

# The 7 Laws of Noah &...

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## The Seven Laws of Noah and the Non-Jews who Follow Them

By Michael Kress

Sitting at a table at Mendy's Kosher Delicatessen in New York, Jim Long pauses to say a blessing in Hebrew before biting into a massive hamburger topped with fried pastrami. "This pastrami is better than bacon," he declares in his warm voice tinged with an Arkansan accent. The 58-year-old filmmaker—who no longer permits himself bacon—is in the city with his wife Carol, who sits primly beside him. They are here to speak at several Orthodox synagogues about their documentary, *Riddles of the Exodus*, which examines the biblical account through the lens of Egyptian archaeological finds.

The Longs are an observant couple. Hebrew phrases pepper their conversation—a *b'ezrat Hashem* (with God's help) here, a *baruch Hashem* (praise God) there. Back in Arkansas, they keep a traditional Jewish home. "We've got blessings in *ivrit* [Hebrew] hanging on the walls, and menorahs on display," Long explains. Each year, they build a *sukkah* and attend a Passover *seder*. "Our oldest grandson just turned six and already knows his *aleph-bet*," Long boasts.

But despite the *baruch Hashems*, the *menorahs*, the *sukkah*, the avoidance of pork and the intimate familiarity with advanced rabbinic texts, Jim and Carol Long are not Jewish, nor do they

have any plans to convert. They are Noahides: non-Jews who accept the authority of Jewish law and focus their lives around the Jewish concept of Sheva Mitzvot B'nei Noach or the Seven Commandments for the Children of Noah. This set of laws is intended for non-Jews and, according to tradition, predate the Ten Commandments given at Mount Sinai. "I believe exactly what a Jew believes," Long tells me. "My belief system is exactly parallel to that of an Orthodox Jew. That doesn't mean I am one."

Unbeknownst to most Jews, there are hundreds, maybe even thousands, of Noahides, and most, like the Longs, are former Christians who've turned their backs on the faith. This is not the first time the world has seen a community of "Righteous Gentiles" who center their beliefs around Judaism but it is the first time in history that such a group has begun to organize as a worldwide movement. And that movement is being actively encouraged by some Orthodox Jewish groups—in particular, the Brooklyn-based Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidim.

About forty blocks north of Mendy's deli, Rabbi Yakov Cohen scurries around a second-floor office at the Schneerson Center for Jewish Life, the home of Chabad on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

The 30-something Brooklynite with a close-cropped reddish beard, rarely sits still: he devotes his copious energies to helping out with the Chabad center's core mission—classes, prayer services and other programs for Jewish residents of this tony Manhattan neighborhood.

His true passion, however, lies in reaching out to non-Jews through what are usually referred to as the "Seven Laws," which he describes as pillars of universal morality that serve as a "balm for a world of conflict and immorality." Jewish teachings say that God first gave these laws to Adam, then reaffirmed them as part of the covenant he made with Noah after the Flood. Just as the Jews have the Ten Commandments

(plus an additional 603 mitzvot), non-Jews—all of whom are technically the children of Noah—have the Seven Laws, which command them to establish a legal system and refrain from murder, blasphemy, idolatry, adultery, theft and eating the flesh of a living animal.

“The non-Jews have the full length and breadth of Torah—they just have a different role in it,” says Cohen, his rapid-fire delivery complete with a yeshiva-ish lilt. “The role of every person is to be a good person, to bring divine light, to draw down godliness, Hashem, into the world. To do it as a Jew, as a non-Jew, it doesn’t matter. It’s the same light,” he says. “It’s the same Godly energy.”

Like virtually all Chabad Hasidim, Cohen seeks counsel in the words of Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the late Lubavitch rebbe, who died at age 92 in 1994 and is still affectionately referred to simply as the “the rebbe.” “Influencing non-Jews to keep their mitzvos, the Seven Noahide Laws... will assist our task of making the world into a dwelling place for God, and help bring about the arrival of Messiah,” Schneerson said in a 1987 speech during a Purim celebration. In response to teachings like this, thousands of his followers fanned out around the globe to battle what they saw as society’s moral degeneracy, bringing yiddishkeit to non-observant Jews and seeking out and supporting interested non-Jews.

About six years ago, Cohen founded Noahide.org, a website that serves as a sort of Noahide think tank, through which he runs conferences, publishes papers and counsels non-Jews from as far away as Scandinavia. Other Chabad-associated websites such as AskNoah.org and 7for70.com (meaning, seven laws for the proverbial 70 nations of the world) likewise seek to spread Noahide values to non-Jews in English, French, Spanish and other languages. Rabbis from Shimon Cowen in Australia to Immanuel Schochet in Canada offer halachic advice to Noahides and lecture about what Jewish tradition expects of non-Jews. In Israel, Chabad emissaries visit Arab and Druze villages to

pass out literature about the Seven Laws and converse with the sometimes bewildered—but often receptive—locals. In addition to preparing the world for the Messiah, they see themselves as presenting moral values that will end the centuries-old animosities between Muslims and Jews.

“We, the Jewish people, especially frum people, have to be a light upon the nations and we have to tell them what Torah says,” says Cohen. “We have the responsibility to shed light on the world.”

*Jack Saunders has a snowy white beard of biblical proportions.*

Back in the 1980s he was a Baptist minister at Frazier’s Chapel Independent Baptist Church in Cohutta, Georgia, near the Tennessee border. But that was before the now 58-year-old Tennessean began to question the fundamentals of his faith and came to the conclusion that the gospel stories of Jesus and the entire New Testament are false.

“It was kind of disturbing,” he says of the experience. “But if you’re looking for truth and truth smacks you in the face, then you have to do something. You have to be able to confront it and say, ‘This is the truth’ and let go of your emotions.”

