d. They include:

- (a) Loving G-d
- (b) Praying to Him
- (c) Thanking Him for His generosity
- (d) Trusting Him
- (e) Honoring Him
- (f) Sanctifying his Holy Name
- (g) Prohibiting the desecration of his Holy Name
- (h) Moving away from those who do not believe in Him such as atheists, infidels and impious people
- (i) Having a direct relationship with Him, not through any intermediaries. This is why it is forbidden to pray through others to any angels or to the dead or to any person past, present or future!

(a) Loving G-d: Inasmuch as the Israelites were commanded not only to love G-d, but that they should also teach all mankind to love G-d, we see that all people are supposed to love Him. One of the first to do so was Abraham the Patriarch (Sifri Vetchanan), and in the Sefer Mitzvot it says, “This mitzvah [loving G-d] includes that we should call every human being to believe in Him and worship only Him... See to it that you make Him beloved to your fellow men just as your forefather Abraham did.”

(b) Praying to G-d: Noah was punished for not praying so that his fellow men might be saved from the flood. According to the sages (Zohar Leviticus p15b), this is the reason that the flood is named after Noah. However, the destruction of Sodom is another case. This event is not named after Abraham because he did pray to save the people of Sodom before it was destroyed. One type of prayer is a request by a human being to G-d. There is also a thanksgiving prayer that is an important obligation from a person for all the things for which he is thankful such as: his occupation that gives him a livelihood, health, family, etc. and especially if something good has occurred to him personally. This brings us to thanksgiving.

(c) Thanking G-d for His generosity: Again the best example is from Abraham. In the Gemara Sota: 10, Abraham in Beersheva would invite people to eat and drink with him. At the end of the meal he would request from them that they should bless and thank G-d for his generosity.

(d) Trusting in G-d: Joseph was punished by two years being added to his stay in prison because he requested help in getting a prison release from Pharaoh's wine chief instead of putting his full trust in G-d (Genesis Rabbah 29:3).

(e) Honoring G-d: To honor one's father and one's mother is a threshold to honoring the heavenly Creator Father who begat us. One should honor and give credit to all wise Torah teachers and sages, especially those who teach you Torah. He who does not fully honor his Torah teachers dishonors G-d. A person must be very careful in fulfilling this commandment. To give honor to G-d, he must give honor to the Torah and to its wise teachers. Honoring G-d also extends to honoring all of G-d's creations because they are His creations. In particular one should honor elderly persons because these persons have most likely witnessed in their lifetime many instances of G-d's intervention. Through my giving honor to them I am honoring someone who recognizes the greatness of the Creator. The importance of fulfilling oaths and vows made in G-d's name can be understood in the framework of giving honor to G-d.

(f) To be willing to make every effort for the Sanctification of His Holy Name: There are opinions that in some situations, a non-Israelite is even called upon to die as a martyr to protect the honor of G-d (i.e. not to worship other gods). All agree that he must be willing to die rather than to commit murder. The person must know that everything occurring is according to the will of G-d and accept it without complaining against Him. This commandment is part of the previous one.

(g) Prohibition against desecrating G-d's name: This was one of the reasons that the people of Sodom were punished. In this respect a G-d fearing person must be especially careful in the manner in which he conducts himself. If he does not act properly, others will point to him and say. "Look how unethically (or however badly) that person is acting and he is a believer in G-d." This constitutes a desecration of His name in an indirect way.

(h) Not Having Fellowship With Unbelievers and Impious People: Relations with unbelievers are only for the purpose already mentioned before. It is the duty of everyone to ensure that all human beings believe in the one true G-d and do His will. Consequently a person must be extremely careful that he does not bring another person to sin by his association with the ungodly. Psalms 1:1 says. "Happy is the man who has not been walked/followed after the advice of wicked men, who has not stood/lingered on the path of immoral men, and who has not sat [or made his permanent dwelling] with scoffers." This is especially true when participating in religious services where the ritual or sermons, songs or prayers are violating the Torah.

Walking in the Halacha

Faith is *Emunah*, what you believe, while *Halacha* means how you walk or conduct yourself in practice of what you believe. We do the things we do because we are what we are. A man will practice what he believes. If he professes to believe in righteousness, but practices unrighteousness, he is a practical, practicing atheist. "Noah was a righteous man in his generation." "Noah walked with G-d." "Noah found grace in the eyes of G-d" (Genesis 5:8, 6:9).

The Laws of Belief

- (1) It is a commandment (mitzvah) for a human being to believe that there is a creator of the universe, that He is Eternal, the First and Last of everything. He is One, and there is no unity comparable to his or G-d outside Him. His unity cannot be multiplied or divided. He is exclusive in his unity, and there is no other like Him in the universe. There is none other or any other sources that have His power or His capability. All the sources of power and energy in the universe stem and come from Him.
- (2) It is a commandment for a human being to study his belief, and to observe the creation to see and to recognize His greatness. It is written in Isaiah chapter 40, "Lift up your eyes and see Who created these." Similarly he should study history to observe what has happened in time past and present: It is also commanded to observe what has happened in history to see how G-d has been in charge and the One who rules over all events. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the L-RD's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:7-9). "Remember the former things of old; for I am G-d, and there is none else; I am G-d and there is none like me,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10-11). Israel was created by G-d to receive the Torah and give the prophets to a pagan world that had many thousands of gods. Israel’s unique prophetic character is different and separates Israel from all other nations. Israel is the only nation on earth whose entire history was written before it happened. The Jews’ mission against a polytheistic world has had an unbelievable impact against polytheism. Even the atheists say, “There is no G-d.” They do not say, “There are no gods.”

