

New Shlichim To The UN?

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New Shlichim To The United Nations?

Shalom Abramowitz

5 Cheshvan 5772 (02.11.2011)

As the world watches in horror the happenings at the United Nations, where light and darkness switched places, ruthless terrorists receive recognition as statesmen and honorable leaders receive treatment as terrorists, something different happened in those halls.

Two Chabad-run Noahide organizations 7for70 directed by Rabbi **Boaz Kali** from Israel and www.noahide.org directed by Rabbi **Yaakov Cohen** have received official recognition from the United Nations, and are authorized to work in the UN. This was the conclusion of a five-year process undertaken by Rabbi Cohen to push the organizations thru.

Their first official visit to the UN included participation in selecting the new judges for the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Rabbi Cohen asked the judges if the plan on judging with the fear of heaven, thus fulfilling one of the Seven Noahide laws.

The organizations are in the process of finding a permanent Shliach to the UN who will represent their organizations.

UN NGO Reps Pledge...

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UN NGO Reps Pledge to Follow Noahide Laws

By David Yisraeli, Chabad Info
24 Tevet 5771 (31.12.2010)

A conference advocating for the acceptance and adherence to the Noahide Laws was held on December 22, 2010.

The event's title was "Unity, Youth and World Peace". Presenters included Mr. **Joop Theunissen** from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and Rabbi **Yakov D. Cohen** of the Institute of Noahide Code, who opened and moderated the conference.

More than 90 people attended this important event, many of whom expressed an interest in continuing this work.

Mr Joop Theunissen Deputy Chief of the NGO branch of ECOSOC signed a proclamation pledging to keep the Laws of Noah.

"Their observance is required, so that the vision of the United Nations – to have a settled and civilized world, in which economic justice and righteousness will prevail – can be fulfilled, with all of us working together in unison."

Noahide Code Rabbi Yakov Cohen said, "Especially now in these

turbulent times, when so many people everywhere feel pressured and unsettled as a result of the global financial crisis, it is more important than ever to focus on the most important part of life: the spiritual integrity of human beings before G-d and the desire of the Creator to bestow all blessings on humanity through the full and complete redemption. At the same time, for the sake of children and youth around the world, it is critical that the representatives of the nations affirm and commit publicly to the basic premise, that people respect the very core fabric of life given by the Creator, which the Seven Universal Laws of Noah represent.

Rabbi Cohen told a story of world leaders who spent weeks trying to put together a map of the world with no success, when, finally a young boy snaps the map together in minutes. Curious, they ask how he was able to accomplish this seemingly impossible feat. He replied, 'I simply put the eyes together then the nose and so on.' Noticing their confused looks, he went on to explain, '...You see, on the other side of the world map is a single face of a human being.'

The NGO Branch services the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, a subsidiary body of the ECOSOC composed of 19 Member States. It also provides relevant advice and information concerning NGOs to representatives of the United Nations system, member States and civil society.

Following the conference the participants enjoyed Kosher food and wines from around the world, and agreed to support these ideas of "Unity and Youth" to help bring world peace with the Laws of Noah.

Rachel's tomb

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Superfragilistic Amniotic Inter...

by Stephen F. Kaufman

Title hardly makes any sense, right? Wrong!

Attempting to decipher the rhyme or reason for things of potential global impact goes against the pall of rational thought that is of value to the human race. Kind of like calling an otter a threat to walruses.

Let's take for example the obscene presumption of UNESCO in their recent acknowledgment of the Palestinian Authority renaming one of Judaism's most profound and sacred sites in an attempt to change the world's perception of the humanitarianism that Israel represents, and that is very obvious to anyone who would take the time to examine the record. The subtle implications of UNESCO's idiocy ranks along with the stupidity that intimates the holocaust never having happened.

In Israel there is a special site considered to be the third holiest place in the Jewish world: Rachel's Tomb. It is near Bethlehem, which was ceded to the PA in an earlier attempt to assuage the 'unassuageable.' (Something like the Oslo Accords where Arafat was given a great number of 'assuagements' that he resolutely, and with his profoundly canaille mentality, rejected). The first is the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. The second is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem known as the Wailing Wall.

Refer

to <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/news.aspx/140345>, On October 29, 2010, UNESCO overwhelmingly sided with the PA to rename the site of Rachel's Tomb as a mosque claiming that Abraham was also the patriarch of the Arab worlds.

The apparent weakness of Israeli leadership is a substantial reason for the world's obvious attitudes in misunderstanding what reality can and should be. In an attempt to constantly placate the world, Israel consistently cedes its own importance to the world at large. Perhaps the Israeli – US subterfuge connection is a valid reason for this overt display of deception. Sun Tzu, the world renown author of *The Art of War*, the Chinese classic of strategy, would no doubt agree with the tactics that Israel essentially uses to keep the world off-balance if–IF–they are conscious of their ploys. Clever, those Jews! Incidentally, Sun Tzu's *Art of War* is explained in depth for anyone to understand if they would examine the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Let's go further and clarify what Zionism and Judaism is.

Zionism is a concept that calls for the return of the Jewish people to Israel and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in their own land. It is a political idea that has roots in ancient history and modern nationalism. Accordingly, Israel and Jerusalem was given to the Jewish people by God Almighty Himself. This is acknowledged by just about every religious group on the face of the planet. Even the Muslims know this. Therefore, it cannot be given back to anyone because it never belonged to anyone. The Jews didn't conquer the land. They were given it from God, if you will. As well, Zionism should not to be confused with the Christian desire to see all Jews back in Israel (as reported by many of the so-called erudite press) so they can experience the "rapture," a Christian tenet about Jesus returning to Earth once all the Jews are "in their place." As a matter of fact, an organization called nefesh b'nefesh is allegedly funded by Christian groups to expedite

“aliyah,” the Hebrew word for return.