Saunders recalls how hard it was to express his doubts to his parishioners and admit that he had “been wrong for all those years.” The process was slow. For about a year and a half he preached only from the Jewish Bible, what Christians call the Old Testament. Then one Sunday morning, Saunders recalls, he stood on the pulpit and read from Isaiah 7:14, in which a young woman, interpreted by Christians to be a virgin, gives birth to Jesus. For the first time he let his parishioners know that he saw no hint of Christian prophecy in that passage. “That’s when everything, you may say, hit the fan.”

Some church-goers abandoned Saunders, but nearly half of the

congregation's 70 members were moved by the pastor's change of heart and stayed as Frazier's Chapel Independent Baptist Church removed its steeple and crosses. "At the time," Saunders says, "the only thing we knew was what we were not." After reading about the Seven Laws and studying with a rabbi, Saunders and his remaining flock became Noahides and redubbed their place of worship Frazier's Chapel B'nai Noach Study Center. "I wanted to be able to read the Hebraic sources by myself," says Saunders, who has since learned Hebrew. "I didn't want to be lied to because I'd been lied to by all those Christians."

It was Texas archaeologist Vendyl Jones who introduced Jim Long to the Seven Laws. The two met in 1993 when Jones appeared on the Dallas radio show that Long produced. A former Baptist preacher, Jones had grown dismayed with what he considered the anti-Jewish sentiments of the Gospels and sought council from rabbis, studied in Israel and became a Noahide. He is believed to have been the inspiration for the character Indiana Jones in the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and is the founder of the Vendyl Jones Research Institute—a nonprofit based in Grandview, Texas, devoted to Biblical archeology. Considered one of the pioneers of the modern Noahide movement, Jones fondly remembers meeting Schneerson in his Brooklyn home and the rabbi's encouraging words: "'Vendyl Jones, you are doing the most important work in the world.'"

Long found himself intrigued by Jones's spiritual journey. Having drifted from denomination to denomination until he abandoned Christianity altogether, Long "was looking for something to fill the void." Shortly after the radio interview, he began attending Torah classes and joined Jones on archeological digs in the Middle East.

For Pam Rogers, the break with Christianity was more wrenching. Rogers and her husband, Larry, who live in Tulsa, Oklahoma, were members of the Worldwide Church of God, a small Christian movement that observes the Sabbath on Saturdays,

before becoming leaders of a Messianic Jewish congregation. In the early 1990s, a Jewish man befriended them and challenged them to prove the validity of the Christian Bible. As the couple tried to defend their views, they came to believe that the New Testament distorted the teachings of the Hebrew Bible.

The decision to become a Noahide threatened to break the Rogers family apart. Pam's father, a Pentecostal preacher, refused to speak to her for four years. Larry lost his job because he refused to work on Saturdays. The couple almost divorced because Pam made the decision to build her life around the Seven Laws before Larry did. "We lose our children, our spouses, our identities," Rogers says of the sacrifices that she and other Noahides are often forced to make for their faith.

*Despite what might seem an obvious trajectory, following the Seven Laws is not a path to becoming a Jew, says Yakov Cohen of the Schneerson Center. "We're not interested in membership," he says.*

Rather, the Chabad sees Judaism as a "universal religion" that offers salvation to everyone without conversion.

Jews are not known for proselytizing, and most Jews believe that Judaism prohibits it. David Novak—a Conservative rabbi and leading authority on the Seven Laws and what Judaism requires of non-Jews—debunks that idea. "Find me one halachic prohibition against proselytizing," he says. The popularly accepted notion that Judaism opposes proselytizing, Novak argues, rests less on theology than on the fact that most of Jewish history has been a perpetual struggle for survival. "For most of the time, Jews couldn't do it."

Novak, who teaches at the University of Toronto, points to sporadic attempts to convert people to Judaism throughout history. The best-known effort took place during the time of the Second Temple, which stood from 515 to 70 B.C.E. Living

under the Romans, Jews actively proselytized, with great success. Some non-Jews converted, others simply took on aspects of observant Jewish life and became part of Jewish communities. Called the “God Fearers” (Yirei Adonai), they are immortalized in the Book of Psalms.

While Jewish law does not prohibit proselytization, it does not call for a world of Jewish converts, either. The traditional messianic vision, as articulated most famously in the Book of Isaiah, is of a world at peace in which everyone acknowledges one God, even if all do not adopt Judaism:

*And many peoples shall go and say: ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares...*

Even in a text as familiar as the Aleinu prayer, Jews regularly reference a vision of Jews and non-Jews under a monotheistic ruler—to many, a clear allusion to Noahides:

*All the world’s inhabitants will recognize and know that to you, every knee should bend, every tongue should swear. Before You, Lord, our God, they will bend every knee and cast themselves down and to the glory of your name they will render homage, and they will all accept upon themselves the yoke of your kingship, that you may reign over them soon and eternally.*

*Since the earliest days of Christianity, Jewish sages have argued over whether the Noahide commandment not to worship “false gods” is compatible with other religions.*

Islam, the rabbis hold, is acceptable because of its adamantly monotheistic stance. Christianity, on the other hand, remains a subject of contention, with many arguing that belief in the Trinity is polytheistic, and therefore out of bounds under Noahide law.

Another critical debate centers around whether the Seven Laws are a set of universal moral imperatives that people intuit on their own or are precepts that Jews must actively bring to the world. The dominant halachic attitude has been that Jews are not required to spread Noahide teachings to non-Jews. Moses Maimonides, the medieval Jewish philosopher and legal authority, disagreed. In his monumental 12th-century work the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides envisioned a society in which non-Jews would be governed by Jewish law, noting that they could choose to convert. "If they do not want to, we do not compel them to accept the Torah and the commandments. Moses did, however, command in the name of God to compel all people to accept the Noahide laws," Maimonides continued. "Compel" may seem a particularly strong word, but Maimonides's stance is clear: Jews must do what they can to teach non-Jews about the Noahide laws.

