

The **Jewish understanding of fulfilling the Law** is rooted in the teachings of the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) and the broader body of Jewish scriptures. The concept of fulfilling the Law, often referred to as "keeping the commandments" or "observing the mitzvot" (commandments), is central to Jewish religious practice and theology.

Here are key aspects of the **Jewish understanding of fulfilling the Law**:

- **Covenant Relationship:** The commandments in the Torah are seen as expressions of the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people. The covenant establishes a special bond between God and Israel, with the commandments serving as a guide for righteous living and a reflection of the responsibilities that come with being part of this covenant.
- **Moral and Ethical Guidelines:** The commandments encompass a wide range of moral, ethical, ritual, and legal principles. They cover areas such as social justice, compassion, honesty, and reverence for God. Fulfilling the Law involves not only adherence to ritual observances but also embodying ethical and moral values in daily life.
- **Love for God and Neighbor:** Central to the Jewish understanding of the Law is the commandment to love God with all one's heart, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5). Additionally, the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is considered a fundamental ethical principle. Fulfilling the Law is seen as an expression of love for God and fellow human beings.
- **Continuity and Tradition:** Observing the commandments is viewed as a way of preserving and passing on Jewish tradition from generation to generation. Jewish continuity is maintained through the transmission of religious practices, teachings, and values.

- **Repentance and Atonement:** The Jewish tradition recognizes the importance of repentance (teshuvah) and atonement for sins. Fulfilling the Law involves acknowledging one's mistakes, seeking forgiveness, and making amends, especially during the High Holy Days, such as Yom Kippur.
- **Study and Interpretation:** Jewish tradition places a strong emphasis on the study and interpretation of the Torah. Scholars engage in the ongoing process of interpreting the commandments, deriving ethical and legal principles, and applying them to contemporary situations.
- **Responsibility for Repairing the World:** The concept of tikkun olam, or "repairing the world," is central to Jewish ethics. Fulfilling the Law includes a commitment to social justice, compassion for the vulnerable, and active engagement in efforts to improve the world.

Overall, the **Jewish understanding of fulfilling the Law** is multifaceted, encompassing both ritual observances and ethical living for individuals and the nation of Israel. It involves a holistic approach to religious practice that integrates love for God, ethical conduct, and a commitment to preserving Jewish tradition.

Many of the themes and concepts associated with the benefits of observing the law in Judaism are rooted in various passages

throughout the Bible, the Old Testament which is the Tanakh. Here are references for each of the mentioned benefits:

Closeness to God:

Reference: Deuteronomy 4:7 "What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?"

Spiritual Growth:

Reference: Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

Blessings and Prosperity:

Reference: Deuteronomy 28:1-14 (Blessings for Obedience)"If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth."

Protection and Divine Favor:

Reference: Psalm 34:7"The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."

Community Cohesion:

Reference: Exodus 19:5-6
"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Preservation of Jewish Tradition:

Reference: Deuteronomy 6:6-7"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them

on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Ethical Living:

Reference: Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

While these references capture the spirit of the mentioned benefits, it's important to recognize that the understanding of these passages may vary among **different Jewish traditions** and interpretations. Additionally, consider that **the Bible is a complex collection of writings**, and the themes are often woven throughout various books and verses.

The Noahide Laws: applied to all humankind

The key passage associated with the Noahide Laws is found in Genesis 9:1-7. In this passage, **God establishes a covenant with Noah and his descendants**, outlining several fundamental principles that are considered part of the Noahide Laws. The specific prohibition against murder is often understood within the broader context of God's commandments to Noah.

Genesis 9:5-6 (New International Version):

"And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind."

While the term "Noahide Laws" is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, these principles are traditionally derived from **the covenant established with Noah** and are considered binding for all humanity. The prohibition against murder is rooted in the sanctity of human life and the recognition that humans are created in the image of God.

The Noahide Laws include prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, illicit sexual relations, and cruelty to animals. These laws are **considered universal commandments** applicable to all people, regardless of their religious background.

Key point: The concept of the Noahide Laws is not framed as a divine commitment to abstain from certain actions, but rather as a set of ethical guidelines for human behavior. The covenant with Noah is seen as an expression of God's expectations for humanity's moral conduct.