(3) It is appropriate to say aloud what you believe in order to strengthen the conviction in your heart. For example: There is one G-d and His name is One. (Zech. 14:9). There can be no compromise on pronouncing aloud this belief. The Torah concept of G-d does not allow him to have a split personality. It is worthwhile to say different basic concepts of belief toward the one true G-d loudly and clearly, such as the affirmation (Shema Yisrael) “Hear O Israel...” Here are other sentences that are worthwhile repeating at regular intervals, since they are among the basics of belief:

- I believe with a complete belief that the Creator, blessed be His Name, He alone, created and made all the created things. He alone made, is making and will continue to make all things.
- He is One, and there is none other like Him, in no way or manner. He alone is our L-rd in the past, present, and future.
- He does not have body. Nobody can be like Him, and no imagination can detail or describe Him. No picture can depict Him; no image can portray Him. No material can contain His essence. No wood, no stone, no plant, no star nor constellation can be compared to Him.
- G-d is first and last. Of no man can this be said.
- To G-d and G-d alone we should pray (meaning that no use at all of any mediator should be made in a prayer between man and G-d).
- G-d knows all the thoughts and actions of a person. He pays good wages to those who do good while punishing those who do evil. The most significant compensation will be in the next world (after death). There will also be worldwide compensation with the coming of the Messiah. After that, there will be a resurrection of the dead.
- G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people so that they bring merit to all of humanity. This Torah has never changed and will never be changed. Part of this Torah was given to the whole human race. Another part of the Torah was given only to the Israelites. (Every human being can join and be part of Judaism by conversion, but a person is not obligated to do so.) If a person fulfills the commandments of a son or daughter of Noah, then that person will have a part in the world to come.

The Prohibition Against Doing Anything that Contradicts the Belief in One God

- (1) It is prohibited to worship any other god, in any form or matter at all. If a person is forced to do so, he should try as hard as possible not to carry out such a demand. If he is being threatened by death, there are those that believe that he should be willing to die as a martyr if he does so while being witnessed by ten Jews or ten people of other nations who worship only the One true G-d. A person is not allowed to give honor to other gods, to hug or kiss them; to swear by them, to pray to or worship them. He is not allowed to produce an idol so that others can worship it. He is not even allowed to produce it for artistic purposes. He is not allowed to participate in any rites connected with the worship of other gods even if this person is passive and does not take any active participation in it. All this is so that he will not be misunderstood and cause others to sin because of his action. It is the duty of a person to degrade and hold in contempt all other gods or any form of idolatry.
- (2) To deny the existence of G-d is worse than worshipping other gods. Some maintain that this is included in the prohibition of worshipping other gods. Others maintain that it is considered blasphemy since there is no greater insult to the one true G-d than denying his existence.
- (3) It is appropriate to refrain from the following because they too are considered related to the worship of other gods:
 - a. Dealing in magical traits, such as predicting with the aid of a crystal ball, or hypnotizing yourself so that you can predict the future or dealing in black magic or trying to predict the future through other means such as horoscopes or things like that;
 - b. Believing in superstitions, such as bad luck because of a black cat or good or bad luck connected to certain numbers;
 - c. Gathering animals for magic, like hypnotizing them;
 - d. Dealing in spiritualism;
 - e. Trying to communicate with the dead.

The Prohibition Against Insulting or Offending the Honor of G-d

1. The prohibition against cursing G-d by His name or by any other substitute for His name.
2. The prohibition against denouncing G-d or his Torah;
3. The prohibition against asking philosophical questions about what occurred before the creation of the world.

We should only observe what has occurred since the creation and this is so that we can try to realize and grasp the greatness of the one true G-d as we have already previously mentioned;

4. It is prohibited to interbreed animals or plants that are not of the same species.
5. It is prohibited to take on or initiate a new religion. But Noahides, fulfilling the seven commandments (mitzvot), are not taking on a new religion since these seven commandments are mentioned in the Torah. Noahides may perform commandments that were given specifically to the Jews in the hope that they will be rewarded for them, provided that they don't consider these actions obligatory. It is also important to note that according to some opinions there are some commandments that Noahides should not fulfill because they are connected with holiness and given specifically to Israel. These are the commandments of Tefillin and mezuzah. All agree that the child of Noah should not observe the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as Shabbat, as given to Israel as a day of rest, but it is appropriate for him to inculcate the message of the Shabbat, as will be explained further on. It is important to study the laws of the Torah that apply to Noahides. However they are prohibited from studying those parts of the Torah that don't apply to them. This refers mainly to the oral law (Talmud, Rambam etc.) but also when reading the Bible it is better to skip those laws that don't apply to them.

Explanations

According to Rabbinic literature, G-d does not want people to question matters connected with that which existed before the creation. As creatures in creation, we can only comprehend G-d in and through creation as Creator. "When I consider the heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; [I think:] What is man that You are mindful of him" (Psalm 8:3). Only the Torah existed before creation. David declared in Psalm 119: "Your word, O G-d is from everlasting to everlasting." "With Hashem's word the heavens were made, and all the heavenly hosts [were fashioned] with the breath of His mouth" (Psalms 33:6).

Genetic engineering is a delicate subject. There is room to postulate that engaging in some kinds of genetic engineering constitutes a violation of the prohibition to crossbreed. Since the prohibition of crossbreeding does not include hybrid breeding of plants and animals and breeding to develop a hybrid within a species of like kind the same can be said regarding some kinds of genetic engineering.

Even if it is permitted, those dealing in this field must be careful that through this work they will not feel that they are capable of divorcing themselves from G-d and His creation, that scientists will not feel that they are capable of creating independently from G-d, like Adam in his first sin.

