



Bnei Noach and Outreach

Based on Likutey Sichot, vol. 15, p. 122

Fundamentals: 7 commandments



- **There's a message of Judaism for whole humankind**
 - 7 Commandments (Talmud Sanhedrin 56a)
 - 30 Commandments (Talmud Chulin 92a, Asara Maamaron, Maamar Chikur din, 3:21)
 - Ramifications
 - Intellectual commandments (Honoring parents, Tzedaka)
 - Ramifications of the 7 commandments (Laws of Swearing, Idolatry details)
 - Ramba"n in parashat Vaishlach
 - Rab Nissim Gaon, introduction to Talmud
 - Sefer HaChinuch 416

Outreach - Jews



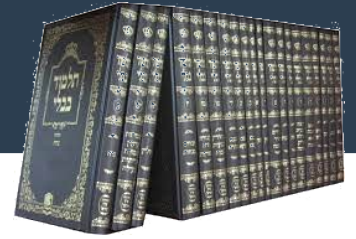
- Do we find the idea of Outreach regarding the 7 Commandments?
 - For Jews:
 - By the same regard, Moses was commanded by the Almighty to **compel** all the inhabitants of the world to accept the commandments given to Noah's descendants (Rambam, Laws of Kings, 8:10).

Outreach – Non Jews



- **Do we find the idea of Outreach regarding the 7 Commandments?**
 - **Two subjects**
 - History
 - Sources regarding different eras of history
 - Form of Outreach
 - Avraham

Talmud Sotah 10a (Avraham)



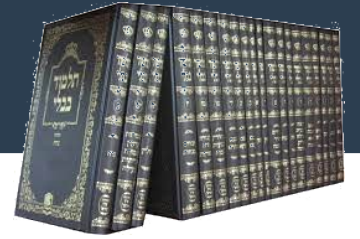
- The verse there states: “And he planted an *eshel* in Beersheba, and called there [*vayikra*] on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” (Genesis 21:33). Reish Lakish said: Do not read this word literally as “*vayikra*,” and he called, but rather as *vayakri*, and he caused others to call.
- This teaches that Abraham our forefather caused the **name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to be called out in the mouth of all passersby**. How so? After the guests of Abraham ate and drank, they arose to bless him. He said to them: But did you eat from what is mine? Rather, you ate from the food of the God of the world. Therefore, you should thank and praise and bless the One Who spoke and the world was created. In this way, Abraham caused everyone to call out to God.

Midrash Bereshit Raba 43:7 (Avraham)



- “He blessed him, and he said: Blessed is Abram to God, the Most High, **Maker of heavens and earth**” (Genesis 14:19) – [...] Rabbi Yitzchak said: He [Abraham] would receive passersby into his house. After they had eaten and drunk, he would say to them: ‘Say a blessing.’ They would say to him: ‘What shall we say?’ He would say to them: ‘Say: Blessed is God, the Most High, of whose food we have eaten.’ **The Holy One blessed be He said to him: ‘My name had not been known by My creations, and you caused My creations to recognize me.** I consider it for you as though you were **My partner in creation** of the world.’ That is what is written; **“Maker of heavens and earth.”**

Talmud Yoma 28b (Eliezer)



- That is the meaning of the verse: “He is Damascus [*Dammesek*] Eliezer” (Genesis 15:2). Rabbi Elazar said: The word *Dammesek* is a contraction of he who draws [*doleh*] and gives drink [*mashke*] to others from his master’s Torah.

Midrash Bereshit Raba 63:6 (Shem)



- **But the children struggled in her womb, and she said, “If so, why do I exist?” She went to inquire of Hashem (Bereshit 25:22)**
 - Midrash: were there synagogues and study halls in those days? Did she not go only to the academy of Shem and Ever?
 - Rashi: AND SHE WENT TO ENQUIRE at the school of Shem.

Talmud Sanhedrin 108b (Noach)



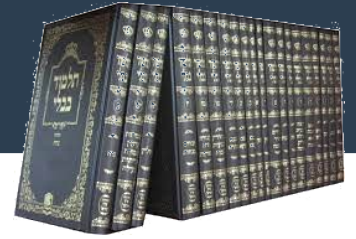
- Rava taught: [...] This teaches that Noah the righteous would rebuke the people of his generation, and he said to them statements that are harsh as torches, and they would treat him with contempt. They said to him: Old man, why are you building this ark? Noah said to them: The Holy One, Blessed be He, is bringing a flood upon you (Talmud Sanhedrin 108b).
- Rashi (Bereshit 6:14): MAKE THEE AN ARK — There are numerous ways by which God could have saved Noah; why, then, did he burden him with this construction of the Ark? So that the men of the generation of the Flood might see him employed on it for 120 years and might ask him, “What do you need this for”? and so that he might answer them, “The Holy One, blessed be He, is about to bring a flood upon the world” — perhaps they might repent.

More Nevuchim, Part 2, c. 39 (Ever, Metushelach)



- Our Sages, when speaking of prophets before Moses, used expressions like the following: The bet-din (court of justice) of **Ever**, the bet-din of **Metushelach**, and in the college of Metushelach; although all these were prophets, yet they taught their fellow-men in the manner of preachers, teachers, and pedagogues, but did not use such phrases as the following: “And God said to me, Speak to certain people so and so.”