The 19th century Italian rabbi and famed Kabbalist, Elijah Benamozegh, also believed that Jews have a responsibility to guide non-Jews towards the path of righteousness. Shortly before his death in 1900, Benamozegh received a letter from Frenchman Aimé Pallière seeking advice on converting to Judaism. Benamozegh told the young man there was another way. "The religion of humanity is no other than Noahism," the rabbi wrote to Pallière. "Here is the religion preserved by Israel to be transmitted to the Gentiles. It is the path which lies open before your efforts, before mine as well, to spread the knowledge thereof, as is my duty to do so." Called the "first and last high priest of the Noahide religion," Pallière is



believed to have been the first modern Noahide. A talented writer, he learned Hebrew, lectured at the Orthodox Rabbinical School of France and urged Jews to follow Orthodox traditions.

Benamozegh believed “that mankind cannot rise to the essential principles on which society must rest unless it meet[s] with Israel. And Israel cannot fathom the depths of its own national and religious tradition, unless it meet[s] with mankind.” A half-century later, Benamozegh’s dream of a Jewish-supported Noahide worldwide movement would be seized upon by Schneerson. “Every Jew has the obligation to ensure that all the peoples of the world observe the Seven Noahide Laws” and that non-Jews, as well as Jews, “acknowledge God as Creator and ruler of the world,” Schneerson declared.

It’s a position that remains controversial. “If Jews are telling Gentiles what to do, it’s a form of imperialism,” Novak says. To him, the Seven Laws are valuable in constructing a moral foundation that enables Jews to speak out on social issues, but not as part of a religion around which non-Jews should structure their daily lives. “Why would any Gentile want to be told by Lubavitch—or any other rabbi—what to do?” Novak asks. “I am suspicious of anyone who wants to live this way.”

Novak isn’t alone in his suspicions. “With a lot of rabbis, there’s still this skepticism and fear that someone’s trying to infiltrate your shul and will end up being some sort of missionary trying to bring people to Christianity,” Jack Saunders says of the reception Noahides often receive when seeking guidance. Counseling Noahides is not the sort of subject covered in a typical rabbinical school education and rabbis tend to confront the issue only if approached personally by a non-Jew.

Barry Freundel, the author of *Contemporary Orthodox Judaism’s Response to Modernity* and rabbi of Washington, DC’s Keshet Israel, a modern Orthodox synagogue, is among the many rabbis

who have never been approached by a Noahide. Freundel doesn't share Schneerson's belief that Jews are required to spread the Noahide laws to non-Jews—but he also doesn't believe that Jews can ignore interested Noahides. "Once they are doing it, you are required to help them," he says.

Carol Long wishes there were many more rabbis who were willing to work with Noahides. "They have to know there are actually people out there looking to them for leadership and spiritual guidance and who respect what they bring to the world."

*Today's Noahide movement has no prescribed ritual and liturgical life.*

Even the laws themselves—six out of the seven—are prohibitions such as "don't kill" and "don't steal."

"We need to give more than 'don't, don't, don't,'" Larry Rogers says. If more people are going to become Noahide, "they have to have a life. They have to know there are life celebrations," he says. "We're trying to find our place with Hashem."

To add greater meaning to their lives, some Noahides have created a lifestyle parallel to that of Orthodox Judaism: They study Jewish texts, pray and follow some of what are known as the "positive commandments"—rituals and other mitzvot. They've adopted portions of Jewish liturgy and prayers, removing all mentions of chosenness, to make clear that this concept only applies to Jews.

But "there are so many opinions about Noahide halacha," says Pam Rogers. "It's very confusing for us Gentiles." The Noahide approach to Shabbat illustrates the difficulty of deciding which Jewish traditions to follow. Rogers and her husband try to avoid work and set aside time for a festive meal and prayer, but don't refrain from using electrical devices. Others may shun the use of electricity but go out of their way

to perform at least one activity over the course of Shabbat that distinguishes them from Jews. Jack Saunders, for example, writes a check. "I always do something that makes it known I'm not Israel," he says.

From his base in New York, Yakov Cohen is working to bring structure to this mosaic of Noahide spiritual life. He and others are creating a Noahide siddur (prayerbook) to standardize prayers, and a liturgy of lifecycle rituals, such as funerals and baby-naming ceremonies. This year, one of the first Noahide weddings was held in Buffalo, New York, under a chuppa. The officiating rabbi spoke of the Seven Laws as the marriage's foundation and sealed it with a contract modeled after the traditional ketuba. Rabbis are also working on the first-ever Noahide Shulhan Arukh—a comprehensive book of law pertaining to non-Jews, which will spell out the specifics of Noahide life, making clear which mitzvot are acceptable for them and which aren't. "We know what they can't do," says Cohen. "Let's see what they can do."

*Noahides are few, dispersed, often misunderstood and they crave community.*

Lucky ones, like Saunders, find likeminded souls near home with whom to gather together to study Jewish texts, pray, discuss the challenges of the Noahide life and socialize. Local groups, such as the Chavurath B'nei Noach (the Fellowship of the Children of Noah) of Ft. Worth, Texas, serve as an important source of communal life for their members. Organizations such as The Root & Branch Association, Noahide Nations, Rainbow Covenant and B'nai Noach Torah Institute provide advice and support to Noahides wherever they live, often through the Internet.

No single organization, however, is widely recognized as representative of the worldwide movement. That's partly because of the diffuse and ad hoc nature of Noahide

organizations, but it is also reflective of the nature of the movement, which is composed of independent-minded people who have rejected their traditional faith and are willing to follow a largely uncharted spiritual path. "We're very iconoclastic—we're all about taking down the idols," Jim Long says. Saunders puts it more pessimistically: "It seems like every time we try to organize, it doesn't go well."