Fulfilling the Law: Understanding Matthew 5:17-26

What does "Fulfillment of the Law" mean? (Matthew 5:17-20):

- Read Matthew 5:17-20.
- Explain the concept of fulfillment, emphasizing that Jesus came **not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it**.
- Explore Exodus 20:13 (Commandment "You shall not murder"), and consider how Jesus expands the understanding of the commandment to include **internal attitudes of anger and contempt**.

Reconciliation and Relationships (Matthew 5:21-26):

- Read Matthew 5:21-26, focusing on Jesus' teachings about reconciliation.
- Introduce the Old Testament parallel in Exodus 20:24, emphasizing the importance of coming to the altar with a reconciled heart.
- Discuss the **broader context of the Old Testament law**, which often addressed not only actions but also the **underlying personal attitudes and intentions**.

Historical Context and Supersessionism:

- Understand the competitive environment of the historical context of Jesus' teachings, highlighting the tensions between Jewish and Gentile communities in the early Christian era.

Key point: Acknowledge the **historical misuse** of certain biblical passages, including supersessionist ideas, and emphasize the need for responsible biblical interpretation.

Antisemitism and Contemporary Responsibility:

- Acknowledge personal beliefs about the historical connection between supersessionism and antisemitism.
- Emphasize the importance of recognizing historical sensitivities and working towards positive interfaith relations.
- Encourage responsible biblical interpretation that promotes understanding, love, and respect among different religious traditions.

Supersessionism or Replacement Theology

Supersessionism, also known as replacement theology, is a theological concept that emerged in Christian thought, particularly during the early centuries of the Christian era. This concept asserts that the **Christian Church has replaced or superseded Israel as the primary people of God**, and that the promises and covenant made with Israel in the Old Testament are now fulfilled in the Christian Church. The term "supersessionism" comes from the idea that the Christian covenant supersedes or replaces the covenant with Israel.

The origins and development of supersessionism can be traced through historical and theological contexts:

- **Early Christian Theology:** In the early centuries of Christianity, as the movement spread beyond its Jewish origins to include a predominantly Gentile (non-Jewish) audience, theological discussions arose about the relationship between the Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus.
- **New Testament Interpretation:** Certain New Testament passages, especially in the writings of the Apostle **Paul, were misinterpreted** in ways that seemed to suggest a new covenant superseding the old. For example, passages like Galatians 3:28-29 and Romans 10:12-13 were understood as emphasizing the inclusive nature of the

Christian message, where faith in Christ became the primary marker rather than adherence to Jewish law.

- **Theological Debates:** Early Christian theologians, such as Origen and Augustine, contributed to the development of supersessionist ideas. Augustine, in particular, played a significant role in shaping Christian theology with his emphasis on the "City of God" and his interpretation of biblical covenants.
- **Political and Social Factors:** The increasing separation between Jews and Christians was also influenced by political and social factors, including the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the Bar Kokhba revolt in the second century. These events led to a physical and cultural separation between Judaism and Christianity.
- **Institutionalization of Christianity:** As Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the idea of the Church replacing Israel gained theological prominence. This shift in status and influence contributed to a sense of superiority among Christians.
- **Persecution of Jews:** Unfortunately, supersessionist ideas have been associated with the persecution of Jews throughout history, as they were sometimes used to justify discrimination, forced conversions, and violence against Jewish communities.

Catholic Church rejects supersessionism

It's important to note that supersessionism is a theological perspective that has been criticized and rejected by many contemporary Christian scholars and denominations. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) issued a declaration, "Nostra Aetate," which rejected supersessionism and emphasized the continued significance of the Jewish people in God's plan. Many mainstream Christian denominations today reject supersessionist

theology and seek to promote positive interfaith relations with Judaism.

Ethical behavior, law and living a God-honoring life

Matthew 5:17-26 is part of the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament, where Jesus discusses various aspects of ethical behavior, law, and morality. In these verses, Jesus emphasizes the fulfillment of the law and addresses issues related to anger, reconciliation, and ethical conduct. Here are some Old Testament parallels and historical connections:

Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV):

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."

Old Testament Parallel (Exodus 20:13):

"You shall not murder."

This is a direct reference to one of the Ten Commandments from the book of Exodus. Jesus expands the commandment to address the underlying issue of anger and hatred.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV):

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

Old Testament Parallel (Exodus 20:24):

"Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to

you and bless you."