Commandments Concerning Honoring G-d

1. A PERSON MUST HONOR G-D AND HIS TORAH, including the sages, teachers of Torah, elderly person, holy books, holy places like houses of prayer and cemeteries where (tzadikim) are buried. If a person makes a vow in G-d's name, he must fulfill his oath. If he does not make the vow in G-d's name but pledges to do something for someone else, he must fulfill it. It seems that if he made the oath to himself or concerning only himself it is also appropriate that he fulfill his vow. In doing so, he honors himself. A person

who makes a vow to himself in the name of G-d is honoring G-d by fulfilling it. If a person makes a pledge to a fellow man, he must fulfill it since it is in the category of civil laws that are incumbent on Noahides. By not fulfilling pledges, vows, oaths and covenants, one dishonors G-d, Torah and himself.

2. Before performing any work, or whatever, it is suitable for a person to say that he will do this thing with G-d's help, in order that he will remember that all of his successes are derived and come to him only through G-d.
3. A Noahide, to fulfill the seven commandments, should strive to learn carefully and seriously all his obligations concerning all the seven commandments of the children of Noah. If there is a problem, or if the person does not know exactly how to fulfill a certain obligation as a Noahide, he should turn to a Jewish Torah authority who is acquainted with the subject matter to make a decision on the issue or question. Any learned Jew can teach non-Jews only if he himself is a Torah observant Jew. He must believe that God gave Moses the written law and also the oral law. He must observe Shabbat and Kashrut and the other Mitzvot.

Prayers

Noahides are not commanded to have formal prayers. It should be left to the individual how, what, and when he will pray. Prayer is permitted, but not commanded. There are several types of prayers; requests, recognition of G-d's grandeur, thanksgiving to Him for good things that He has done for a person and strengthening ones faith, as it is stated in many places in the book of Psalms. It is advisable to turn toward the direction of Eretz Yisrael, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount when praying.

A Siddur for Bnei No'ach should be established for these who wish to have guidance in prayer. Below are some suggestions for formal prayer that might be included in a Bnei Noah Siddur:

1. Regular prayers might be said everyday that could include a statement saying, "Know today, and place it on your heart, that Hashem is the L-rd in the heavens above and on the earth below -- there is nothing else." Also he might recite the affirmation, "Hear O Israel..."
2. Prayer in time of emergency or danger: A person who finds himself in danger should recite an appropriate chapter from the book of Psalms, for example, chapter 20. If the emergency is due to illness, chapter 103. If he needs to strengthen his belief in G-d so as to receive His help, chapter 121.
3. A Prayer of Thanksgiving: Psalms, chapter 107 or chapter 136. In the Standing Prayer emphasize, "and all the living will give thanks to You forever, selah."
4. Special prayers during holidays: It is worthwhile to pray for world peace. When saying such a prayer, one might add, "G-d of the world, give peace to

the world, thereby allowing all living creatures that You created to enjoy all of your blessings.” On the Sabbath one should recite from the book of Psalms, chapters 92 and 104.

5. Blessing before or after the meal: It is worthwhile that after the main meal of the day (whether at noon or in the evening) a Noahide should wash his hands if they have become soiled during the meal (before the meal there is no command for the Noahide to wash his hands in a ritual matter as do the Jews. This is specifically a Jewish practice. It is, however, necessary to wash them for sanitary purposes.) and utter a blessing of thanksgiving to Hashem for the good that He has given to him. It can be something like this: “Blessed are You, King of the Universe, Who feeds the whole world with His goodness, pleasantness, grace and mercy. He gives bread to all flesh and the world is full of His mercy. Due to his great goodness, we have never lacked and will never be in need of food forever. His great Name feeds and gives everyone his livelihood, does good to everyone, and prepares food for all those that he has created.” A person can, of course, change this, especially if some good things have occurred to him lately. Each person who chooses to say this prayer should do so individually (as opposed to having one person say it for all). Clearly, these prayers are to be directed solely to Hashem, and not to any intermediary.
6. Repentance: A Noahide who has sinned against G-d or his fellow man must repent and be sorry for what he has done. He must undertake that he will not commit this sin again. He should make a personal prayer to G-d, requesting mercy. If he has hurt a fellow person, or if he has done damage to that person’s property, he must compensate him, as the people of Nineveh compensated each other, and he must request that person’s forgiveness.

Prohibition Against Influencing Others to Sin

There is a prohibition against causing another person to err or commit sin as Pharaoh accused Abraham (Genesis 20:9) and the same concerning Avimelech who accused Isaac (Genesis 26:10).

In accordance with this, people should conduct themselves with modesty so as not to bring others to sin. In particular, women should apply this to their mode of dress and behavior.

Holidays

Sabbath

A Noahide should not observe the Shabbat in the manner that a Jew does. Nor should he make a point of abstaining from hard physical work on the Shabbat. A Noahide should not give occasion for a Jew to break the Shabbat.

There are those who say that every Ger Toshav (a non-Jew living in Eretz Yisrael in the time of the Jewish Temple, who has formally accepted the obligation to observe

the Noahide laws in front of a Jewish court) has to uphold and keep the Sabbath (Rashi, Kritot 9, Yevamot 40). There is room to suggest that the Noahides, even nowadays, by accepting to fulfill the seven commandments, are in the same category as a Ger Toshav and should, according to Rashi, be required or at least allowed to keep the Shabbat.

So I (Rav Schwartz) would like to suggest that this is the way that the Noahides could celebrate the Seventh Day, a day of refraining from his vocation. On the eve of the Sabbath (Friday night), they might have a festive family dinner with special food and light candles after sundown in honor of the Seventh Day, which was given to Adam and Noah (and to make the Noahide celebration of the Shabbat distinct from the Jewish Shabbat observance). During the meal they may sing songs to strengthen their belief, including songs about the creation. They may read from the Torah. They should not call this day the Sabbath, but the Seventh Day as it is written in Genesis.