Meiri on Pirkey Avot (History)



- There were, in all generations, special people holding the covenant and the faith. We don't know all of them except for a few in some generations that were very honorable and known. They were, on the first times, **Adam and Shet**. In the times of Enosh until the Flood: **Chanoch, Metushelach and Noach**. In the times from the Flood until the Big separation: **Shem and Ever**. All of these had a group of lots of friends and honorable people that would go after their ways of thinking through studying. Not all of them had the merit to influence through teaching to many and the mission of transforming the nations with a clear mouth, rather only through teaching in their houses to those that were with them.
- The thing with **Avraham** was not through a prophetic commandment, sent from God to the point that he would say "This is what God says", "This is what God commanded to you". Rather was in a way of learning and making known the Truth with divine inspiration and traveling here and there in the land to explain to them the Torah of God to bring them into the tradition of the covenant with great deepness and giving them bread. He wrote books expressing the bad faith and the service to God.

Rambam (Laws of Idolatry, c. 1)



- The wise men among them would think that there is no God other than the stars and spheres for whose sake, and in resemblance of which, they had made these images. The Eternal Rock was not recognized or known by anyone in the world, with the exception of a [few] individuals: for example, **Chanoch, Metushelach, Noach, Shem, and Ever**. The world continued in this fashion until the pillar of the world - the Patriarch Abraham - was born.
- When he [**Avraham**] recognized and knew Him, he began to formulate replies to the inhabitants of Ur Kasdim and debate with them, telling them that they were not following a proper path. He broke their idols and **began to teach the people that it is fitting to serve only the God of the world**.
- When he overcame them through the strength of his arguments, the king desired to kill him. [...] he began to call in a loud voice to all people and inform them that there is one God in the entire world and it is proper to serve Him. He would go out and call to the people, gathering them in city after city and country after country, until he came to the land of Canaan - proclaiming [God's existence the entire time] - as [Genesis 21:33] states: "And He called there in the name of the Lord, the eternal God." **When the people would gather around him and ask him about his statements, he would explain [them] to each one of them according to their understanding, until they turned to the path of truth. Ultimately, thousands and myriads gathered around him.**
These are the men of the house of Abraham. He planted in their hearts this great fundamental principle, composed texts about it...

The form of Outreach

(Midrash Bereshit Raba 49:3)



- “For I love him, so that he will command his children and his household after him, that they observe the way of the Lord, to perform righteousness and justice, so that the Lord will bring upon Abraham what He spoke concerning him” (Genesis 18:19). Rabbi Azarya in the name of Rabbi Yehuda: Righteousness at first, and ultimately justice. How so? Abraham would take in passersby. After they ate and drink, he said to them: ‘Recite a blessing.’ They said: ‘What should we say?’ He said to them: ‘Say: Blessed is God, the Most High, whose food we have eaten.’ If he agreed to recite the blessing, he would eat, drink and go. But if he would not agree to recite the blessing, he [Abraham] would say to him: ‘Give me what you owe.’ He would say: ‘What do I owe you?’ He would say to him: ‘A cup of wine costs ten *polars*, a pound of meat costs ten *polars*, and a loaf of bread costs ten *polars*. [After all,] who can provide you with wine in the wilderness? Who can provide you with meat in the wilderness? Who can provide you a loaf of bread in the wilderness?’ When he [the guest] would see the **trouble** that he was causing him, he would say: ‘Blessed is God, the Most High, whose food we have eaten.’ That is what we have written: Righteousness at first, and ultimately justice.

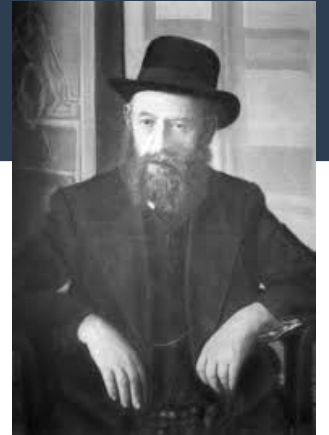
Let's focus on Avraham



- **Called in the name of Hashem**
 - To all Passersby
 - After giving food
 - Explained in many ways monotheism, creation something from nothing, divine providence / supervision, oneness of Hashem etc.
 - Partner in creation / Hashem was recognized by His creations
 - **Pressure / Trouble...**
- **Didn't he realize that they were cheating him?**
 - Why was Hashem so happy?

Main idea

- **When the person is too coarse, he can't perceive higher ideas**
 - Spies (Bamidbar 13)
 - Ugly man (Talmud Taanit 20a)
 - Story of Rebbe Rashab



Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneerson
1860-1920

Explanation and Pressure



- **First explain**
- **Then pressure**
 - Pressure break the coarseness of the person so that the explanation “enters” the mind
- **Conclusion**
 - There are enough sources to understand that Outreach is a proper attitude, both for Jews and for non-Jews
 - Some conditions...
 - Know the material
 - Don't enter arguments
 - Always base yourself on sources
 - Make sure you have a supporting rabbi (who knows about Bnei Noach)