Judaism, aside from being a “religion” is essentially a way of life and a way of moral thinking that can elevate universal harmony and consciousness for the entire world. Jews are the self-proclaimed conscience of the world based on the giving of the Torah. Probably another reason for the unending extreme antisemitism rampaging throughout the world. Orthodox Judaic opinions suggest that antisemitism is a natural law and must be present at all times and in all places. Anytime anyone tells you to behave yourself, it is natural to resent them and eventually hate them. It is curious indeed that if 5,345,585 Bombablingsians starve to death or die from typhoid in Babalubia, or are Stalinized, the world protests for about two minutes. On the other hand, if a Jew builds one house on the West Bank, the whole world goes ballistic and accuses them of occupying someone else’s land in one form or another. So, in this writer’s estimation, hatred of Jews and Israel is a real thing. But, of course, it is not just Jews in Israel. It is Jews anywhere and everywhere.

Egyptian dominance in the world came and went as did the civilizations of the Greeks and Romans. The putrefaction of the Nazis and Communists also came and went. So did Mai’s massacres. But the Jews still remain (go figure) irrespective of the horrors perpetrated on them as a people throughout all time. For Israel to return the land that is not theirs, but is the domain of God is an absurdity. Jerusalem, the true holy city, is the center of the spiritual world, and if this was not so, then why does every major religion associate with it as their own? If in fact the Jews are the “chosen” people, it should be easy to see why they are the mark of all nations’ angst, jealousy, and fear.

The Old Testament of the Bible is always referred to as the basis for the crux of humanity. The New Testament refers to its authority as does the Koran. The influence of the Old Testament is universal. The “Lost Tribes” of Israel are now

being discovered as major influences throughout the world with irrevocable impact everywhere they went and in the development of philosophical approaches of most religions and societies. Curiously, recent discoveries suggest that one of the tribes visited and settled in ancient Japan and made a remarkable influence on the Shinto religion. Keep in mind that Judaism has been around for 3800 years making it the oldest "religion" in the world that focuses on a one God principle.

It is time for the Jews and for Israel to put their foot down and not permit any more insults to prevail. It is not enough to simply laugh off the matter at hand and expect everyone to ignore the absurdity. This mentality is one of the reasons that the holocaust happened while calling for the lawyers, who are all mouth and no fist, to put a stop to it. It is time for Israel to become more assertive by educating the misguided in the UN and teach them where it's really at.

Laws of Noah & Anti-Semitism

By Rabbi Yakov D Cohen

The cause of Anti-Semitism is some 3322 years old dating back when the Torah was given for when it was given on Mt. Sinai the name Sinai means "Hate" for it bought out the hatred of the nations. The laws of Noah date back some 1200 years before the Jewish people stood at Mt. Sinai and accepted the Torah.

There are two mysteries that have defied explanation for as long as anyone can remember. The first mystery is anti-Semitism, which is a mystery because there are few things in history that have been as consistent, as universal, and as predictable as anti-Semitism. From one country to another,

from one culture to another, from one religion to another – although lifestyles, philosophies, and so forth are extremely different, there is one thing all of the peoples of the world had in common: They all, at one point or another, included individuals, and even large segments of their populations, why does the world hate Jews?

What did these people know about Jews? Sometimes a lot, sometimes very little, sometimes nothing at all. And yet all of them have a discomfort with Jews. Some of the things anti-Semites come up with concerning Jews and Judaism, make us wonder, “What did we do? What could we possibly have done to cause them to suspect such a thing?”

For example, there’s the accusation that Jews are plotting to take over the world. We have our faults, we’re vulnerable to some legitimate criticism sometimes, but, plotting to take over the world? Where did that come from? In order to examine the mystery of anti-Semitism, one needs to have an understanding of its target, which is the Jewish people.

But that’s not so simple, and brings us to the second mystery: What exactly is a Jew? What is Judaism? A religion, a culture, a family, a nation? What? What is it about Jews that everyone hates?

Jews have always been called the “chosen people,” because that’s how we are described in the Bible. Chosen for what? How did we get to be chosen? Why did G-d have to choose a people?

On Being Chosen

In the story of Creation, we see that G-d doesn’t “choose” anything. He decides beforehand what He wants to create and He creates it. What does it mean, then, that He chose the Jewish people? If He wants a Jewish people, He creates a Jewish people. To “choose” a Jewish people implies that all people were originally alike, but then G-d decided that He wanted one nation to do a special job, or whatever He chose us for, and

so He went around and checked out the candidates and decided that He would choose us, and so we are the chosen people – we're the Jews.

What that implies is that it could have been anybody – it was a choice and G-d chose us, but He could have chosen somebody else and then *they* would have been Jewish. But this doesn't make any sense. If G-d wants a chosen people, then He creates one. And, if one is created chosen, then what's the choice? If there is really a difference, a uniqueness that makes the Jew Jewish, then what is there to choose?

Living in America and being enamored with the idea of egalitarianism we're very uncomfortable with the idea of a chosen people and we try to minimize it, to neutralize it. We try to say that being chosen doesn't mean that we're different, it's just that, well, your grandfather could have been chosen but, uh, he wasn't educated, but our grandfather was already reading Hebrew, was already wise, so he was chosen.

A Light Unto Nations

The Torah is compared to light, a way to live by and to bring light into the world and to make this world a dwelling place to G-d the Creator of all. We Jews have the responsibility to be a light unto nations with and the Laws of Noah and to bring about world peace.

But nature being nature, it was designed and is preserved by the Creator, not men. He decided to create a "Chosen Nation," and likewise arranges matters to keep us on the headlines—for good or for bad.

It is not uncommon for a lighthouse whose light is negligently out, that the very ship it was designed to aid crashes into the lighthouse itself, thus damaging both parties... Why?