On the Seventh Day itself, if they can arrange it without difficulty, they should refrain from going to work. If possible, they should go out to the fields or a park so as to feel close to the Creator of the world. If the congregation holds a prayer session, they may recite the Psalms connected to the Sabbath and to the creation (like Psalm 104). Also they should study portions of the Torah connected to commandments of the children of Noah. They can study from the weekly portion of the Torah being read that Sabbath in the synagogues those subjects which concern all mankind and skipping those topics that concern specifically the Jews.

At the end of the Sabbath (Motzai Shabbat), the end of the Seventh Day and the beginning of the new week, they can recite the prayer for the new week (Havdalah) after having lit a havdalah candle, to thank G-d for having taught Adam how to make fire, which is the source of all energy that enabled man to make changes in this world. This Havdalah prayer, that separates the Seventh Day from the beginning of the week, can be recited as a Noahide wishes and can go something like this.

Blessed are you our G-d, King of the Universe, Who differentiates between darkness and light, between day and night, between the seventh day from the first day of the week, between the clean and the unclean, between the sacred and secular, between holy days and regular days, between Israel and the rest of the nations, who together are partners in one holy objective, to make Your Name holy in this world. AMEN.

Rosh Hashanah

Which is the first day of Tishrei is a day of reckoning for the whole world. The first day of Rosh Hashanah should be a day of repentance and deep inner thought about what a person has done during the past year. A Noahide should recite a prayer requesting that all the people of the world will accept and recognize the truth concerning the one true G-d. A Noahide can recite certain prayers from the Rosh Hashanah prayer book.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is a day of repentance. While it is not a Noahide fast, repentance is a Noahide necessity.

Succot (Feast of Tabernacles)

It is stated in the book of Zechariah that after the Temple is restored, during the holiday of Succoth all the nations of the world will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow down before G-d. Zechariah 14:1-21 states:

And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which come against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the L-rd of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the L-rd of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, which with which the L-rd will smite the nations that come not up to keep this feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses Holiness Unto the L-rd; and the pots in the L-rd's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the L-rd of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and boil them; and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the L-rd of hosts.

It is worthwhile for a person to take his vacation during this time. By doing so, a Noahide can use this free time to study, to observe nature and to meet with fellow Noahides for mutual prayer with emphasis on world peace just as Israelites did when the Temple existed and, as sacrifices were made for the welfare of all the nations, to pray for the coming of the Messiah who will amend the ways of the world.

Hanukah

Noahides are called to celebrate the victory of Judaism over Hellenism since this victory showed the world the strength of the Israelite's belief in the one true G-d, their true devotion and dedication in keeping the Torah and its commandments. It is also a time of special prayer for the restoration of the Tabernacle, the Temple and divine worship.

Passover

Passover is the first emancipation proclamation. It is advised that Noahides during this holiday should put a special stress on freedom for all humans. Although we do find slavery in the Torah, we must remember that the slavery mentioned there is a humane slavery. If one has a slave, then be a merciful master. Thoroughly cleaning ("spring cleaning") the house before this holiday would be a reminder of the slave labor of the Jews in Egypt. It also brings to mind the benefit that the exodus from Egypt brought to the world, a cleansing from the bad habits of mankind. On the eve of the first day of Passover, it is suggested that Noahides hold a festive meal with matzo and wine in honor of freedom.

Shavuot

Holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah. On this day there was a divine revelation and the human race acquired the Torah through it. It is a day that should be set aside for the study of Torah and the Noahide commandments.

Commandments Dealing with Personal Matters

The purpose of the commandments is to correct the character traits of a person so that he can become closer G-d. Rabbi Abba Shaul in the Talmud explained a verse (Exodus 14, 2) as stating that we are to emulate those traits that G-d has revealed to us as being the principles that he uses in running the world. Rabbi Nissim Gaon in the preface to his commentary on the Talmud and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in his responsa (Igrot Moshe, Yorah Deah vol. 2, chap. 130) wrote that all people are obligated to do all those things which are in the categories of ethics and proper character traits even though these actions are not specifically mentioned as being commanded.

Though the commandments have been divided into the two categories of between man and G-d and between man and his fellow, this distinction is an artificial one. This is because all commandments between a person and his fellow are also commandments between a person and G-d inasmuch as He has also commanded them.

Concerning Food

The people of the nations are not limited in the food they are allowed to eat, except the eating of living flesh or the flesh and blood of a human being. There are also those authorities who are of the opinion that a Noahide should not eat the flesh of a dead animal unless killed for the specific purpose of eating its flesh.

These are the main points to the Jewish law (Halachah): This ritual law requires that the animal be slaughtered by severing the trachea and carotid artery in one stroke. This causes the least possible suffering to the animal. The animal must be totally dead with all muscular and nerve flexing abated before one would be permitted to eat it. The lungs must be checked to determine that the animal was not afflicted with certain illnesses that would cause fatality according to the guidelines of the Jewish law.

Animals for eating

The people of other nations are allowed to eat all kinds of animals. Though there is a difference even for non-Jews between kosher and not kosher species, this is mainly regarding the sacrificial ritual and not for eating purposes.