The most recent effort to bring Noahides together comes in the form of High Council of B'nei Noah, an umbrella organization that seeks to fill the leadership vacuum. The High Council's mission is to provide support for Noahides, educate the general public, serve as a liaison with the Jewish community and standardize Noahide beliefs and practices. Last January, members of the Council—which included Saunders and Long—were inaugurated in Jerusalem, where they recited the following oath:

*"I pledge my allegiance to Hashem, God of Israel, Creator and King of the Universe, to His Torah and its representatives, the developing Sanhedrin. I hereby pledge to uphold the Seven Laws of Noah in all their details, according to Oral Law of Moses under the guidance of the developing Sanhedrin."*

The Noahide Council is supported by the respected Orthodox Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, best known for the edition of the Talmud that bears his name, but who's also the leader of the "developing Sanhedrin" cited in the oath. Steinsaltz's Sanhedrin is the most recent attempt to revive the Great Sanhedrin of 71 sages who met in Jerusalem until 425 C.E. to discuss matters of concern to the Jewish people and adjudicate disputes. Steinsaltz argues that both Jews and Noahides follow different parts of the same belief system and can even be considered members of the same religion. "Even from simply a utilitarian point of view, we Jews have hardly any friends in the world. B'nei Noah are by definition our closest friends," he says. "So we should reach out to them."

Already, the Council has been troubled by internal disagreements and criticism from outsiders. Some Noahides are unhappy that its members were appointed by the Sanhedrin rather than voted on, while others complain that all its members are American. Jack Saunders is among those who have left the Council, tiring of the strife though still supportive of its mission. "For me, it's a wonderful thing," he says, but cautions that "working out all the problems is going to be tough."

Steinsaltz believes the Council—and the broader Noahide community—will overcome these rifts. Long also remains optimistic. A major conference for Noahides in Jerusalem for October 2007, during Sukkot, is in the works and Long hopes it will serve as an inspiration for Noahides worldwide. "We think that we could act as a *gesher*, a bridge, between Jews and Noahides," he says.

*As a child of a Jewish father, Philip Levy, a 28-year-old Noahide from the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC, could walk into any Reform synagogue as a full-fledged member.*

But after drifting from Catholicism, his mother's religion, to evangelical Christianity, he found meaning in Orthodox Judaism. Through the Internet and guided by the local Chabad community, Levy came to self-identify as a Noahide. He takes classes and attends services as a non-Jew at a Chabad synagogue and even created a website, [novanoahides.org](http://novanoahides.org) (nova as in Northern Virginia)—in the hope of meeting other Noahides who live nearby. So far, he has only found one.

Why doesn't Levy take that last step and convert, so he can be considered Jewish according to Orthodox standards and become a full member of the community? Nearly all Noahides grapple with the conversion question, sometimes for years and without definitive conclusion. After all, they adhere to traditional

Jewish commandments more strictly than most Jews and many can quote from rabbinic texts as well as yeshiva students.

Some have become Jewish, but they are a minority. For the rest, the reasons for not converting are complicated. "I was raised on bacon and eggs," Levy jokes, "and if I had to give them up I don't know what I'd do." More seriously, he talks about an "attachment" to his "Gentileness" and his respect for his mother.

But for most Noahides the decision not to convert boils down to the fact that they find spiritual fulfillment in what they view as their role in the divine plan for the world: To follow the lead of the Jewish people—not become them. "Israel was chosen to be a nation of kings and priests and a light unto the nations," Pam Rogers explains. "We decided if everybody converted, who would Israel have to be priests to?"

They believe that they can have a greater impact as non-Jews following the Torah than as Jewish converts, both by encouraging other non-Jews to live according to Noah's laws and by calling upon Jews to observe their own traditions. "If I just converted and went out to the non-Jewish world talking about the Torah and the prophets and how great it was, then I'd just be another Jew running my mouth," says Jack Saunders.

To those who take the long view of Jewish history, like University of Toronto professor Novak, the Noahide movement is destined to peter out, as did the Second Temple-era God Fearers. Eventually, Novak reasons, Noahides will return to their original faiths or convert to Judaism. "If you want rabbis to tell you what to do, why not convert to Judaism?" he asks. "It's an untenable situation."

A couple of months after meeting the Longs at Mendy's Kosher Delicatessen, I called them at their home in Arkansas to ask how they envisioned the Noahide future, in 15, 20, or even 50 years. "There will be places in every state and nation where

people can go to study and worship,” answered Carol. No other group of Righteous Gentiles has had the tools of modern technology with which to communicate, organize effectively and dispense information. This, Jim said, not only insures the long-term sustainability, but the growth of the Noahide movement. Then he asked me a question: “Do you know what kind of world we would live in if all nations honored the Seven Laws?” He took a quick breath and answered his own query: “It would be transformational. If we were to stop killing, stop stealing, establish real courts of justice everywhere in the world, do you see what would happen? We’d have world peace.”

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## **IDC Conference : 9-20-2017**

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## **IDC Conference : 9-20-2017**

Welcome to the Summit Conference. Today we will be addressing the The Role of Religious leaders for Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies and Combating Violent Extremism with Universal Noahide – UN

First, I want to thank our my fellow speakers for their outstanding leadership in this historic event: Mr Mark Donfiled and ICD Academy for Cultural Diplomacy

I also wish to thank all of you the future Ambassadors, Delegates, and distinguished guests who have taken the time out of their busy schedule to join us for this important program.

My name is Rabbi Yakov David Cohen and I serve as a Rabbi and an ECOSOC NGO Special Envoy to the UN for The Institute of Noahide Code. In my capacity as Special Envoy for the INC, my responsibilities include human rights issues in the Middle East including defending the rights of Jewish, Christian and Muslim Men, women and children.