The **emphasis on reconciliation** with God and neighbor aligns with the importance of offering sacrifices in a state of harmony and righteousness.

Historical Connections:

While these teachings are rooted in the Old Testament, the historical connections to antisemitism are complex. The Sermon on the Mount, including Matthew 5:17-26, reflects Jesus' teachings within a Jewish context. However, over time, misinterpretations and misuses of certain biblical passages have contributed to negative stereotypes and prejudices against Jews. It's important to note that the teachings of Jesus were addressed primarily to his Jewish audience, and early Christian communities emerged within a Jewish context. The divergence between Judaism and Christianity happened over centuries and was influenced by various theological, cultural, and historical factors.

Antisemitism has historical roots that go beyond specific biblical passages and are often tied to social, economic, and political circumstances. Negative attitudes towards Jews have been fueled by factors such as religious differences, economic competition, and scapegoating during times of crisis.

Interpreting biblical passages responsibly and considering the historical context is crucial to avoiding misuses that could contribute to antisemitism. Responsible biblical interpretation encourages understanding, dialogue, and respect among different religious traditions.

While the specific phrase "Thou shalt not hate" is not found as a direct commandment in the traditional lists of the Ten Commandments, the Bible does contain numerous passages that

convey the idea of avoiding hatred and promoting love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Here are a few examples:

Leviticus 19:17 (New International Version):

"Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt."

This verse emphasizes the importance of addressing issues directly with others rather than harboring hatred in one's heart.

Proverbs 10:12 (New International Version):

"Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs."

Proverbs often contrasts the destructive nature of hatred with the positive effects of love and forgiveness.

Matthew 5:43-44 (New International Version):

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

In the teachings of Jesus, there is a strong emphasis on love and forgiveness, even towards those who may be considered enemies.

Romans 12:17-21 (New International Version):

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

This passage from the New Testament encourages believers to overcome evil with good and to live at peace with others.

The Role of Messianic Judaism

Messianic Judaism is a religious movement that combines elements of Judaism with the beliefs and teachings of Christianity, particularly centered around the identification of Jesus as the Messiah. Adherents, known as Messianic Jews, often observe Jewish traditions and practices while embracing Christian theology. The movement has both Jewish and Gentile followers.

Messianic Judaism can potentially contribute to bridging gaps and reducing antisemitism in certain ways:

- **Interfaith Understanding:** Messianic Judaism provides a platform for dialogue and interaction between Jewish and Christian communities. By integrating aspects of both traditions, it can foster a better understanding of the commonalities and differences between Judaism and Christianity.
- **Cultural Continuity:** For Jewish individuals who embrace Messianic Judaism, it allows them to maintain a connection to their Jewish cultural and religious heritage while incorporating beliefs in Jesus as the Messiah. This may facilitate a bridge between the two faith communities.
- **Educational Opportunities:** Messianic Jewish congregations often engage in educational activities to promote understanding of Jewish traditions, history, and customs. This educational outreach can help dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about Judaism among Christians.
- **Interfaith Collaboration:** Messianic Jewish communities may participate in interfaith initiatives, fostering collaboration and cooperation between Jewish and Christian groups. Joint efforts in community service, charitable work, and social justice can build bridges and demonstrate shared values.

However, it's crucial to recognize that Messianic Judaism is a complex and diverse movement, and its acceptance within both Jewish and Christian communities varies. Some Jewish groups view Messianic Judaism as outside the bounds of mainstream Judaism, while some Christian denominations may also have differing perspectives on its theological integration.

Moreover, the success of any movement or approach in reducing antisemitism depends on respectful dialogue, mutual understanding, and an acknowledgment of historical sensitivities. The focus should be on promoting positive relationships, fostering understanding, and working towards common goals rather than reinforcing divisive theological differences.

In any interfaith context, sensitivity to historical factors, openness to learning from one another, and a commitment to combating prejudice are essential components for building bridges and reducing antisemitism.

Noahide Laws and thou shalt not murder

The prohibition against murder is considered part of the Noahide Laws. The Noahide Laws are a set of ethical and moral imperatives that, according to Jewish tradition, were given by God to Noah after the Great Flood. These laws are seen as universal principles applicable to all humanity, and they form the foundation of ethical behavior for non-Jews.