[Why is it permitted for Noahides to eat any kind of animal whereas all animals were prohibited to Adam? It is written (Bereshit 9:3), "Every living thing that moves upon the earth shall be (as) food for you." Every living thing that moves includes cattle, beasts, birds, and even the fish of the sea. All of these are called "living things that move" (Ramban). Meat, which was prohibited to Adam, was permitted to Noah because (a) it was because of him and for his needs that G-d spared the animals; were it not for man they would not have been spared (cf. 6:7); (b) he toiled over them and attended to their needs in the ark. Of him it is said (Psalms 128:2): "You shall eat from the toil of your hands." He had thus acquired rights over them (Or HaChayim). "They were saved in an ark which you toiled to build; i.e. their salvation came through you; they are therefore yours to do with as you please like the green herbs of the field" (Bechor Shor; Chizkuni). "As the green herbage I have given you everything." Though I permitted only herbage, but not flesh, to Adam, I give you the same right to everything that he had for herbage" (Rashi). R' Bachya and Chizkuni

comment that the comparison to green herbage is noteworthy: Lest one think that everything was permitted, G-d qualified His permission by comparing it to herbage. Just as some herbs are beneficial to man while others are unfit for food and even poisonous, so among the animals and birds there are those that are permitted by the Torah and those that are prohibited (see comm. of Chavel to his ed. of R' Bachya). This explains why, in spite of the general permission which was granted to Noah to consume meat, it is important that the Noahide not eat meat taken from a living animal, and the Jew eat only certain species slaughtered according to the Jewish law. Malbim explains that it is logical and desirable for a lower form of life to be eaten and absorbed into a higher form. Therefore, animals eat plant life, thus elevating it, and humans eat animals, elevating them to become part of intelligent man. (O that man would be intelligent!)]

Flesh from the living

It is prohibited to eat meat that has been cut or torn off from a living creature, even from a dead animal, if the flesh was cut off when the animal was still alive or when it was on the verge of dying and not slaughtered according to Jewish law. If it was slaughtered by cutting its neck and not slaughtered by a Jew according to Jewish law, many of its parts are considered to have been cut from a living animal and are therefore forbidden. This refers to all parts that are attached to the trachea and the esophagus and includes the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines.

There are various methods used for killing the animals that are intended for human consumption. Some of them present no problem but others would call into question the permissibility of eating the above-mentioned organs. One should therefore either not eat those organs, verify that the method which was used to kill the animal was not by cutting its neck or, (and this is the most practical suggestion) only purchase the meat of such organs if it has been slaughtered by a Jew according to Jewish law-i.e. that is certified as kosher.

Nearly all the meat for human consumption today comes from animals that have been killed for eating. However some slaughterhouses detach parts of the body before the animal has stopped flexing its limbs. If a Noahide is not sure about the source of the meat, it is advised that he buy the meat from a person whom he can trust such as a fellow Noahide. If a Noahide wants to remove all doubt, it is possible for him to buy kosher meat with a kosher label from a recognized Rabbinical organization. These rules of flesh from the living hold only toward animals and birds that have warm blood. It does not hold toward reptiles, creeping creatures and fish

Flesh from the living is mixed with other meat

It is prohibited to eat meat that has been mixed with flesh from the living, whether it was done on purpose or not, even if cooked, broiled or added to a soup or any other type of drink.

Naturalist

The consumption of food should be mainly for health value. It is worthwhile though that a person should enjoy the food he eats since then the food is digested properly. There is also a spiritual value. If there is plenty of food on the table and it tastes good, a person feels and recognizes the grace of G-d. Food should be consumed to be

healthy and not just for enjoyment. Therefore a person must ensure his good health in everything that is connected with his diet. This includes a naturalist.

Vegetarianism

It is not good for a person to be a total vegetarian if he is doing so because he is trying to be merciful toward animals. There is a danger that such a person will feel that he has fulfilled his duty and will become unmerciful toward other species, including human beings. In his book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler, the biggest criminal of the human race, said that he used to feed rats because he felt sorry for them. Of course, doctors have proven that it is not necessary to be excessive in the consumption of meat so as to remain healthy. Human teeth were created like those of an animal that eats vegetables and fruits. Adam was prohibited from eating meat. Only during the time of Noah was this prohibition lifted. This is because Noah saved animals from the flood and was allowed after that to eat meat. The Torah not only permits, but advises man to eat meat so that he recognize the difference between man and animal. Rabbi Abraham Issac HaCohain Kook explained it in this way: “The Torah commanded us to eat meat for by doing so we realize that G-d gave us guidelines that teach us to be careful not to cause needless injury to other members of creation. If we are careful for these other members of creation, then we will be doubly sure of being careful in our daily contact with the crown of creation, which is mankind”.

Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages

A person should drink alcoholic beverages in moderation. To a Noahide it is enough to remind him of the sad story of Noah and the effects of his drunkenness after he planted a vineyard. A person who is an alcoholic should avoid use of alcohol.

Keeping Healthy

A person should not indulge in things that are hazardous to his life and health. According to Genesis 9: 5, a person is not allowed to commit suicide. From this we can learn that anything unhealthy is prohibited. This includes smoking, narcotics, alcohol abuse, gluttony, exposing oneself to AIDS or other sexual diseases, driving when sleepy and taking unnecessary risks such as dangerous trips or pastimes. On the other hand a person can undertake dangerous professions, like building houses or picking fruits from tall trees because he is doing these things to build a better world and to find a livelihood for himself and his family.

Ethical Behavior and Moral Values

1. A person should strive for better ethical and moral values. He should be merciful and should not harm animals unless it is for the benefit of humans, such as food, medical experiments and for work. Hunting just for sport and not to eat the animal's flesh or use its fur, is seen as cruelty to an animal and is inappropriate. A person must also be merciful and just toward his employees and servants. He is not allowed to overwork or bring grief to his servants. According to the Rambam (Avadim 9:3), “A person must first feed his animals and servants before he sits to eat his own meal.”

2. A person should strive not to be extreme in any character trait. For example, he should not be stingy; on the other hand, he should not overspend.