I like to open with a story that took place with the former New York Mayor David Dinkins and the Chabad Rebbe Menachem Schneerson in 1991.. ...Mayor Dinkins went, both as the Mayor and as the representative of the black community to the Rebbe in Brooklyn, New York, and said, "We pray for the peace of our two communities". The Rebbe replied, "It is one community, under one G-d, under one administration."

*One people One World under G-D*

Some people wonder, can't we just get along – but everything in life that will function – and certainly function long-term must have both a foundation and a logical premise.

The only way societies – as empirically through thousands of years of human civilization proves – live together, is, if there is a higher ideal.

What can possibly be the higher ideal which unites all of mankind?

What we all have in common is three things:

1. Each and every one of us is a creation of our heavenly father G-D
2. Each and every one of us (including all species, plants, even minerals) have a cosmic goal in the tapestry and



symphony that produces the beauty and melody called humanity –

3. The Creator has specifically taught the Jewish people, passed down from Moses, a universal Noahide ethical code and by us all humbly accepting, we introduce this higher ideal.

I read a personal ad in the paper: Homeless! (JOKE)

Seeking home, will pay rent, utilities, looking to make the world a better place, will provide good company – G-D.

Each and every one of us makes a home for G-d by keeping the Universal Noahide code!

The Universal Noahide Code is one for peace.. Jewish Sages explain that a wonder of G-d's creation is that, although the face of every human being is essentially the same, no two people are identical. As facial features differ, so too, the workings of no two minds are alike. Since differences are an inherent dimension of G-d's Creation, no society should try to stifle these differences. They should not only be tolerated, but encouraged as a springboard for growth. Humankind is created in the Divine Image. Given that this House is one of peace, we must within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, attempt to promote these values not only globally, but specially, immediately in our surroundings.

The Torah message is Universal. Torah was ultimately given for peace. Peace between man and G-d, and peace between man and man. The first Five Commandments are the relationship between man and G-d, whereas the last five deal with man's relation to his fellow human being. These values are eternal, and are encompassed in the Universal Noahide Code. The truth of the matter is that before there was any formal religion there was only Noah, a man who withstood the tides/norms of his day and went against all of the trends of his time, for he

considered these to be unethical, indecent Noah took it upon himself to serve and obey the One G-d. His example was as valid today as it was then. It is critical for all of us, that we, the representatives of many different people affirm and commit publicly to the basic premise, that people respect the very core fabric of life given by the Creator. These are contained within the Seven Universal Codes of Noah, a way of life that expresses and makes the human being commit, to honoring first of all, the Creator, and ultimately, His Creation.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals envision zero hunger, no poverty, decent work and economic growth. May I propose that in the Universal Noahide Codes, the belief in one G-d, promotes equal treatment for all human beings. Humankind's unity reflects G-d's indivisibility. The respect for human life envisioned in the Noahide Codes, also promotes respect that no human being is to be deprived of food as we are seeing regrettably in Syria, in North Korea, as a means of social control, of beating people into deprivation as a means of subjugation. The respect for decent work and economic growth requires us to take into account, the right of all human beings to be remunerated properly for their work that local practices be taken into account by any multinational wishing to invest in a particular area. It is a way of balancing profit with the needs and culture and livelihoods of those either employed or impacted by business.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals also promote partnering for all the goals we wish for humanity, as well as the promotion of peace, justice and strong institutions.

May I further propose, that the Universal Noahide Codes also envision this. There is no greater partnership than the nucleus of society which is the family, the respect for human life within the family, the respect for the most vulnerable, which are the young, the weak and the infirm and the old. And although not politically popular, may I suggest that the

respect for the unborn is also a component of the first partnering of humans. A future partner of society should be respected. Everyone here present today, is here, because your right to be born was respected. May I ultimately suggest as well, is that the Universal Noahide Codes also strengthen the notion of promoting justice, because in its core, the concept of the creation of a judicial system is paramount. As is often said, there is no peace, without justice.

We have all and are all created by G-d – in fact in this sense we have something in common not only with all humans, but also with animals, vegetation and even rocks and non-living creations, with the Universe itself. We need a vigorous proactive campaign which is what I am proud my organization Institute of Noahide Code stands for, in which all people, all people, are elevated through the deep appreciation that their lives are a choice – God chose them, as He loves to see each human being bring light, love, unity and harmony to his or her surroundings, to the world at large. When we all realize we are His ambassadors, each and everyone of us, not only do we do good, but this gives us an inner feeling of worth and as we add respect to ourselves, love to the core, to reflect this to the rest of the world, by extending that to each and every person.

For us to have UNITY we need ONE AND ONLY G-D and for G-d to have UNITY HE needs us!

We had a giant in the United States, may his memory be a blessing.

Dr. Martin Luther King queried those around him: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

The Rebbe Menachem Schneerson also taught us that a “Little light can dispel a lot of darkness”. Not far from this concept, and in terms of love, which is the underlying theme

that humanity craves for, Dr. King added: Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that”.

But what is love based on? Love, as Jewish mysticism teaches us, is realizing that we are but one heart in many bodies, one universal mission, affirming that each one of us has been made in the image of our Maker, challenged to rise above instinctual selfish instincts and invite a Divine purpose, mission and meaning in our life. We can only achieve this objective, in the manner of respect, of establishing court systems, by creating partnerships that include the basic core of society which is the family unit, the respect for human life, through food, equitable respect for the rights, needs of others. We include in this, the environment, as well as our fellow animal creatures, His entire Creation.

Practically, by each of us dedicating our lives individually to this recognition that “I am not a biological being, born one day, to die another”, rather “I am an ambassador of our Creator to add in the goodness and kindness of this world, I take upon myself the responsibility to share this message – the message of truth, the message of empathy, the message of love”. Then and only then, can truly the vision of the U.N. be realized and speedily fulfilled, as the great prophet Isaiah expressed ‘that they will beat their swords into plowshares and no nation will make war ever again’.