Because of our essential nature and function. The only reason

for bothering to select a particular people—and a small and rebellious one at that—is if they have a purpose to fulfill and a task to accomplish. The Jewish people were tasked with being a lighthouse for the treacherous waters that humanity constantly flounders in. The nations are meant to persistently gaze in our direction. That's natural.

However, a lighthouse is only useful if the keepers actually maintain the building and keep a steady beacon burning. To that end, G-d gave us the light—His light. We are mere keepers, and dare not claim the light is ours alone.

So, what does the reaction to the Danish anti-Islamic cartoons have to do with Jews?

On the one hand, it is pure and evil anti-Semitism—may G-d return their hatred on their own heads! But at the same time, it is only natural that nations turn to us, whether when creating a religion or when looking for a scapegoat. When the Creator wove the fabric of nature, He designed it so that all eyes face us, regardless of their awareness of this inner reason.

The rest of it is up to us: to guide our neighbors on this planet with the illumination that G-d gave us, to give to them: the seven laws of Noah, as transmitted through the Torah. And it is in the interest of us all—ships and lighthouse alike—that our light should burn steady and sure. It is not uncommon for a lighthouse whose light is negligently out, that the very ship it was designed to aid crashes into the lighthouse itself, thus damaging both parties...

At times, we are like keepers who have forgotten about the beacon atop their tower, and are instead chasing fireflies outside. At such times, we must rediscover the stairwell leading to the top of our lighthouse and the lighthouse master's instructions on how to kindle its light.

Every step in this direction, no matter how seemingly small,

prepares our world for the era when no nation will provoke another, for the divine light will shine brightly for all to navigate a calm sea of life with comfort and ease.

Today we face greater a challenge than anti-Semitism in America, with the idea of equality and politely correctness. We should not forget our task and everyone task to light up the world with the Laws of Noah

9 21. 2010 from a speech to Hadassah NYC

10 wounded IDF vacation in NY

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Ten severely wounded IDF soldiers vacation in NY

Ten severely wounded IDF soldiers are on a vacation in New York, accompanied by Chabad Terror Victims Project and hosted by Chabad Israel Center of the Upper East Side.

This past Tuesday night, four hundred members of Chabad Israel Center of the Upper East Side's community, joined ten IDF soldiers on a grand two hour cruise along the Hudson river. The cruise was an opportunity for the community to meet and

thank ten heros of Am Yisrael in a fun, relaxing and enjoyable setting while enjoying music, great food, open bar, and a variety of entertainment booths.

The group of ten severely wounded Israeli soldiers landed in New York this past Sunday with a grand welcome, from the community, amidst singing and dancing. During their ten day stay, the soldiers will be touring New York, Washington, The Hamptons and Niagara Falls. In the past two days they have toured the length and breadth of Manhattan, including the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, Maddam Tussaud's, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Times Square and Central Park.

When asked by a local community member what he hoped to achieve on this trip, Uri, a soldier responded, "I just want ten days of forgetting about my pain and suffering. I want a break from it all."

This is what Chabad Israel Center of the Upper East Side and Chabad Terror Victims Project's in Israel had in mind when organizing this trip – to offer these veterans ten days of worry-free relaxation and a much needed break from endless treatment and therapy.

Rabbi **Menachem Kutner** from Chabad Terror victims Project arrived with the soldiers on their trip as CTVP takes care of these soldiers year round. The soldiers are being hosted by Chabad Israel Center of the Upper East Side under the auspices of Rabbi **Uriel** and **Shevy Vigler**. The trip is being coordinated by Rabbi **Laima Barber** and Rabbi Uriel Vigler.

Jewish business leaders gathered together on Monday morning to give the soldiers an official and warm welcome from the Chabad Israel Center community in a private and exclusive affair held at the Chabad Israel Center. American veterans of war were present and welcomed the group to the USA. Rabbi Krasnianski of Chabad of the Upper East Side welcomed them to the

community. Shimon Shkury and Issy Hacmun, two local businessmen, welcomed the group on behalf of Chabad Israel Center.

In all probability the highlight of the entire trip so far, was when the soldiers were brought to Chabad Israel Center's Alef Bet Preschool. The children awaited the group with songs they had prepared and cookies they had baked for our beloved soldiers. After the kids finished their songs, the soldiers started teaching the kids some of the songs that they remembered from kindergarten. Then the soldiers simply picked the kids up, hugged them, kissed them and started dancing with them. Truly an inspiration!

During the cruise, Rabbi Menachem Kutner introduced some of the soldiers to the community. The community was truly moved when the soldiers described in detail how they were injured. The climax was when Ben S, a soldier who lost one hand, and the other is paralyzed and suffered severe head injuries got up and emotionally declared to his commanding officer Ron Lichy. Thank you for saving my life in Gaza – those were all the words he could utter...

The cruise ended when Uri R. ended his speech and thanked the entire community for their support and thanked them for bringing them to the United states and allowing them to have a wonderful vacation.

Rabbi Uriel Vigler then took the mike and corrected him. "It is not you who have to thank us. It is our pleasure and honor to be hosting these true heroes of our time. We are the ones who have to thank you."

The Choice is yours...

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The Choice is yours...

Greetings to our dear readers,

On Sunday November 1, 2009 – ; The Chabad of Fairfax, Virginia hosted a symposium on Noahide Laws, with Rabbi S. Deitsch
www.CHABADofVA.com

The Choice is yours an international seminar that is centered on building universal solidarity and peace. The Seminar took place at the Chabad of Northern Virginia; the seminar brought together people from faiths with the goal of spreading the universality of the seven laws of Noah in the Washington DC area.

This seminar focused on increasing international commitment to peace and in our time, for it is very important that each person, independent of his religious creed, race or political choices, makes sure that he/she is making a contribution, through his/her own behavior to balance the world said Rabbi Y Cohen of www.Noahide.org

Non-Jews from different backgrounds such as Peruvian, Indonesian, African Americans among others came to learn about the Laws of Noah. There were also Jewish people who attended to learn more about the Noahide.