3. A person should strive to be humble. As Abraham said about himself, “and I am just dirt and ashes” (Genesis 18: 2 7)

4. A person should strive to be truthful except in instances that the truth can bring harm to himself or others. An example is Abraham in the book of Genesis who said that his wife was his sister so that he would not be killed. In his defense, there was truth in his saying that she is his sister since his father was also her ancestor. Abraham was Sarah’s uncle!

It is also permissible to change wording to preserve peace, but one must still be very careful about what he says. If the truth can bring harm, then it is not the truth. If the truth is harmful or shameful to the innocent, it should not be repeated. However, one should try not to lie to conceal the truth even for a good reason. He can simply refuse to comment or respond. Instead of saying, “I do not know” when you do know, say rather, “I cannot say,” or “I have no comment.” In explanation of this, the sages teach that when God wanted to create man, the angels were split on this issue. There were those who requested that G-d should not create man since mankind finds it difficult to say the truth, and their peace is full of disputes and fights. On the other hand, the angels that represented justice, grace, goodness, love, mercy, charity and benevolence called on G-d to create man. G-d threw truth to the ground, but not peace. From this the sages learned that truth that brings destruction and does not build is not truth. Thus a person is allowed to change his wording to bring peace.

5. A person must be grateful to whoever was kind and good to him. Joseph in his confrontation with Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39: 9) explains his loyalty to a person that has been good to him which is reason enough not to sin, not to mention, that G-d also forbids it. Therefore a person must also honor his parents. One that disgraces his parents is liable to be punished.

6. Protecting the ecology is very important as long as it does not endanger human life.

7. A person should not be jealous. Cain killed Abel because of jealousy. In Pirkey Avot (4:20) it says that, “jealousy, lust and pursuit of honor remove a man from this world.”

8. A person should be modest and chaste in his clothing. One of the sins which brought about the flood was that the people of that time wore clothing which left inappropriate portions of the body exposed. He should be dressed appropriately for the occasion, be clean but not too conspicuous. According to Rashi, among the reasons that Jacob told his sons to go down to Egypt, (Genesis 42:1) was so that they would not be conspicuous in appearing as if the famine didn’t concern them. From this we learn that a person should not be ostentatious, neither regarding himself nor his deeds.

9. A person should work even if he is financially well off. Agriculture is recommended since it brings him closer to G-d as he realizes that his welfare is dependent upon the rain that is in His hands. Today, agricultural work is not as it used to be, so if he tries to find another work he should look for something that will have a minimal danger of temptation and bring positive results.

10. A person should strive to be a peacemaker amongst the nations of the world and between fellow men. Rashi, in his commentary to Genesis 11:9, brings some sayings of the sages who explain why the generation of the tower of Babel, whose sins were worse than the sins of the generation of the flood, was punished less severely than the generation of the flood was punished. The reason is that there was love and peace among the generation of the tower. This goes to show to what high esteem G-d holds those who love peace.

Arts

The arts help develop creativeness in a person, and this is positive and productive when used in the right way. This means that a person should be allowed to deal in the arts if it will encourage the development of good values and morality and not the opposite. For example, if a person deals in arts that are connected with pornography, he is dealing in negative matters. The same holds true in arts that encourage violence or harm to other human beings or laughter and ridicule of those persons who are less fortunate than others, not to speak of pseudo-scientific literature that speaks against the belief in the one true G-d and His Torah. On the other hand, if a person is gifted and uses this gift by producing beautiful things that bring honor to G-d, he is fulfilling G-d's wish.

Pastime and Recreation

A person needs rest, but he should use this period of rest for the benefit of his physical and mental health. A person should not use his free time to engage in idle talk or matters that can bring him to sin. What a person does when he or she is away from home and among strangers decides that person's real character.

Working For A Living

1. Work as a moral value:

- G-d encouraged work to help mankind, as a moral value and in partnership in the work of the creations.

2. Restrictions in Agriculture

- It is recommended to not castrate men or animals because there was a great rabbi who was of the opinion that Noahides have taken upon themselves not to do this.
- It is forbidden to crossbreed animals and trees that are not of the same species. Breeding within a species in either the plant or animal kingdoms is permitted. It is permitted (even for Jews) to use and eat both animals and trees that were produced through forbidden crossbreeding.

- (Nowadays there are many things that can be done through genetic engineering. It may be that this is in the category of the prohibition of crossbreeding. One of the reasons given for the prohibition to crossbreed
- is that doing so implies disrespect for G-d's handiwork. It is as if one is declaring that those species that He created in His world are not enough.
- Though genetic engineering is not necessarily doing this, it may still imply a lack of respect for the Creator because it implies that the order of His creation is not good enough and is an attempt by man to improve on it. On the other hand there is no denying that man does have the right to try to improve a species and possibly genetic engineering is no different.)

3. A person should work as much as he can.

- This is true especially if he is a hired worker. This is true even if he is self-employed. We can learn this from Jacob who told the shepherds whom he met (Genesis 29:7), that they should not stop work at high noon.

4. Being a Faithful Worker

Jacob told his wives that he had worked with all his power under the employ of their father. A person should work in honesty and move away from dishonest ventures.

Studying Science

There is value in studying science, especially since this enables a person to recognize the greatness of G-d and to better the creation for the benefit of society. All this is under the condition that it be done in a proper manner and not by unbelievers who want to liberate themselves or take over the world from G-d, which was the first sin made by a man.

1. Healing with the aid of Doctors and Medicines

- As it is stated in Exodus that a doctor should heal, our sages learned that a person who can heal his fellow human being should do so, that a sick person must go to a doctor to be healed. The important point here is that he should not rely on doctors alone, but in G-d who is the true doctor. The person should make an effort to get well.

2. Transplanting of Organs

- This is allowed to save the life of a person as long as the life of another person is not shortened so as to withdraw organs from him.