Sweet New Year!!!

THANK YOU.

IDC – Chabad UES NY NY USA on 9 20, 2017  
[RabbiCohen@Noahide.org](mailto:RabbiCohen@Noahide.org)

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# May 3 La Agenda

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# May 3 La Agenda

6:30- 7 PM – REFRESHMENTS AND GUEST REGISTRATION

7:00 PROGRAM BEGINS

OPENING REMARKS – RABBI ABRAHAM COOPER

INTRODUCTION WITH SHORT VIDEO ABOUT IPCGE

7:15 pm:

FIRST AWARD PRESENTED TO MR. GERALD LEVIN, former CEO Time Warner

Award Presented by Mr. Jack Rapke, Film Producer

– video presentation and acceptance

## **First Panel Discussion – Culture of Peace in Western Democracies**

Naarator: Dr. Richard Hellman

Panelists/ H.E. Yasar Yakis, .Mr and Dr. Levin, MP Zingeris, MP. Okamoto, Mrs. Judy Schaffer

7:45 pm:

SECOND AWARD PRESENTATION TO MASTER **Jun Hong Lu**, founder of GuanyinCitta; President and Director of 2OR Australia Oriental Radio (2OR); President of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Research Centre (ACBRC), founder, Australian **Australia Oriental Media Buddhist Charity Association**

Award Presented by:

Vice Mayor Chin Ho Liao of San Gabriel and Mrs. Lily Valachenova, UNESCO Liaison Officer at United Nations headquarters, NY.

video, presentation and acceptance

## **Second Panel Discussion – Religion and the Culture of Peace**

Naarator: Dr. Richard Hellman

Panelists: Master Lu, Rabbi Abrahamson, Dr. Wafik Mustafa, Joana Adeboye

8:15 pm:

THIRD AWARD PRESENTATION- Mr. GIANDOMENICO (GIANNI) PICCO, former Under-Secretary General, United Nations.

Award presented by Mr. Robert Bookman, Senior motion picture

and television agent at Paradigm

– video, presentation and acceptance

### **Third Panel Discussion: Culture of Peace as a Foundation for Preventing and Resolving Conflicts**

Narrator: Judy Schaffer

Panelists – Gianni Picco, Lily Valachenova, Richard Hellman, Rabbi David Cohen

8:45 pm: **PRESENTATION OF MODEL IPCGE MEDIA PROJECT:** Harran – cradle of monotheism as a model for the Culture of Peace – FM Yakis and Shoshana Bekerman, Director IPCGE

Open Discussion and Invitation to partner – Dr. Laurie Levin

Conclusion

#### **PANELISTS:**

H.E. YASAR YAKIS, Former Foreign Minister of Turkey, co-founder AKP

M.P Mitsunari Okamoto, Komeito Party, Japan

Pastor Joana Adeboye, co-founder, International Strategic Alliance Committee for Nigeria

Mrs.Lily Valchanova – UNESCO- UN Headquarters Liaison Officer

Dr. Wafik Moustafa – Founder and Chairman, British Conservative Arab Network UK; Author of “Egypt, the Elusive Arab Spring”.

MP Emanuelis Zingeris, Lithuania- Founder and President  
Parliamentary Forum for Democracy

Rabbi Binyamin Abrahamson, Founder, President “Alsadiqin”;  
author: “Divine Diversity”

Dr. Laurie Levin; Founder Moonview Sanctuary, Author: “G-d The  
Universe and Where I Fit In”

Mrs. Judy Schaffer, Founder and President: Heroes to Heroes

Attorney Richard Hellman, President of Middle East Research  
Center, Washington D.C.

Rabbi Yaakov David Cohen, Founder and President, Noahide  
Institute U.N. NGO

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# **The Annual Conference on Cultural Diplomacy in the UN**

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# **The Annual Conference on Cultural Diplomacy in the UN**



***The Annual Conference on Cultural Diplomacy in the UN***

***“The Influence of New US and UN Leadership on International Relations, Economic Development, Innovation, New Markets, & Global Human Rights”***

*(New York City & Washington DC; January 10th – 14th, 2017)*

—

***Symposium Timetable***

***Tuesday, January 10th, 2016***

***VENUE: United Nations Conference Room 6 (CR 6) 15:00-18:00  
(hosted by Romanian Mission)***

**14:00 Registrations**

**15:00 “Responsibility and the Role of the United Nations in Today’s Interdependent World”**

*Introductory Speech*

**Mark Donfried**

*(Director General, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy)*

**15:15 Keynote Speech**

**H.E. Amb. Ion Jinga**

(Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations)

16:30                                   **“The Role of the New UNSG in the Changing  
Global Landscape”**

*Keynote Speech*

**H.E. Amb. Odo Tevi**

(Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the  
United Nations)

17:00                                   **H.E. Amb. Laura E. Flores H.**

(Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Panama to the  
United Nations)

18:00                                   **Social Program**

***Wednesday, January 11th, 2016***

***VENUE: United Nations Conference Room 6 (CR 6) 15:00-18:00  
(hosted by Romanian Mission)***

10:00                                   **Keynote Speech**

**Mr. Mohammed Shams Malique**

(Representative of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, President of the Citizen Movement ; Criminal Lawyer; Director of Melford Village;

**10:15 Keynote Speech**

**Mr. Jacob Milton**

(CEO, Legal Network International, LLC ND Tycoon Properties, Inc.)