I asked one the Jewish ladies why she attended the event. I once tried to explain to a co-worker of mine about believing only in G-d and no other else. But my co-worker got upset. So

I came to the event to learn how to approach or introduce the Noahide Laws and I learned a lot. I am happy to hear that we have big Noahide organizations who are working very hard to spread the word she said. As for me, I came for the same reason. Few months ago I heard that my mother was about to get involved in a certain religion, coupled with heartfelt prayer to G-d; I immediately sent information about the Truth of G-d and there's no other beside Him. I thank G-d that my mother listened. But what took place gave me a realization that just how much important for me that my family believes only in G-d, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; so desires that all mankind knows Him. It inspired me to help in spreading the Noahide laws.

There were two Noahides who joined us. I asked one of them how they learned about the Noahide. One man explained that he had a Jewish co-worker and they talk about religion until he learned about the Noahide Laws. While the other man explained that his father was Jewish and the mother was Catholic, which brought him into confusion of which way to go until he learned about the Noahide and his wife accepted the Noahide laws as well. But they are hoping to have a Noahide community here in Fairfax, which they can have a sense of community of their own.

The Program was led by Rabbi Yakov Cohen of Noahide.org, who spoke about Maimonides & played a film interview about people who adopted observance of the Noahide laws, accompanied by wisdom from prominent Rabbis.

The film played also described how wonderful the world will be in the era of Moshiach. It will be the world of which we dreamworld peace between man and his fellow, and in all of creation.

Our other guests were Rabbi Yehoishophot Oliver, and Dr. Michael Schulman, who displayed Noahide books, and assorted cards distributed by his organization, Ask Noah International.

It was exciting to learn of the existence of a prayer booklet for Noahides .

On display were also seven Noahide Laws magnets which are also good gifts for non-Jewish friends and bumper-stickers.

We thank the rabbis who made the effort to come, and all those who strive to introduce to the world that HaShem our G-d, Blessed is He; is the True and Only G-d. Indeed, this is the same mitzvah that our Father, Avraham did in his time.

May Moshiach come speedily, and rebuild the Beit Hamikdash in Eretz Yisrael. Then Jews and non-Jews will come together in peace, and give thanks and praise to HaShem, our G-d.

Aviya Isaacson (mygreatestjoys@aol.com)



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Maimonides in the Era...

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Maimonides in the Era...

By: Rabbi Yakov Dovid Cohen

The Era of the Messiah is a time that the Miztvoth-Commandments will be in their complete glory and will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash; Temple. And is part of the belief of the coming of Messiah. And therefore it is paramount to explain that "We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah. Therefore in the times of Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash Temple. As it is written in: Jer 36:26 he will remove the stone from your flesh"

As Maimonides States in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D.

The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential; as it is written Isaiah 11:9 "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed."^[1]

The understanding of the stages of Messiah is part of the basic obligation to believe in the coming of Messiah; outlined in the Thirteen principle of faith that one must believe and await his coming, Is part of the perfection of keeping the Miztvoh. The Messianic Age is the only one, which will enable men to realize their real and ultimate purpose in life.

Maimonides states this view in the code saying, in chapter twelve law 4: the sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that the Jewish people rule over the world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that the Jewish people be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, with out any one to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to come, as we explained in Hilchos Teshuvah. [\[2\]](#)

We thus see that the belief in the Messiah is integrated with the entire view of Maimonides that the Torah as a whole was given for the purpose of helping man to self development in order to reach the human genus of the highest degree of intellectual perfection, the realization of which is only possible in the coming of the Messiah.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson^{[\[3\]](#)} Explains that the times of the Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash. This knowledge of the Messiah and all its details is connected to the first Mitzvah of knowing G-D, and since at that time we will have an increased in knowledge “for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed.” and this is not possible to fully understand G-D without the Messiah.

And therefore is crucial and fundamental part to know that only in times of Messiah we “will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential”

And continues in chapter 12, law 5. In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Why is necessary to know the stage of the world. "The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential" why does have to say mortal potential it is obvious as we are merely men.

Maimonides is telling us "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah in our times that our occupation is purely to know G-D. That even a person that his occupation is Torah must sustain themselves with business, however in the times of the Messiah "will be solely to know G-D". And solely for that reason and for the sake of Torah, and this is why he writes "Only" for the will be no other motives even holy ones.

Halachah – Jewish law is to refine the world at large so that it will exist in harmony with G-D's will. There have been times during which this intent has been put into practice by Jewish kings. In the most complete sense, it will be realized when the Messiah comes, when the observance in all the Mitzvot associated with the Mikdash Temple will be restored and our people will devote all their energies to this goal. Similarly, the effect of the Mitztvot in the world at large will be completed. There will be no pressure or disturbances hindering the observance of the Torah. Furthermore, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will be abundant.

In the Laws of Kings. Maimonides explains that there is a relationship of cause and effect between the obstacles and the generous flow of the divine beneficence. " There will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance". For this relationship to the affected not only must man receivers the Divine blessings, but

he must also be conscious of them.

Furthermore for this reason he emphasizes that in the time of the Messiah " good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available. Being involved in material delights in the time of the Messiah is however somewhat problematic. At a time when humanity and the world at large will be refined and elevated to a state of perfection, it is difficult to conceive a man that would choose to invest his time in physical delights, by stating it will be" as freely available as dust". Although they will be accessible to man and he will partake of them for the sake of his health, he will consider them like dust as being worthless.

Although we will live in an Era of material prosperity our attention will not be focused on it. Rather the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah. This implies two concepts. One; Because good things will flow in abundance in all the delights will be freely available, and we will be able to direct all of our energies to the study of Torah. Two; More particularly, our energies will be directed to the knowledge of G-D.

