

# The Religion of Ordinary Life (Parts 4-5)

## INTRODUCTION

How essential is the idea of 'God' to living a good / moral life?

Show students the Noachide Code, e.g. from:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Laws\\_of\\_Noah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Laws_of_Noah) or

<http://asknoah.org> or see the Code at the end of these notes.

Explain that, according to Judaism, Jews should keep the 613 commandments of the Torah [the first five books of the Bible], but for non-Jews the expectation is that they should observe just the seven Noachide laws. Provide some time for reading and reflection.

## ACTIVITY

Show students the trailer for the film 'Noah' explaining that the director, Darren Aronofsky, was inspired but not limited by the account of the Great Flood in the Bible (Genesis 6-9):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2sGw3w8\\_HA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2sGw3w8_HA)

Explain that the Code is known as 'Noachide' because the final version, with the addition of the 7<sup>th</sup> law was said to have come into being after the Flood.

Ask the students to respond to such questions as:

- *Why do you think the commandment about law courts came in after the Great Flood?*
- *What do you think is meant by 'God'?*
- *What is 'idolatry' and why do you think the Noachide Code (as well as other religions such as Christianity and Islam) placed such importance on acknowledging One God?*
- *According to the biblical account, God destroyed the world because of people's wickedness. How far do you think belief in one God is needed to prevent the disasters that can arise from human selfishness?*
- *What do you think of the seven laws as a whole?*

Show students parts 4 and 5 of Don Cupitt's 'The Religion of Ordinary Life' [[www.doncupitt.com/ordinary-life](http://www.doncupitt.com/ordinary-life)] on 'Faith in Life' and 'Solar Living'. [See previous Solarity session for the full document.]

## ACTIVITY

Provide some time for reading and reflection and then ask the students to respond to such questions as:

- *Suppose that, as Cupitt says, 'Life is now as God to us' and that even 'The Supreme Good' is transient, i.e., will pass away in time. How important do you think it is to believe that there may be an eternal 'God'?*
- *What, according to Cupitt, is 'solar living'?*
- *In what ways do the students 'express' their lives?*
- *Don Cupitt says that 'We should never complain'. Why do you think he says this? Do you agree?*

## CONCLUSION

Encourage the students to sum up their reflections on how essential they think the idea of 'God' is to living a good / moral life.

- *Are the Noachide Code and Cupitt's 'Religion of Life' trying to do some of the same things?*
- *In what ways are they similar / different?*

## Seven Laws of Noah

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Laws\\_of\\_Noah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Laws_of_Noah) [Downloaded 6 April 2014]

The rainbow is the unofficial symbol of the [Noahide Movement](#), recalling the rainbow that appeared after the [Great Flood](#) of the Bible.

Among religious branches of [Judaism](#), the Seven Laws of Noah ([Hebrew](#): שבע *Sheva mitzvot B'nei Noach*), or the Noahide Laws, are a set of [נח בני מצוות](#) moral imperatives that, according to the [Talmud](#), were given by God as a binding set of laws for the "children of [Noah](#)" – that is, all of humanity.

Accordingly, any non-Jew who adheres to these laws is regarded as a [righteous gentile](#), and is assured of a place in the [world to come](#) ([Hebrew](#): [Olam Haba](#)), the final reward of the righteous. הבא עולם.

The seven laws listed by the [Tosefta](#) (dated to 220 CE) and the [Babylonian Talmud](#) (dated to 300 CE) are:

- The prohibition of [idolatry](#).
- The prohibition of [murder](#).
- The prohibition of [theft](#).
- The prohibition of [sexual immorality](#).
- The prohibition of [blasphemy](#).
- The prohibition of eating flesh taken from an animal while it is still alive.
- The requirement of maintaining courts to provide legal recourse.

According to Rabbinic tradition, the Noahide laws are derived exegetically from the six commandments which were given to [Adam](#) in the [Garden of Eden](#), [Gen 2:16](#), and a seventh precept, which was added after the [Flood of Noah](#). According to Judaism, the [613 commandments](#) given in the written [Torah](#), as well as their explanations and applications discussed in the [oral Torah](#), are applicable to the Jews only, and non-Jews are bound only to observe the seven Noahide laws.