The prohibition against murder is based on the commandment given to Noah, and it is understood as a fundamental principle of moral conduct. This concept is derived from the covenant made with Noah as recorded in the Book of Genesis.

The specific Noahide Law related to the prohibition against murder is often stated as follows:

Prohibition Against Murder: The prohibition against taking the life of another human being is considered a fundamental Noahide Law. This aligns with the broader ethical principle of respecting the sanctity of human life. The concept of the Noahide Laws has been influential in various ethical and legal traditions, emphasizing **a set of universal moral principles** that transcend specific religious boundaries. The prohibition against murder, as one of the Noahide Laws, reflects the value placed on the preservation of human life and the promotion of justice and peace.

The **prohibition against murder**, as part of the Noahide Laws, is not explicitly detailed in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) in the form of a commandment given directly to Noah. However, the foundation for this principle is traditionally derived from the **covenant established with Noah after the Flood**, as recorded in the Book of Genesis.

The key passage associated with the Noahide Laws is found in Genesis 9:1-7. In this passage, God establishes a covenant with Noah and his descendants, outlining several fundamental principles that are considered part of the Noahide Laws. The specific prohibition against murder is often understood within the broader context of God's commandments to Noah. Here is an excerpt:

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What is a blood libel? Is it connected to the life blood passage?

The concept of the Noahide Laws, including the prohibition against murder, is not inherently connected to blood libel. The **Noahide Laws are a set of ethical and moral imperatives** considered by Jewish tradition to be **applicable to all of humanity**. These laws, including the prohibition against murder, are based on the covenant made with Noah after the Great Flood, as recorded in the Book of Genesis.

Blood libel, on the other hand, refers to false and malicious accusations that Jews use the blood of non-Jewish children in religious rituals, particularly in the making of matzah (unleavened bread) during Passover. Blood libel has been a historically unfounded and deeply harmful accusation against Jewish communities. It has led to persecution, violence, and unjust legal actions against Jews in various periods of history.

The prohibition against murder in the context of the Noahide Laws is a general ethical principle that emphasizes the sanctity of human life. It is not connected to any ritual involving the use of blood, and it certainly does not provide any basis for accusations like blood libel.

It's crucial to distinguish between authentic religious teachings and baseless accusations. Blood libel has been repeatedly discredited and condemned, and it is widely recognized as a form of **anti-Semitic propaganda**. Responsible and informed discussions about religious traditions should avoid perpetuating unfounded stereotypes or historical prejudices.

The blood libel connected to Jesus

The concept of blood libel, as historically understood, refers to false and malicious accusations that Jews use the blood of non-Jewish children in religious rituals. This accusation has been specifically directed at Jewish communities and **is not connected** to the life or teachings of Jesus in any authentic religious sense.

In Christian theology, Jesus is central to the belief in salvation and forgiveness of sins through his sacrificial death on the cross. This theological concept is not linked to any accusations of using blood in a harmful or ritualistic manner. The notion of blood libel is an entirely distinct and unfounded historical accusation against Jewish communities.

The Greatest Blessing for the Jew

The Jewish understanding of fulfilling the Law is rooted in the teachings of the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) and the broader body of Jewish scriptures. The concept of fulfilling the Law, often referred to as "**keeping the commandments**" or "**observing the mitzvot**" (commandments), is central to Jewish religious practice and theology.

Overall, the Jewish understanding of fulfilling the Law is multifaceted, encompassing both ritual observances and ethical living. It involves a **holistic approach to religious practice that integrates love for God, ethical conduct, and a commitment to preserving Jewish tradition.**

In Judaism, the observance of the law, particularly the commandments (mitzvot) outlined in the Torah, is seen as a way of **fulfilling one's covenantal relationship with God.** While the focus is on faithfulness to God and the ethical and moral principles embedded in the commandments, there are also traditional teachings about the potential benefits and blessings associated with observing the law. It's important to note that interpretations of

The concept of the "heart" is mentioned in various passages throughout the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. In the context of the biblical text, the "heart" is often used metaphorically to refer to the innermost thoughts, emotions, and intentions of a person. Here are a few examples:

- **Deuteronomy 6:5 (New International Version):**
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

This verse emphasizes the wholehearted love and devotion that is to be directed towards God.