At present, our study of Torah has many different objectives, most obvious among them knowledge of how to perform the Mitzvot, however in the Era of redemption our study of the Torah will have a single goal, the knowledge of G-D. In that Era we will still observe the Mitzvot in perception. Nevertheless since nothing will disturb our Torah study, we will be able to learn how to observe the mitzvoth perfectly into a relatively short time. Therefore our attention will be devoted into the deeper dimensions of Torah study.

Maimonides goes on to say "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." this example of the water covering the ocean does not seem to fit with understanding, for covering seems implies is beyond comprehension, can just as the water concealed that what is in

the sea.

To the contrary by quoting "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." He highlights the manner in which the knowledge of G-D will permeate the world and the thought processes of every individual person. A vast multitude of creatures likewise inhabits the ocean, however when looking at the ocean, what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains. Similarly, although in the Era of the Redemption the world will continue to exist, individual creatures will lose consciousness of their separate identity and will be suffused with the knowledge of G-D.

The Era of the Redemption will not negate the world existence; on the contrary, it will affirm the true existence of the world. As Maimonides bring in his very first law Yesodei Ha Torah 1:1 "All the Beings of the heavens, the earth, and whatever is between them came into existence solely from the truth of His Being." And this how Maimonides begins and concludes the Misnah Torah, the compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of creation of the world will be when King Messiah Comes.

Maimonides begins by saying the first Mitzvoth is "to know that there is a G-D" and since one must know of G-D before any Mitzvoth therefore we can not say this is the first Mitzvoth. The Knowing of G-D .As the Abarbernel ^[4] writes, "The first Mitzvoth to believe that there is a G-D. We already know that he exists. Therefore we must say that it means, that G-D is complete and that he dose not need any thing, and that all, need him." And this that "He Is" and needs no one is understood according to intellect, since he created intellect he is not bound by it. As explained by the Rashbah he can be two opposites and no rules apply.

Therefore the belief and knowledge of G-D is in three stages. One: The general belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth.

Two: The belief and knowledge according to intellect that he is the first. And all come from him. This is the first Mitzvah. Three: And even greater knowledge, that he is not limited by intellect. And the mind itself understands this. As it says "the greatest knowledge that you do not know him."

Likewise in Mitzvoth we also have three stages One: before any Mitzvoth, one must except the yoke of heaven, like when the Jews said before receiving the Torah we will "Do" and then we will "hear." As the belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth of knowing G-D. Two: To understand with ones intellect the Mitzvoth, action to be able to do by learning Torah. Three: Great is study that brings to action. To fulfill because it his (G-D'S) will. And the third stage will only be when the Messiah comes that one will be totally "Only to know G-D" ¹⁵¹ one will have no other motives even holy ones. Only for the sake of the knowledge and understanding of Torah. And not to be rewarded in the world to come. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. The Jews and the nations of world will be free to study Torah and its wisdom.

In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: the founder of the Chabad branch of the Chassidic movement. Chabad (an acronym of the Hebrew words for Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge) is a philosophy and approach to life in which the mind and intellect play a key role in man's endeavor to serve his Creator.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman summarized the fundamentals of his philosophy in a slim volume known as 'Tanya', on which he labored for twenty years. On the title page of Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman states the aim of his book: to demonstrate how the fulfillment of the divine purpose in creation is indeed exceedingly close, in a long and short way. "The era of Messiah ... is the culmination and fulfillment of the creation of our world" the world is to this end that it was created... In the future , the light of G-d will be revealed without any

obscuring garment, as it is written: “No longer shall your Master be shrouded; your eyes shall behold your Master”.^[6]

A semblance of this was already experienced on earth at the time that the Torah was given, as it is written: “You have been shown to know that the L-rd He is G-d, there is none else beside Him”^[7] ... [But] then their existence was literally nullified by the revelation, as our sages have said, “With each utterance [the people of Israel heard from G-d at Mount Sinai], their souls flew from their bodies...”^[8] Yet in the end of days the body and the world will be refined, and will be able to receive the revelation of the divine light ... via the Torah.^[9] The Rebbe explained the laws of Noah are a means to bring about universal peace among all nations, and to refine the world to bring about the Era for all to see “That G-D is one and His name is one.”

Conference on the Noahide laws November 1, 2009 Chabad of VA –
www.Noahide.org

[1] Maimonides, Moses. Shemonah Perakim. Translation into English by J L Gorfinkle under the title The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics. New York, 1912.

[2] Ibid

[3] The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Likutei Sichos vol. 27 p250 Kehot Pub. B. N.Y. USA

[4] . Reines, Alvin J. Maimonides and Abarbanel on prophecy. H.U.C.A.Press

[5] Rambam, Finkel, Avraham Yaakov, Yeshivah Beth Moshe 2001, 62

[6] Tanya Ch (Isaiah 30:20)

[7] Deuteronomy 4:35

[8] Talmud, Shabbat 88b

[9] Likkutei Sichot, vol. XI, pp. 8-13.

Maimonides in That Era

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Maimonides In That Era

Rabbi Yakov Dovid Cohen

The prophets of Israel describe a future in which a great leader shall arise in Israel, awaken his people to return to G-d, restore them to their homeland, rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and bring about an age of universal enlightenment, harmony and perfection. As Maimonides States in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era

there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D" [1]

The Rebbes Rabbi M. M. Schneerson explains this applies to the "nations of the world" for them to know and study the seven laws of Noah. This is the reason Maimonides write "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." [2]

The Laws KINGS

At the outset it must emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him it include this belief among the articles of faith, but is inherently connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

In the last book of the Mishnah Torah Law of Kings chapter eleven [3] "In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash (Temple) and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah".