3. Unnecessary Dangers

- A person should be careful about medical treatment and medicines so as not to fall into unnecessary dangers like a dangerous plastic surgery that can have serious effects on the health of a person. If the dangerous surgery or treatment is being carried out to try to save the person's life, then it is allowed.

4. The Purposes of Medical Treatments

- The main purpose is to increase the life span of a person and to prevent suffering, to increase fertility, but not to increase the pleasure of a person. It is prohibited to cause abortion without the medical reason of saving the life of the pregnant woman. (As it is not certain that a Noahide is permitted to perform an abortion even in such a situation, one should try to find a Jewish doctor to do it.)
- A doctor is not allowed to stop the suffering of his patient by shortening his life.

5. Medical Experiments

- If such experiments endanger the life of the patient, but there is a chance that it can save his life, it is allowed. However, there is a need for the approval of the patient. It is not enough to request the permission of the family. It is also may be allowed if the experiment might help a terminal patient who otherwise will die. A rabbi who is an expert in Jewish law should be consulted before doing such a thing.
- If the experiment cannot endanger the patient, it is worthwhile to receive the patient's approval because there might be some side effects, or it might endanger him later.

Patriotism

A person should be faithful to his country and leader. A person should not only pray for the welfare of his country but for all the world and humanity. It is forbidden to evade paying taxes and customs. Tax evasion is not to be confused with tax avoidance. Tax evasion is criminal. However, one is allowed to avoid paying taxes by using all possible deductions, depreciation, amortization and transfers of properties to heirs before death to avoid taxation. It is legal and should be pursued.

Vows, Oaths and Pledges

A pledge is a positive mild commitment, "If I can, I will." It is a matter of conscience and ability to fulfill. It is probably appropriate that it should be fulfilled.

A vow is a commitment made to someone else. It should be fulfilled because of the obligation to abide by the laws of interpersonal relationships.

An oath is an unconditional commitment. When undertaken in the name of G-d it must be honored because of one's duty to respect G-d. Abraham made Eliezer place his hand under his thigh and swear by an oath (Genesis 23:2-3). A person must keep all vows, and oaths he made, especially if he has promised to give alms to the needy or a sacrifice to G-d.

Commandments Dealing with Matters Between Man and His Fellow

The Prohibition Against Murder

Every man must safeguard the most important deposit given in the custody of humanity, the lives of human beings, be it his own life or that of others. It is therefore prohibited for a person to endanger himself and, even more so, others. He should be careful to guard his own health and that of society and not do those things that are likely to cause harm like driving with excessive speed, etc.

A person is prohibited from murdering any person, adult or child, man or woman and even the fetus in a womb. However, abortion is allowed if it will save the life of the mother.

It is prohibited to kill a sick person although he is dying of a terminal disease, and there is no possibility of saving his life and even if the patient himself requests to die. Taking organs from such a person while he is still alive, although it may save another person's life, is also prohibited. If it is known that there is no chance of saving life, there is no need to prolong suffering by artificial means since the patient is dying anyway. However, we are not allowed to cut off the equipment that allows the dying person to breathe directly.

It is forbidden to kill a criminal before he is brought to trial and sentenced by a court. A person is not allowed to commit suicide or to shorten his own life in any way. If he is being forced to commit idol worship, he is allowed to commit suicide to sanctify the name of G-d. If a person is being forced to kill another person or be killed, he is still not allowed to kill others. However, if the killers are demanding that one person be handed over to them or they will kill everyone, it is allowed to hand over that one person to save the lives of all the others. However, in the case of terrorists, it should be considered that such demands by terrorists have only proven to encourage the killers to take more hostages and kill more people.

If a person is running after you or chasing you to do you harm but not to kill you, then you are not allowed to kill him. However, if his purpose is to kill, and you have no other way in which to save your life but to kill him, you are allowed to do so in self-defense. But if there is any other way that you can save your life, perhaps by injuring him just enough to stop him from chasing you, then you are not allowed to kill him. If you do slay the murderer, you are guiltless and may save other people's lives whom the murderer might otherwise kill later. Thus if the killing is to save your life or someone else's life, you are allowed to kill him. It is even a mitzvah to do so as

Abraham went out to war to save Lot, his nephew and others. Here Abraham was saving life, not killing one who is trying to kill him.

It is prohibited to declare war on another nation since you will be involved in killing and you are endangering the lives of your people too. You are allowed to go out to war if you are being attacked. You are allowed to kill the attackers, but you are not allowed to kill prisoners of war if they are no longer endangering life.

Prohibition Against Spoil, Plunder, and Harming the Rights of Others

Embarrassing

A person is not allowed to insult or injure the reputation of another person in public. It is better that he be thrown into a burning fire rather than to embarrass someone else. An example is Tamar who avoided publicly shaming Judah even though she had been sentenced to be burnt. Tamar was a child of Noah.

Hitting another person

It is prohibited to hit another person or to injure him. Parents or teachers are allowed to hit their children to discipline them and in self-protection. You are also permitted to fight back if you are attacked.

Property, Goods and possessions of others

It is prohibited to cause damage to such things. If a person is given such a possession to safeguard or for any other reason even if it is worthless, it must be returned to its legal owner. You cannot keep it. A person is also not allowed to cheat on taxes.

Returning lost property

When a country has laws concerning the return of lost property, then such goods must be handed over to the rightful owner.

Prohibition against cheating in business and weights

A person is not only prohibited from doing so, but he must make every effort to protect his credibility by carrying out his business transactions in the most honest and honorable way possible.

Coveting other person's property

This means property, money or anything belonging to another. It is prohibited to covet belongings of another, which means to scheme to acquire them by illegal methods against the will of the present owner. It is forbidden to sue for damages against any individual, company or government when there was no real damage done or for an exorbitant proportion.

