

Introduction

Mankind cannot rise to the essential principles on which society must rest unless it meets with Israel.

And Israel cannot fathom the deeps of its own national and religious tradition unless it meets with mankind.

— R. Elijah Benamozegh¹

I set out through this book to provide you with a simple, readable introduction to the Seven Commandments of the Rainbow Covenant. The effort began years ago and “simple and readable” eventually took second place to finally delivering a finished product. Still, the treatment here is really nothing more than common sense analysis based, I hope, on Torah — that immense body of Divine legislation, so closely related to the Noahide Law that God entrusted to Israel. The Noahide laws establish minimal guidelines — practical guidelines — of acceptable human behavior, while also pointing all of us to the Torah’s countless welcoming “paths of righteousness.”²

According to an ancient Hebrew tradition, God revealed the Torah at Mount Sinai in the seventy languages of the nations of the world.³ Israel says, similarly, that the one Torah shows man seventy faces or dimensions.⁴ And it’s certain that, if a student happens upon two seemingly contradictory teachings based on Torah, he can often truly say, “I think they are both right—both are the words of the Living God.”⁵ So long as one studies with humility and pure intentions, even the hottest dispute that revolves around the holy Book will — as the sages say — end with love.⁶

One starts by trying to contemplate just one of the Torah's faces. "When you are able to do so, you won't need words of explanation, for it is the Eternal face that is talking to you, visually and directly."⁷

Keep My Commandments, and live; and My Law as the apple of your eye. — *Proverbs 7:2*

My effort here has been to reveal a face of the Torah as I see it, to help give you the foundation necessary to discover further dimensions of Torah for yourself. So I incorporated more than a few footnotes — not just as a way of concentrating information, still less to distress you with the style — and earnestly ask you to use them. Please, go to the sources, not only to uncover my mistakes — I hope there aren't many — but to develop your own understanding.

Most religions are man-made. Except for one, all of humanity's religions either: 1) emerged from tribal prehistoric nature myths, lacking any original literate tradition or ethical pretensions, like the amoral nature religions of ancient Greece, Japan and Rome; or 2) began with a single individual who claimed to have a special message. He would gather a following and his followers would spread his word, winning converts until a new religion was born.

Most of the great world religions followed this second pattern.⁸

The religion of Israel did not. While Abraham prepared the way, the Hebrew Revolution really began only at Mount Sinai. God proclaimed His message to an entire people there. Every man, woman and child heard Him; the whole nation of Israel became His priests.

So the religion of Israel, if we can call it that—rather than a mere faith or just a system of belief, it's an entire way of life, a way of eating, thinking, and knowingly trying to embody righteousness — is unique.