Whoever dose not believe in him, or dose not await his coming denies not only the statement of the other prophets, but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher, for the Torah attests to his coming, stating [4] "And the L-rd your G-d will bring back your captivity and have compassion upon you. He will return and gather you... Even if your dispersed ones are in the furthest reaches of the heavens, ... G-d will bring you...

We must understand as to the detailed laws concerning the Messiah as Maimonides wrote the Misnah Torah as a book of laws

as he writes. It is a digest of all Jewish law, as Maimonides states that one needs only to study the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazaka to learn the entire Jewish law Torah. Why we must know all details regarding the days as he states "We will sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah"

He continues [\[5\]](#) in the second law "Similarly, in regards to the cities of Refuges, it is stated, When G-D will expand your borders. You shall add three more cities..."

The Mishnah Torah is a book of laws that provides a clear guide as to the Halachah. To know what to do as is this information in our current stage. We must therefore say that all it is critical.

As Maimonides has stated in his introduction to the [\[6\]](#) Mishnah Torah is to provide a single reference for Halachic. "Ruling". Why does he go into detail as to the Times of the Messiah "In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash" This information does not have any bearing on the person that is required to believe in the coming of the Messiah. And moreover Maimonides has already told us of the commandment to believe in the coming of Messiah as part of the thirteen principle of faith that one must believe and await his coming.

As Maimonides is one of the few that brings Halachic ruling regarding the Messianic Laws I will go into great detail as he continues in the second Law [\[7\]](#) "Similarly, in regards to the Cities of Refuge, it is stated "when G-D will expand your borders. you shall add three more cities. "This command has never been fulfilled. (Surely) G-D did not give this command in vain, and thus the intent was that it be fulfilled after the coming of Messiah. " There is no need for us to know this information from an Halachic book of Laws.

Maimonides [8] continues with the following "who ever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only the statement of the other prophets," but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher " for the Torah attests to his coming, stating, and G-D will bring back your captivity" Maimonides, however, does not content himself with a single proof texts, and continues" there is also a reference in the passage concerning Bilaam, who prophesies about the two anointed kings the first anointed king, David who saved Israel from her oppressors, and the final anointed king who will arise from among his descendants Save Israel at the ends of days that passage states [9] "I see it, but not now" this refers to David "I perceive it, but not in the near future "This refers to king Messiah. "A star shall go forth from Yaakov" this refers to David " and a staff shall arise in Israel" This refers to King Messiah." He shall crush all of Moab's princes" this refers to David, as it is written Samuel 8:2 "He smote Moab and measured them with a line "; he shall break down all of Seth's descendants " This refers to King Messiah about whom it is written" He will rule from sea to sea ". This extensive quotations from the bible and Torah prophecies is not Maimonides normal style as he rarely brings quotations as well as sources in his writings.

To understand as to why Maimonides goes into great detail regarding the Messiah. We must compare the first Messiah referring to King David as quoted above, as being the anointed one and does not include King Saul who was also anointed.

Again it must be emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him to include this belief among his Laws, but is inherently connected with an Halachahic ruling to provide a clear halachahic guide to action and is not a story and connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

These questions can be resolved within the context of the

explanation of a more general issue, namely the location the law of kings at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah. At the beginning of these laws of Maimonides has stated that [\[10\]](#) "Israel was commanded to fulfill three Mitzvot and when they entered the holy Land to appoint a king. to destroy the descendants of Amalek., and to build G-ds chosen house." [\[11\]](#)

Accordingly, it would appear appropriate to record the laws governing the appointment of a king at a much earlier stage within the book of code.

He nonetheless chooses to make these laws at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah, as a compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate and complete performance of all Mitzvot of the Torah will be attained when a king rules over Israel. It is then that we will fulfill the Mitzvot of waging the wars of G- D, destroying Amalek, and building the Temple Mikdash. Similarly, our observance of the Torah and its Mitzvot will be enhanced in totality. As he writes at the conclusion of chapter four," The king purpose and intent should be to elevate the true faith." [\[12\]](#)

This conception of the monarchy found full expression in King David, who united the entire Jewish people, completed that conquest of Israel, secured peace for our nation and began the preparation for the building of the Temple Mikdash in Jerusalem.

Within this context we can appreciate Maimonides understanding of the Messiah in the beginning of chapter eleven" king Messiah will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty," And therefore when we pray three times a day the Amidah or Shemone Esrei, eighteen benediction the fourteenth benediction that is a prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem clearly makes reference to king David " Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city and dwell therein as you have promised: speedily establish their in the throne of David your servant," and in

the fifteen for the arrival of are Redeemer the Messiah again makes reference to king David

The Amidah are as old as our people and date back to the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our current prayer books dates back to a later time, to the time of Ezra the scribe and the Men of the Great Assembly more than 2300 years ago. That was the time of the Babylonian exile, for the men of the Great Assembly saw the need to establish one prayer in Hebrew for all the Jewish people regardless of the place and time.

He therefore implies and defined Messiah as a King who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also bring about the complete and total observance of the Torah and Mitzvots, even greater then the times of the Temple Mikdash, as their will be an additional three cities of refuge, that was never available only when the Messiah comes.

Our faith and our yearning for the Messiah is integral part of the belief in the coming of the Messiah. And only now can we understand why it is necessary to know the times of Messiah in all its detail. The time of Messiah will be the ultimate practices of the Laws Mitzvoth. As he states "all the statutes will be reinstituted as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah. [\[13\]](#)

Messiah according to Maimonides

The Era of the Messiah is a time that the Miztvots will be in their complete glory and will be even greater then the times of the Mikdash; Temple. And is part of the belief of the coming of Messiah. And therefore it is paramount to explain that "We will sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah. Therefore in the times of Messiah will be even greater then time times of the Mikdash Temple. As it is written in

“Jer 36:26 he will remove the stone from your fresh”

As Maimonides States in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. “In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D.