**10:30 "Democracy And National Elections In Bangladesh and the USA"**

*Keynote Speech*

**Prof. Dr. Shaheda Obaed**

(Educationist, Retired as Director General, National Academy for Education Management)

**11:00 Keynote Speech**

**The Hon. Giandomenico Picco**

(Former United Nations Under Secretary General)

**11:30 Keynote Speech**

**Lily Gray**

(Liaison Officer, UNESCO Liaison Office to the UN)

**12:15**                                    **“Foreign Assistance: Ineffective or  
Detrimental Without Cultural Awareness”**

*Keynote Speech*

**James L. Creighton**

(Distinguished Fellow, East-West Institute)

**13:00**                                    **Break**

**15:00**                                    **Keynote Speech**

**Prof. Dr. Volker Berghahn**

(Seth Low Professor of History, Columbia University)

**16:00**                                    **Keynote Speech**

**The Hon. Rabbi Abadie**

(Chief Rabbi, Safra Synagogue)

**16:30**                                    **“Theatre, Ritual and Building  
International Communities”**

*Keynote Address & Interactive  
Discussion*

**David Daimond**

(Director, Theatre Without Borders)

**Dr. Jessica Litwak**

(Artistic Director, the H.E.A.T. Collective)

**17:30 Music as Cultural Diplomacy**

**Speech**

**Heather Schmid**

(Award Winning Singer & Cultural Diplomat)

**18:00 Social Program**

***Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

***VENUE: 2103 RAYBURN BUILDING, United States Congress,  
Washington DC***

**12:30 Tour Meeting Point Entrance to US Capital  
Visitors Center & Orientation Film**

**1:20 Tour of US Capital – Guided Walking Tour**

**15:00 “The Influence of New US on International  
Relations, Economic Development, Innovation, New Markets, &  
Global Human Rights”**



***Hungarian Mission)***

10:00

**Welcome Remarks**

**1. E. Amb. Katalin Bogyay**

(Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations)

**Mark C. Donfried**

(Director General of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy)

**“The Role of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in  
Peace and Security”**

*Panel Discussion*

**H.E. Ms. Cristina Gallach**

(Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public  
Information)

**Nihal Saad**

Chief of Cabinet & Spokesperson for the High-Representative  
of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**Rev. Msgr. Tomasz Grysa**

(Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United  
Nations)

**The Hon. Agha H. Jafri**

(Secretary General, American Muslim Congress)

12:30-13:00

**“A Conversation with H. E. Amb. Katalin Bogyay,**

**Permanent**

**Representative of Hungary to the UN, President of the ICD Program on Cultural Diplomacy & The Arts”**

Moderator:

**Mark C. Donfried**

(Director General of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy)

**VENUE:** Permanent Mission of Hungary to the UN (227 E 52ndstreet, New York)

*(13:30-18:00)*

13:30 Lunch Reception Hosted by Hungarian Ambassador to the United Nations

15:00 **“Conflicts cause Poverty and Poverty can Cause Conflicts”**

*Keynote Speech*

**Dr. Amir Lakha**

(Founder and Chairman, Humanitarian And Charitable One Trust)

15:30 **Rehabilitate And Reintergrate For Development**

*Keynote Speech*

**Nancy Bolima**

(Founder & Executive Director, HEDECS Cameroon)



**16:00**

**“Education as a Resource of Smart Power”**

*Keynote Speech*

**Aigerim Raimzhanova**

(PHD Student of Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations, a program offered by the University of Bucharest, Romania – Faculty of Philosophy, in cooperation with the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD), Berlin)

**16:30**

*Concluding Speech*

**Mark Donfried**

(Director General, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy)

**18:00**

**Social Program**

***Saturday, January 14th, 2016***

***Day of Departure***

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**NOVEMBER 9TH SUMMIT AT U.N.**

# HEADQUARTERS

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## NOVEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> SUMMIT AT U.N. HEADQUARTERS

NOVEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> SUMMIT AT U.N. HEADQUARTERS

*Hosted by the Mission of Panama to the United Nations*

*Co-sponsors:*

*Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Global Ethics/ Multi Track  
Diplomacy*

*Institute of Noahide Code NGO ECOSOC*

**MOBILIZING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS FOR AGENDA 2030**

Conference Room 6

United Nations Headquarters

15:00 -18:00

## **AGENDA**

Introduction and Welcome:

Keynote Speaker

**Her Excellency Ambassador Flores**

### **Session I**

**3:00 – 3:40 pm**

**UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON THE CULTURE OF PEACE AS A PRE-  
CONDITION FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Moderator: Mrs. Judy Schaffer, Founder: Heroes to Heroes**

**SPEAKERS: Panel I**

***UNESCO REPRESENTATIVE –MRS. LILY VALCHANOVA***

**THE HONORABLE H. LINCOLN DOUGLAS, MINISTER OF ARTS AND  
MULTICULTURALISM –TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

- 1. GIANNI PICCO, FORMER UNDER SEC. GENERAL OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS/ BOARD MEMBER IPCGE**

## **SESSION II**

**3:40- 4:30 pm**

### **RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL VALUES AS A DRIVER FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST 2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**

**Moderator: Mayor Martin Oliner, Mayor of Lawrence Long Island**

#### **Introduction:**

The Noahide Laws and the post 2015 agenda:

**RABBI YAKOV DAVID COHEN, FOUNDER/ DIRECTOR** Institute for Noahide Code

Speakers: Panel II

**RABBI ELIE ABADIE** – Yale University Center for Faith and Culture/ Chief Rabbi Safra Synagogue

**IMAM SHAMSI ALI** – President, Nusantara Foundation & Spiritual Leader of Jamaica Muslim Center New York –

**ABBOT WEI FENG** – Founder Amitabha Temple in Sacramento and Lucky Temple in Oakland, USA

**Col. (Res.) MUNIB BADER, Co-Founder/ Druze Association for Development and the Culture and Peace/former Attaché** in Brazil, Bolivia and Peru

**REVERAND V. SIMPSON TURNER JR.** – Pastor Mount Carmel Baptist

Church/ currently serves as FDNY Chaplain in New York, served formerly as Chaplain of New York City Department of Corrections and Sherriff's Office

### **SESSION III**

**4:30 – 5:00 pm**

#### ***THE U.N. POST 2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE***

Moderator: **Mrs. Judy Schaffer**

***Mr. J. Marthone – Director, Sustainable Development/ World Energy Forum***

**ATTORNEY RICHARD HELLMAN**– Attorney Specializing in Environment Protection, Global 500 Roll of Honour, , USA/ President, Middle East Research Center Ltd.

