

Sanhedrin Moves to Establish Council For Noahides

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A council of non-Jewish observers of the Seven Laws of Noah has been selected and will be ordained by the reestablished Sanhedrin in Jerusalem this January 2006.

B'nai Noach, literally "Children of Noah," known as Noahides, are non-Jews who take upon themselves the Torah's obligations for non-Jews - consisting of seven laws passed on from Noah following the flood, as documented in Genesis (see below).

Until now, Noahide communities and organization had been scattered around the globe, with a particular concentration centered around the southern United States. The communities themselves are a relatively **recent phenomenon** bolstered by the fact that the Internet has allowed individuals sharing Noahide beliefs to get in touch with one another.

The court of 71 rabbis, known as the Sanhedrin, which was reestablished last October in Tiberius following the reinstatement of rabbinic *semikha*, decided, after numerous requests from the Noahide community, to assist the movement in forming a leadership council.

Rabbi Michael Bar-Ron, with the Sanhedrin's blessing, travelled to the United States to meet with representatives of the Noahide movement and select members for the High Council. Bar-Ron, an ordained student, *talmid samukh*, who currently sits on the Sanhedrin, is also one of the Sanhedrin's spokesmen.

Bar-Ron organized a small conference in California where six of the council's future members were selected and also addressed the annual convention of the Vendyl Jones Research Institute - one of the Noahide organizations represented on the council. At the VJRI convention, Bar-Ron met five more of the Noahide leaders who will be joining the council.

The purpose of the council, which was the brainchild of Rabbi Avraham Toledano, is to assist the B'nei Noach in their struggle to observe the word of G-d. "The goal is to unify, serve and organize all kosher B'nei Noach communities of the world under a single body that can operate under the direct authority and supervision of the Sanhedrin," the decision to establish the body reads. **"To form a vessel through which the Torah, from Zion (via the Sanhedrin) can effectively serve non-Jewish communities around the world."**

A third goal of the creation of the High Council and the Sanhedrin's efforts in regard to the Noahide community, is to "transform the Noahide movement from a religious phenomenon - a curiosity many have not heard of - into a powerful international movement that can successfully compete with, and with G-d's help bring about the fall of, any religious movement but the pure authentic faith that was given to humanity through Noah, the father of us all," said emissary Bar-Ron.

To that end, one of the **primary functions of the council will be the creation and development of effective outreach materials for the world.** Although Judaism does not require or encourage non-

Jews to become Jewish, the observance of the Seven Laws of Noah is incumbent upon humanity and widespread observance is to be worked toward, even through active proselytization, something that is anathema to Judaism.

The council is also seeking to identify and contact communities around the world who observe the Seven Laws of Noah in order to invite them to learn more about the movement. B'nei Noach in India and Brazil are already in touch with Noahide leaders.

Asked why the Sanhedrin would reach out to B'nei Noach before concentrating on outreach within the Jewish community, Rabbi Bar-Ron answered: "There was no conscious choice to ignore the issue of outreach toward other Jews, but there is a Torah principle that a *mitzva*, positive precept, that comes to your hand should be fulfilled first and should not be put off. It happens to be that the group that showed the most outward display of support and genuine concern for the success of the Sanhedrin - contacting us from the very outset - were the B'nei Noach. **One of the great responsibilities of the Jewish people is to spread the laws of Noah.**"

Bar-Ron said he had mixed feelings as he departed for the meetings with the B'nei Noach leaders, as he left the day the forced expulsion of Jews from Gaza began. "I was in such a horrible heart-wrenching pain about leaving - I almost felt like a traitor to our people. But I realized then that although the government was detaching itself from the Land of Israel - a partial annulment of our covenant with G-d, similar to the sin of the ten spies - there is another aspect of the covenant that has not been pursued. That aspect is our obligation to be a nation of priests unto the nations. **This is the core of the covenant with Abraham and it is something the Jewish people as a nation has not involved itself in since Second Temple times.** So as the government disengaged from the covenant, I was participating in the reengagement with an aspect of the covenant that has been dormant."

Bar-Ron was very impressed with the B'nei Noach leaders he met. "Each of them had a different unique talent. One was an extremely talented media coordinator, two were great scholars of Noahide law, one was secretary of a large successful Noahide community and research institute and one was a law enforcement officer for a number of years. Each had the wisdom and experience that will help them lead the movement.

All of the prospective members of the High Council are obligated to appear in Jerusalem this coming January, at which time they will be ordained by the Sanhedrin as members of the High Council. "One of the things I thought would be more difficult was implementing the fact that the Sanhedrin's steering committee unanimously voted that the High Council members must appear personally before the Sanhedrin to be ordained as such," Bar-Ron said. "But the level of commitment of these people is so high that it is not posing a problem at all.

Each member was screened very carefully and accepted not only on the basis of their high reputation, wisdom and experience - there were many dedicated and talented B'nei Noach who we would have loved to have accepted into the council - but for their role as representatives of entire B'nei Noach communities or as experts in a particularly field.

The **acting head of the Sanhedrin, Rabbi Yoel Schwartz, has set up a Beit Din for B'nei Noach to serve the needs of B'nei Noach worldwide. At this point, the council will not serve as a adjudicating body.**

"It is **our sincere hope** that in years to come, the knowledge of the *halakha*, Torah law, of the Seven Laws of Noah will grow to such a degree that there will be true Noahide judges," Bar-Ron said. **"One of the goals is to delineate clearly the seven laws and their applications according to the**

Mishneh Torah of the Rambam."

"Never before in recorded history have B'nei Noach come together to be ordained by the Sanhedrin for the purpose of spreading Noahide observance of laws," Bar-Ron said. **"This is the first critical step of bringing about the ultimate flowering of the brotherhood of mankind envisioned by Noah, the father of mankind."**

The **Seven Laws of Noah** are:

Shefichat damim - Do not murder.

Gezei - Do not steal or kidnap.

Avodah zarah - Do not worship false gods/idols.

Gilui arayot - Do not be sexually immoral (engage in incest, sodomy, bestiality, castration and adultery)

Birkat Hashem - Do not utter G-d's name in vain, curse G-d or pursue the occult.

Dinim - **Set up righteous and honest courts and apply fair justice in judging offenders and uphold the principles...**

Ever Min HaChai - Do not eat a part of a live animal.

For more information email the Sanhedrin's secretary at: dbtc@actco.com