The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential; as it is written Isaiah 11:9 “for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed.” [\[14\]](#)

The understanding of the stages of Messiah is part of the basic obligation to believe in the coming of Messiah; outlined in the Thirteen principle of faith that one must believe and await his coming. Is part of the perfection of keeping the Miztvot. The Messianic Age is the only one, which will enable men to realize their real and ultimate purpose in life.

Maimonides states this view in the code saying, in chapter twelve law 4: “ the sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that the Jewish people rule over the world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that the Jewish people be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, with out any one to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to come, as we explained in Hilchos Teshuvah. [\[15\]](#)

We thus see that the belief in the Messiah is integrated with the entire view of Maimonides that the Torah as a whole was given for the purpose of helping man to self development in order to reach the human genus of the highest degree of intellectual perfection, the realization of which is only possible in the coming of the Messiah.

In chapter eleven of the Mishah Torah law 1;" He will rebuild Temple Mikdash and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be to reinstitute as in former times.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson [\[16\]](#) Explains that the times of the Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash. This knowledge of the Messiah and all its details is connected to the first Mitzot of knowing G-D, and since at that time we will have an increased in knowledge "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." and this is not possible to fully understand G-D without the Messiah.

And therefore is crucial and fundamental part to know that only in times of Messiah we will "and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential"

And continues [\[17\]](#) in chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Why is necessary to know the stage of the world. "The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential" why does have to say mortal potential it is obvious as we are merely men.

Maimonides is telling us [\[18\]](#) "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah in our times that are occupation is purely to know G-D. That even a person that his occupation is Torah must sustain themselves with business, however in the times of the Messiah "will be solely to know G-D". And solely for that reason and for the sake of Torah, and this is why he writes

“Only” for the will be no other motives even holy ones.

Halachah is to refine the world at large so that it will exist in harmony with G-D's will. There have been times during which this intent has been put into practice by Jewish kings. In the most complete sense, it will be realized when the Messiah comes, when the observance in all the Mitzvot associated with the Mikdash Temple will be restored and our people will devote all their energies to this goal. Similarly, the effect of the Mitzvot in the world at large will be completed. There will be no pressure or disturbances hindering the observance of the Torah. Furthermore, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will be abundant.

In the laws of Kings. [\[19\]](#) Maimonides explains that there is a relationship of cause and effect between the obstacles and the generous flow of the divine beneficence. " There will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance". For this relationship to the affected not only must man receivers the divine blessings, but he must also be conscious of them.

Furthermore for this reason he emphasizes that in the time of the Messiah " good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available. Being involved in material delights in the time of the Messiah is however somewhat problematic. At a time when humanity and the world at large will be refined and elevated to a state of perfection, it is difficult to conceive a man that would choose to invest his time in physical delights, by stating it will be" as freely available as dust". Although they will be accessible to man and he will partake of them for the sake of his health, he will consider them like dust as being worthless.

Although we will live in an Era of material prosperity our attention will not be focused on it. Rather the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. Is part of our Mitzvot according to Torah. This implies two concepts. One.

Because good things will flow in abundance in all the delights will be freely available, and we will be able to direct all of our energies to the study of Torah. Two. More particularly, our energies will be directed to the knowledge of G-D.

At present our study of Torah has many different objectives, most obvious among them and knowledge of how to perform the Mitzvot, however in the Era of redemption our study of the Torah will have a single goal, the knowledge of G-D. In that Era we will still observe the Mitzvot in perception. Nevertheless since nothing will disturb our Torah study, we will be able to learn how to observe the mitzvot perfectly into a relatively short time. Therefore our attention will be devoted into the deeper dimensions of Torah study.

And goes on to say [\[20\]](#) "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." this example of the water covering the ocean does not seem to fit with understanding, for covering implies is beyond comprehension, can just as the water concealed that what is in the sea.

To the contrary by quoting "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." He highlights the manner in which the knowledge of G-D will permeate the world and the thought processes of every individual person. To understand the simile, the vast varieties of creatures that live on dry land are readily discernible as separate entities. [\[21\]](#)²¹

A vast multitude of creatures likewise inhabits the ocean, however when looking at the ocean, what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains. Similarly, although in the Era of the Redemption the world will continue to exist, individual creatures will lose consciousness of their separate identity and will be suffused with the knowledge of G-D.

The Era of the Redemption will not negate the world existence; on the contrary, it will affirm the true existence of the world. As Maimonides 94 bring in his very first law Yesodei Ha Torah 1:1 “ All the Beings of the heavens, the earth, and whatever is between them came into existence solely from the truth of His Being.” And this how Maimonides begins and concludes the Misnah Torah, the compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of creation of the world will be when King Messiah Comes.

Maimonides begins by saying the first Mitzvoth is [\[22\]](#)“ to know that there is a G-D” and since one must know of G-D before any Mitzvoth therefore we can not say this is the first Mitzvoth. The Knowing of G-D .As the 22 Abarbernel writes, “The first Mitzvoth to believe that there is a G-D. We already know that he exists. Therefore we must say that it means, that G-D is complete and that he dose not need any thing, and that all, need him.” And this that “He Is” and needs no one is understood according to intellect, since he created intellect he is not bound by it. As explained by the Rasbah he can be two opposites and no rules apply.

We might further add that it will be an age of peace and plenty and the chief interest of man will be the knowledge of G-D. In that Maimonides in speaking of man’s objective, says in Moreh Nevukim [\[23\]](#) Guide to the perplexed“ the fourth kind of perfection is the true perfection of man, the possession of such notion which lead to true metaphysical opinions as regards G-D. With this perfection man has obtained his final object, it gives him true human perfection, it remains to him alone, it gives him immortality and in its account he is called man.”

