



Jerusalem Court for Issues of Bnei Noah

9th Cheshvan, 5770 (October 27, 2009)

Question and answer with Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi
on the teachings of *Bnei Noah*

Dear Sheikh Prof. Abdul Hadi Palazzi

Rabbinic Judaism teaches the "Seven Laws of Noah" as a universal measure that is the basis of all proper religion. Some *poskim* go so far as to declare some versions of Islam, righteous among the Muslims, as *Bnei Noah* or similar to *Ger Toshav*. Within Islam itself there appears to be internal support for this. The Qur'an and Haddith support ideas strikingly similar to Noahide teachings, perhaps remnants of ancient teachings. Some see this in the terms al-Hanifiyya or al-Sabiun. There are opinions that one of the main goals of early Islam (for example the Constitution of Medina صحيفة المدينة) was to call the Jews and Christians to unite as believers without losing their identity as Jews and Christians.

The members of the nascent Sanhedrin and the Jerusalem Court concerning Bnei Noah, value your opinion on these matters and regard you as a true friend. If you have the opportunity, please reply with any answers that you can to assist us.

We believe that there is potential for a deep and meaningful relationship between the righteous among the Muslims and Jews as *Bnei Noah* and *Bnei Israel* based on the teachings of *Bnei Noah*. We believe this is a truthful alternative to the mistaken ideology of endless war between Islam and Judaism. We would like to propose a useful intellectual, historical and theological framework for people who are already trying to seek peace between Jews and Muslims, built on the foundation of *Bnei Noah* teachings. The nascent Sanhedrin is discussing this in some detail.

What is your opinion concerning discussing the Rabbinic teachings of *Bnei Noah* as a basis for understanding and cooperation between the righteous among the Muslims and Jews? Do you believe that a Muslim would show any interest in the "Seven Laws of Noah"? Is it correct to compare the teachings of "Bnei Noah" to Hanifiyya? Or is there a better term?

In an interview you made several years ago, you said that religions are fundamentally at odds with each other and that only through "meta-religion" can we seek peace. Would you connect this to the teachings of "Bnei Noah"?

Two project proposals that have been raised in the *Beis Din for matters of Bnei Noah* include:

- A joint "Bnei Noah" court between a Jewish Rabbinical Court and an Islamic Shaaria Court to allow an opportunity for Israeli-Palestinian grievances to be verified and ruled upon according to religious law. This idea is only in its initial stages, and not well understood. We said in a previous statement, "lies and misinformation" are a key part in the campaign against Israel, and we feel this is due in significant part because there is no credible court that Muslims and Jews can turn to, the secular courts having failed us in resolving Palestinian-Israeli grievances.
- A Muslim author has expressed "a great love" for the "Solomon's Temple". It appears that this is an opportunity to educate the Islamic public on the "beauty of Solomon's Temple". Without any political motive, it appears to me a positive thing to give expression to yearning and longing for the beautiful things of years gone by.

Are you familiar with the teachings of Rabbi Benamozegh?

Can you comment on these three threads?

<http://www.alsadiqin.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=7>

<http://www.alsadiqin.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=8>

<http://www.alsadiqin.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=6>

Best regards

R' Abrahamson

Director, Committee for Historical Research on Islam and Judaism

Dear R' Abrahamson

I too think that interfaith dialogue should not be based on vain talks on general issues, by rather being centered on preparing the ground for the future Redemption of humanity by developing the Noahide substratum of all religions, and of Islam and Christianity in particular.

I agree that the teachings of Bnei Noah sound very similar to *al-Hanifiyya*. It is surely correct, but it involves a limitation, since it refers to those monotheistic Arabs who neither converted to Judaism or to Unitarian Christianity before the advent of Islam. I think the work to do involves developing the rest, i.e. showing how it is possible for a Muslim to conceive himself as a Noahide.

The basic difficulty in the contemporary Islam world about this point is the belief in "tahrif" of Torah. In classical Arabic, this word can either mean "alteration" (in the text), or "misinterpretation" (in the sense). While most of contemporary Muslim propagandists take only the first possible meaning into consideration, plenty of authoritative scholars of old (including Imam al-Ghazali and Shaykh Muhiddin Ibn 'Arabi) prefer the second one, and support their point of view through ahadith which are universally accepted as authentic. According to one of them, the Prophet Muhammad asked the Jews of Medina to bring their Torah Scroll and to read from it to confirm a verdict (and the argument is "were that Scroll adulterated, the Prophet would have never judged on its base"). According to another hadith, he met Jews who were bringing a Torah Scroll in procession, kissed the Scroll and said "amantu bika wa amantu bima fik" (I believe in you and in your contents). The argument here is "were that Scroll adulterated, the Prophet would have never said 'I believe in your contents'.". As a Muslim scholar, I think that showing all these and other legal proof in Islam is the best way to lead Muslims to recognize the Divine character of the Torah as the Jews have it today.

The "Constitution of Medina" is surely a relevant document, especially since it mentions different religious communities which become partners in a project of common life without losing their identity.

I hope and what I pray for a deep and meaningful relationship between Jews and Muslims as Bnei Israel and Bnei Noah. In my understanding, the Seven Laws are an integral aspect of Islam, which contains all of them. Of course, the goal I hope to see becoming true is a situation in which Jews see Muslims as Bnei Noah, and Muslim see Jews as Believers (mu'minim) following the path of Torah. For what concerns Christianity, I think the situation is more complicated, since it involves the problem of trinity, etc.

Concerning a joint "Bnei Noah" court between a Jewish Rabbinical Court and an Islamic Sharia Court to allow an opportunity for Israeli-Palestinian grievances to be verified and ruled upon according to religious law. That is a good idea. It could be a first step to pass from theory to implementation

Concerning educating the Islamic public on the "beauty of Solomon's Temple", I think that all possible efforts should be done to educate the Islamic public on this subject, and also to prove that that same beauty is described in Islamic sources, too, to the point that the theory "Jews have no connection with the Temple Mount", apart from being quite recent, is also opposed to what Islamic scholars have been teaching for centuries. I have read about the existence of a book published by the Waqf during the British Mandate which identifies the Haram of al-Aqsa with the place where the Temple originally stood.

Yes, I am familiar with the teachings of Rabbi Benamozegh, and am indebted to his "Israel and Humanity" for what concerns my vision of a possible development in interfaith relations.

Concerning the threads:

1. The similarity between the photos which are compared is really impressive.
2. For what concern music in Islam, the *Hanafi* school is forbidding it with the exception of daff drums and horns, while the *Shafi'i* school does not distinguish between forbidden or permitted instruments, but between the different feelings that music can cause. See the text of Imam *al-Ghazali* (who was *Shafi'i* in Law) at <http://www.amislam.com/alchemy.htm> (chapter 5)
3. In Islam one ends the prayer with three *salams*, too. The first is without moving the head, and is a greeting for all Prophets and Believers, that the one to the right is for the angel who records good deeds and the final to the left for the angel who records bad deeds.

These pages are wonderful examples of what must be circulate to prepare the ground for a change of attitude. Please do accept my prayers for your work and for its good results.

All the very best,

Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi
<http://www.amislam.com>
<mailto:islam.inst@alice.it>