- **Deuteronomy 10:16 (New International Version):**
"Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer."

Here, the idea of circumcising the heart is a metaphor for removing spiritual hardness and stubbornness.

- **Deuteronomy 30:6 (New International Version):**
"The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live."
- This verse connects the idea of circumcised hearts with the ability to love and serve God fully.
- **Proverbs 3:5-6 (New International Version):**
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Antisemitic Political and Religious Leaders

While there were historical figures who played roles in promoting antisemitism and perpetuating negative views of certain Jewish groups, it's important to note that attributing hatred specifically to individuals is complex, as these sentiments often arise from a **combination of social, cultural, and political factors**. However, I can provide examples of individuals who, through their writings or actions, contributed to anti-Jewish sentiment at various points in history:

- **Martin Luther (1483–1546):** The founder of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, initially expressed sympathy for Jews early in his career. However, later in life, he wrote pamphlets such as "On the Jews and Their Lies," where he expressed strong anti-Jewish sentiments, including advocating for their expulsion from Christian lands and the burning of synagogues.

- **Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain (15th Century):** The Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile are known for the Alhambra Decree of 1492, which expelled Jews from Spain. While their primary motivation was religious, it had significant economic and political implications as well.
- **Adolf Hitler (1889–1945):** The leader of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, propagated virulent antisemitism that culminated in the genocide of six million Jews during the Holocaust. His book "Mein Kampf" and his speeches contained hateful and conspiratorial views about Jews, blaming them for various societal ills.
- **Tsar Nicholas II of Russia (1868–1918):** The Russian Empire, under Tsar Nicholas II, witnessed the spread of anti-Jewish pogroms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the Tsar himself may not have directly encouraged these attacks, his regime's policies and the atmosphere it fostered contributed to violence against Jewish communities.
- **Henry Ford (1863–1947):** The American industrialist Henry Ford published a series of articles in his newspaper, The Dearborn Independent, in the 1920s that contained antisemitic content, including conspiracy theories about Jewish influence. He later compiled these articles into a book titled "The International Jew."

It's crucial to recognize that these individuals were influenced by the broader social and historical contexts of their times, and their views were not universally accepted. Additionally, **antisemitism existed long before these figures**, and it persists as a societal issue that requires ongoing attention and efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination.

Important role the Pharisees played in developing doctrine before, during and after the destruction of Jerusalem.

<http://www.ryanaycock.com/pharisees.html>

Words used in Hebrew are *hanufah* and *hanef* which are paralleled in other Jewish literature and rabbinical works.

<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/15196-zebu-im>

HYPOCRISY: knowing the rules and nuances and being on the 'inside' of power. That is not what Torah teaches.

(Redirected from ZEBU'IM.)

By: Kaufmann Kohler

A word derived from the Greek ὑποκρίσις="the playing a part on the stage." It denotes acting a false part in life; pretending to be pious or righteous when one is not. It is only in later Hebrew that "ḥanufah" and "ḥanef" refer to this failing; hence it is incorrect for the Authorized Version to use "hypocrisy" as the translation of the Biblical "ḥanufah" and "ḥanef," which really denote respectively "wickedness" or "impiety" and "the wicked" or "the impious"; so Isa. ix. 16 (A. V. 17), xxxii. 6, xxxiii. 14; Ps. xxxv. 16; Prov. xi. 9; Job viii. 13, xiii. 16, xv. 34, xvii. 8, xx. 5, xxvii. 8, xxxiv. 30.

Hypocrisy is a vice scarcely known in primitive times when men are natural; it is practised only in a society that has established rules of piety and rectitude, and is deceived by appearances. The hypocrite is rebuked in Ecclus. (Sirach) xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 2: "Let God destroy them that live in hypocrisy in the company of the saints." "Let the ravens peck out the eyes of the men that work hypocrisy" (Psalms of Solomon, iv. 7, 22-25; hypocrites are called also "men-pleasers" in the heading of this psalm).

Birkat Shalom greeting: the blessing or prayer of the Havurat Shalom community.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hebrew-greetings-and-congratulations>

The **obsequious** greeting: obedient, attentive, excessive or servile