Thus we see that Maimonides is of the conviction that immortality is based upon ideas, upon knowledge. “His (Man’s) aim must be the aim of man as man, viz., the formation of ideas and nothing else. The best and sublimes among them is the idea which man forms of G-D, angels and the rest of the

creation according to his capacity.” Consequently the intellectual perfection attained by the soul of the righteous after death is the final purpose of human life.

Therefore the belief and knowledge of G-D in three stages. One: The general belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth. Two: The belief and knowledge according to intellect that he is the first. And all come from him. This is the first Mitzvah. Three: And even greater knowledge, that he is not limited by intellect. And the mind itself understands this. As it says “ the greatest knowledge that you do not know him.” [\[24\]](#)

Likewise in Mitzvoth we also have three stages One: before any Mitzvoth, one must except the yoke of heaven, like when the Jews said before receiving the Torah we will “Do” and then we will hear. As the belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth of knowing G-D. Two: To understand with ones intellect the Mitzvoth, action to be able to do by learning Torah. Three: Great is study that brings to action. To fulfill because it his (G-D’S) will.

And the third stage will only be when the Messiah comes that one will be totally “Only to know G-D” [\[25\]](#) one will have no other motives even holy ones. Only for the sake of the knowledge and understanding of Torah. And not to be rewarded in the world to come. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. The Jews and the nations of world will be free to study Torah and its wisdom.

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philosophy in a slim volume known as "Tanya," on which he labored for twenty years. On the title page of Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman states the aim of his book: to demonstrate how the fulfillment of the divine purpose in creation "is indeed exceedingly close, in a long and short way."

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 28. [Talmud, Shabbat 88b](#)
 29. [Likkutei Sichot, vol. XI, pp. 8-13.](#)
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What the Ark Taught Noah

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What the Ark Taught Noah

By Rabbi Cohen

When the rains first fall at the beginning of the flood story, Noah is described as “a man of little faith,” waiting for the waters to reach his knees or so before finally entering the ark.

Being that Noah had, at G-d’s behest, dropped everything and spent the last 120 years building an enormous ark, to call him a man of little faith seems a bit extreme.

Similarly, the flood is referred to as “the waters of Noah,” as though he – the only one worthy of being saved – were actually to blame for it. This is odd.

But the truth is that Noah is criticized in the flood story. He was surrounded by wicked people who needed a righteous leader to teach them and inspire them to goodness. Noah was righteous, but he wasn’t a leader. He didn’t give enough of himself to the generation.

So Noah entered the ark, a 450-foot floating sealed zoo. The lion roared, the bear growled, the dog barked and the duck quacked. The animals – everything from insects to elephants – were hungry, each with its own diet, feeding time and messy quarters to clean. The ark was also claustrophobic and damp. “Deliver me from prison,” Noah prayed, “for my soul is tired of the smell of lions, bears and panthers.”

But this time Noah had no choice – the world was in his ark and he, as captain, had to take care of it. He fed the animals, he cared for them and he cleaned their stalls. Our Sages say that he gave of himself until he was coughing blood. He gave of himself until there was nothing left to give.

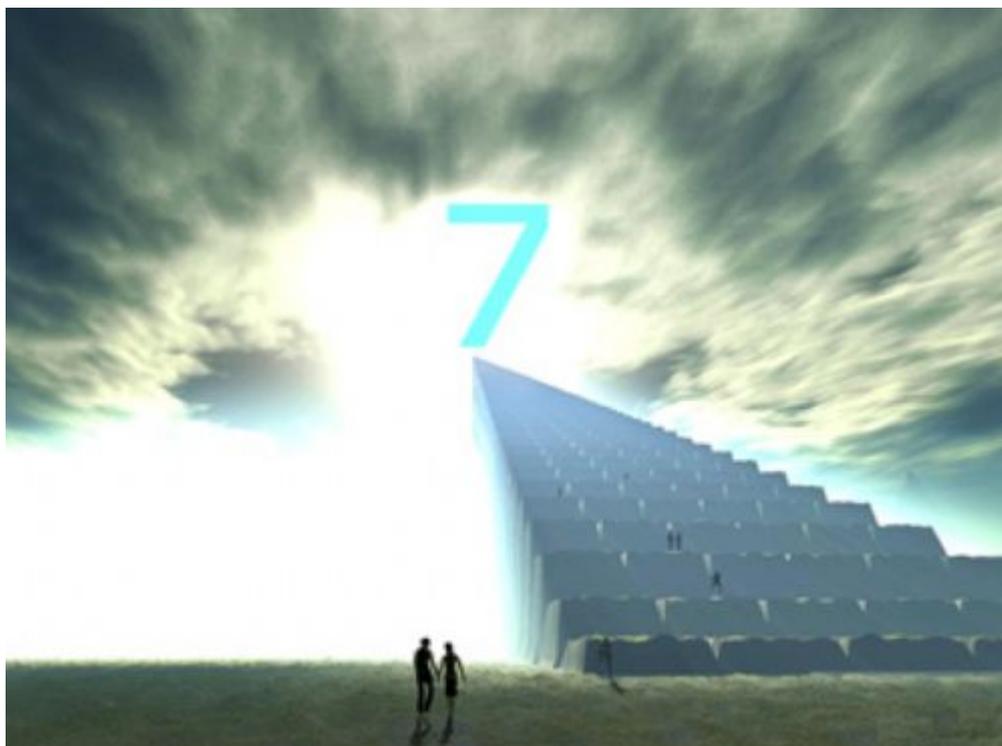
Sometimes all faith means is the realization that G-d wants us to give of ourselves to others, for the world is built on kindness. Thanks to Noah's kindness, there was a spirit of goodness in the ark, where, after a long day, the lion did, in fact, lie down next to the lamb.

The ark taught Noah faith – the faith that we're all in this, the same boat, together.

Heaven for Seven

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Heaven for Seven



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 (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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