**1. LEONARD GRUNSTEIN** –co-founder IPCGE FOUNDATION FOR ETHICAL FINANCE

**5:00 – 5:20 pm** Open Debate/ Questions – moderator: **Mayor Martin Oliner**

**5:20- 5:30 p.m.:**

Summary and Conclusion: **Shoshana Bekerman, Director, IPCGE**

**Vote of Thanks: Hosts and Co-sponsors**

*Developing a Steering Committee to Mobilize Cultural and Religious Leaders for the United Nations Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals*

**5:30 pm** *PHOTO SESSION and open floor dialogue*

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# November 9th Summit

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## November 9th Summit

On the week of the worst terrorist attacks in recent history in Europe, news that has shaken the international community to its core, a group of men and women, diplomats, journalists and Rabbis, Imams, and Reverends, met at the United Nations for the November 9th Summit mobilizing Cultural and Religious Ethics for Agenda 2030.

It is notable that it was the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations that hosted this event, given that this small and prominent Latin American country, decades earlier, had been one of the visionaries to promote the Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin and his 1948 Convention on Genocide, which was ultimately, the cornerstone for the International Criminal Court now based in The Hague.

Co-sponsored by the Insitute of Noahide Code/IPCGE, the platform for this event on 9th November, was the Universal Noahide Code "UNC", setting forth to the international diplomatic and religious community what philosopher Hugo Grotius cited as the basis for the 1945 United Nations Charter and thus, the cornerstone of all international law. Grotius further pointed out that the "UNC" is the practical means, by which humanity may strive to live in unity and in peace and can thus fulfill its potential to see all the families of the

earth blessed. These laws of peace and unity encompass respect for G-d, for human life, respect for the family, for other people's property, for the creation, respect for judicial systems plus respect for all creatures and the environment.

Among those participating, Her Excellency, the Ambassador Laura Flores of Panama, who was the keynote speaker and opened the event welcoming everyone. Ambassador Flores highlighted the efforts to be made now, so that future generations inherit and can enjoy a culture of peace built on respect and understanding. Peace which indeed in thought, and also in the Wall in front of the United Nations Headquarters, is prominently displayed not far from where Ambassador Flores spoke. There on the famed 1948 Isaiah Wall, we read, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Another notable speaker among many prominent participants as The Honorable H. Lincoln Douglas, Minister from Trinidad and Tobago, was Mr. Gianni Picco, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations. On the 9th November, Mr. Picco who was instrumental and actively involved in releasing numerous Western hostages in the Middle East, notably Beirut, spoke about his mediation among terrorists and then some regional tyrants, to save lives, reunite families, spare the world of more bloodshed. Moderating the events, was the Mayor of Lawrence, Long Island, Mr. Martin Oliner, where the Druze leader, Coronel (Ret.) Munib Bader spoke about how the Druze have no aspirations of becoming a country or converting anyone to their monotheistic religion or tradition, and are loyal to the people where they reside. Because 2,000,000 Druzim live in Syria, in Lebanon, and in Israel, the Druze are uniquely positioned to bring peace among these people in the region, according to Coronel Bader.

Among other prominent speakers at the United Nations, Rabbi

Elie Abadie, of Yale University Center for Faith and Culture, and Chief Rabbi of Safra Synagogue in Manhattan, and Imam Shamsi Ali, spiritual leader of Jamaica Muslim Center of New York. Whereas Rabbi Abadie spoke about how religious leaders have to find a means to transmit religious values in a manner that is both positive and conducive to non violence, Imam Ali said that he has been actively pursuing the building of bridges between the different religions that stem from Abraham.

Rabbi Yakov David Cohen, founder of the Institute of the Noahide Code and accredited to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations, opened the panel of religious and cultural values. He first thanked among others, Shoshana Bekerman, without whose expert involvement, the event would have been very difficult to organize. Furthermore, Dr. Leonard Grunstein spoke about finances and development as a means of empowering people. Rabbi Cohen also mentioned, Mrs. Judy Schaffer, who moderated a panel on development. But it was Rabbi Yakov Cohen, who reminded those present in this first UNC Summit at the UN, that the basis of the gathering were the 7 Laws of Noah, with the common thread of the memory of the destruction and despair, upon which the UN was established. The Rav reminded those present that the event was being held on the 77th anniversary of Krystallnacht, a time of darkness and desperation, which memory placed on those participants, and their constituents and congregants, the unique responsibility which humankind carries to be messengers of goodness, kindness and global change.

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# **Music brings us together in celebration**

## **Music brings us together in celebration**

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## **A church is a community**

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*My trust in God flows out of the experience of his loving me, day in and day out, whether the day is stormy or fair, whether I'm sick or in good health, whether I'm in a state of grace or disgrace. He comes to me where I live and loves me as I am.*

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## **From many we become one**

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# How do you give back to others?

## How do you give back to others?

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# **Is space travel a religious matter?**

## **Is space travel a religious matter?**

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## **From many we become one**

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## **8 beautiful cathedrals explored**

### **8 beautiful cathedrals explored**

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## **A church is a community**

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*My trust in God flows out of the experience of his loving me, day in and day out, whether the day is stormy or fair, whether I'm sick or in good health, whether I'm in a state of grace or disgrace. He comes to me where I live and loves me as I am.*

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## From many we become one

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