Bribery

It is prohibited to give or accept bribes. Sometimes one may find himself in circumstances that cause him to pay a bribe, but this would be in a place where there is no justice, such as among robbers or the like, so as to save oneself.

Grace, Mercy, Charity, Kindness and Benevolence

A Noahide is called upon to give to charities and persons in need. According to Rav Saadiah Gaon, it is commendable for a person to tithe, meaning that he set aside up to one tenth of all his earnings for this purpose. However, a person need not deprive himself of his own basic necessities in order to give to others. According to Ezekiel, one of the reasons for the punishment of Sodom was that the poor people there were not given alms. It is worthwhile that a person keep a special account for such a purpose, and once a week or month he should transfer it to good causes. It is best to transfer it directly to the needy people.

A Noahide is called upon to act in a graceful manner and to be benevolent. One should be hospitable and a good host with all his heart as Abraham did.

Eight Degrees of Charity

There are eight degrees of charity, one higher than the other:

1. The highest degree is to aid a man who is in danger of losing his financial independence by offering him a gift or a loan, by entering into partnership with him, or by providing work for him, so that he may remain self supporting.
2. The next highest degree is where the one who gives and the one who receives are not aware of the identity of each other.
3. The third, inferior degree, is when the giver knows who is the recipient, but the recipient does not know who is the giver.
4. The fourth, still lower degree is where the recipient knows who is the giver, but the giver does not know who is the recipient.
5. The fifth degree is where the giver puts the alms into the hands of the poor without being asked.
6. The sixth degree is where he puts the money into the hands of the poor after being asked.
7. The seventh degree is where he gives less than he should but does so cheerfully.
8. The eighth degree is where he gives resentfully.

Courts of Justice

It is important to form courts of justice so that persons can be called upon to uphold the mitzvot, the religious laws and to be able to judge between people. Sages were divided as to whether the Noahides should be judged according to the Torah concerning financial matters or whether they should be judged according to common sense. It is worthwhile that such courts of justice should give sentences according to the same law for men and for women. The judges should be men since a woman should strive not to be involved in public matters. Every person should go to a court for justice and not try to mete out justice himself. Courts of justice are allowed to enforce regulations for the benefit of the society and to improve ethics and morality. It

is the obligation of the Noahide to execute justice to the fullest degree and not to be merciful to criminals. People have the obligation to obey the law and see that the legislative and judicial and personnel and systems obey the law.

Marriage and Sex

Every man should marry a woman, and every woman should marry a man since it is written “that it is not good for a man to live alone by himself.” Marriage brings about a partnership between two people and increases the population of the world. In marriage a Noahide will participate and contribute in the building of the world.

Marriage is initiated by the couple’s decision to live together as husband and wife followed by their sexual union. It is worthwhile and enhancing that the two hold a formal marriage ceremony and a marriage feast.

A married couple can divorce even if both don’t agree to the divorce. If the husband sends his wife away from their home declaring that they are no longer married or if the wife leaves their home with a similar declaration they are no longer married. However, Noahides should abide by the laws of the state in which they live in marriage matters. They should therefore also follow any procedures that are required by the laws where they live so that they should be considered divorced also according to these laws. After the divorce, both partners are free to remarry. The marriage also ends if one of the two dies.

According to the Torah, a married woman and another man are not allowed to have sexual or any intimate relations with each other. A man, on the other hand, is allowed to marry more than one wife or concubine. Since the 10th century the Ashkenazic Jews generally have only one wife. Today there are also civil laws in many countries against bigamy, which are to be followed as law for the Noahide. A person is not allowed to have sexual relations with his mother, sisters, maternal aunts from his father or mother’s side, his father’s wife even after the death of his father, daughter, granddaughter, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law and her mother, his wife’s daughters and granddaughters. A person is not allowed to have homosexual relations (man with another man or a woman with another woman). Also a person is not allowed to have sexual relations with animals. This is bestiality.

A Noahide should not have sexual relations with a Jew(ess).

Rape by a Noahide is a capital offence. There are opinions that, regarding people who are forbidden by the Torah to have sex with one another, the Torah prohibits any physical contact between them that is liable to be stimulating. This would include kissing, hugging and social dancing. It is nevertheless permitted for people to kiss their offspring.

It is worthwhile for men and women to minimize their mingling with one another. For this reason, youth groups and social activities should be organized separately for boys and for girls. In particular, when groups come together for prayer, etc. the men and the women should sit separately.

The purpose of sexual relations is to increase the human race and to strengthen the ties between the married couple. According to the Torah, a husband is called to gratify and satisfy sexually his wife. The same holds true for the wife toward her husband. All this is to strengthen the ties between the married couple. God created men and women with sexual appetite and chemistry. Sex is a blessing from God, and it is not sin in the bounds of permitted sex under the seven laws of Noah.

One should not read pornographic literature or watch pornographic movies. As women who are dressed inappropriately can stimulate men easily, women should dress modestly.

Most authorities are of the opinion that Bnei Noah are not obligated any more to have children. There is a minority view that they are. According to this minority view and the view of Nachmanides, masturbation is prohibited. Also, according to them only the female is allowed to use contraceptives. The ones that would be permitted are foam or pills or similar methods.

It is an ancient custom of Israel to be careful and not to have sexual relations when the woman is having her menstrual period. An Israelite married woman is not allowed to have sexual relations with her husband for seven days, starting from the first day of her menstruation period. After the seven days she must go to a ritual bath, a mikvah, before she resumes having sexual relations with her husband. A Noahide is not called to do so, but it is worthwhile for the couple to abstain from having sexual relations during the woman's menstrual period.