

LESSON 1

GROUND RULES OF LIFE

STARRING: YOU

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Section #1 - Who, What, When, Where, & Why are we here?

Knowing your past; improving your future...

WHY are we here?

Division, prejudice, and discord grip every faction of the world's peoples. We too often hate to love, and love to hate. The source of this problem stems primarily by focusing on our differences; instead of those things that unite us. There are 70 primary nations of people, who each have a special general part to play in the world; and then each person in an individual way has a role of contribution. Indeed history will attest, that various peoples have furthered humanity's abilities in all genres of life. For example; the Greeks are known for promoting philosophy, science, and art. The Romans are credited with laying out the ground rules of government. Ethics are always ascribed to "Judeo-Christian" values; and the list goes on. Each group's addition has enabled all of us to grow. Imagine if all the contributions were given toward a common goal; every facet becoming one more building block toward universal perfection. Sound impossible? That is precisely what our task is down here; to put forth our piece in the grand puzzle.

WHO is needed? **YOU!**

Angels do not give the Creator true pleasure. There is no force challenging their unending desire to do good. Their service is robotic and natural, because as spiritual beings, they have a clear perception of G-dliness. The ultimate pleasure for the Al-mighty is physical reality, where G-dliness is concealed, and the forces of good not always so obvious. When a human being looks beyond the illusion of the tangible realm, to its G-dly core; passes over his passions which try urgently to stray him off the path; and then chooses good, G-d exclaims, "Mission accomplished!" The Supernal Desire and thirst which willed the world into existence is quenched. We were all presented with the torches to light up the dark world, so that even this coarse existence could be a place where G-dly energy could be recognized.

HOW does it work?

As a creation it is impossible for us to relate to our Creator. We can't relate to bugs or animals, and they are creations as well; so how much infinitely more so, with the very Being that brought us into existence. The only way we can relate, or have any grasp of what He wants, is by Him revealing His will to us; therefore, religion has to claim Divine revelation. Judaism has a unique twist distinguishing it from all other religions that ever were, and will ever be-- national revelation. It's very easy for one man or a small group to claim they witnessed G-d, or what have you. Judaism teaches that at Mount Sinai, the entire nation of 3 million witnessed the fusion of the material and the spiritual; the Creator revealed His will and laws, in a manner never to be duplicated again. From that point on, a human being could make the world express G-dliness, by doing His will in the world. The key to creation was now accessible.

WHAT do we do? **WHERE** did it start?

So what does G-d want exactly? The Jewish people are called a "nation of priests." 613 primary deeds were given to be carried out; 248 on the to do list, 365 thou shall nots. Paralleling this there are 248 bones in the body and 365 sinews that make up the circulatory system; demonstrating that adherence to this code, refines every part of the Jew who was instructed to perform them; and connects them with the "Supernal Man," at the same time. The Jewish people are meant to be a living example to humanity, of integrating material and the metaphysical into daily life. Just as priests and the congregation work together in distinct roles to serve G-d in the house of worship, the Jewish people were to be priests for mankind, as if the entire world was one house of worship.

"Thus saith the L-rd of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall take hold of the robe of he that is a Jew, saying: We will go with you, for we have heard G-d is with you."

Zachariah 8:23

So what about the other 70 nations? Adam, the first man, was given a moral code to abide by. 10 generations elapsed and the world had long abandoned them. G-d saw that Noah and his family were the only ones still on the right track; therefore, the world would be started anew, and Noah would be the patriarch of all humanity. After bringing a flood to the world, which cleansed it of previous evils, G-d started from square one-- basic morals. Noah was retold the former edicts and got an additional one; therefore, they bore his name--the Seven Laws of Noah. All humanity would be his pedigree and mandated in fulfilling these basic tenets for a healthy world. Seven symbolizes completeness in nature. There are 7 days in a week, and a person's soul was given 7 emotive attributes that contribute to his personality. Each of the 7 laws corresponds to one of those attributes, refining the soul of the gentile who performs them. The rainbow was given 7 colors, for it is the reminder for humanity to their commitment to these 7 laws. Mount Sinai united the upper and lower worlds, changing all of existence forever. The Seven Noahide Laws were reiterated at this momentous occasion, enabling all people to make G-dliness a part of their own life in their G-d given path. The prohibitions are from idolatry, blasphemy, murder, stealing, sexual misconduct, and eating the limb of a live animal. The seventh is a positive command to set up courts of justice that enforce the other six. While seemingly basic, each one includes countless details which need to be toiled in, by all those who seek true piety. The universal laws must not only be practiced out of rote or common sense , but instead infused with the idea that they were all commanded by G-d to humanity at Mount Sinai.

WHERE did it go wrong?

Why does the world look like it does today? The morals discussed above, were taken and had ceremonies and flare added to them until they formed individual religions. The new rites and rituals of the particular faith became the primary focus, and the moral code of living took a far second. Each group professed themselves as the only truth, and subsequently everyone else must follow or be condemned. Judaism never sought converts. If someone wishes to convert they are dismissed initially. The reason is simple; everyone else already has a G-d given role. We can easily amend our mistake, by putting the added baggage on the back burner, and zeroing in on the Seven Noahide Laws, which are the foundations which unite us. By focusing on those things that make us the same, our unique differences will make us stronger, rather than cause us dismay. Ultimately the goal is universal perfection and unity, with all peoples' occupation being solely to know G-d.

"I will turn all the nations to a clear language, that they may call upon the L-rd and serve Him in one voice."

Zephania 3:9

Section #2 – Quotes About Humanity In Jewish Tradition We're in this together

**"Righteous people of all nations have a share in the world to come"
Sanhedrin 105a**

"Our love of humanity should take no exception to any nation or individual. For man was not created for his own sake exclusively; rather, all men exist for the sake of one another. As a sage once said: "The world and all it contains was created for mankind, and within mankind itself, one person was created for the sake of the next, each to benefit the other." Therefore, not only does [love of one's fellow] apply to the Jewish people but to all mankind. We should love all nations and include all peoples in this universal principle, 'the stranger and native son' alike, all who inhabit the earth."

R' Pinchos Eliyohu Horowitz of Vilna, Sefer HaBris

**a non-Jew who studies Torah is comparable to the High Priest
Avodah Zara 3a, Bava Kama 38a**

Righteous gentiles are called:

***priests**

Midrash: Yalkut, Kings II, 296

***pious ones**

Tana D'vei Eliyahu Zuta 20:6

***are rewarded for fulfilling G-d's commandments**

Talmud Yerushalmi, Peah 1:1

***G-d recalls their merits**

Yalkut: Tehilim 643

***they will return with the resurrection of the dead**

Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer 34

***they have a share in Gan Eden**

Zohar, Pekudei

"I call heaven and earth to bear witness, that any individual, man or woman, Jew or Gentile, freeman or slave, can have the Holy Spirit bestowed upon him. It all depends on his deeds."

Shaare Tzedek 60a, 60b

"G-d will wipe away the tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:8):

"This means from the faces of Jews and non-Jews alike."

R' Yehoshua ben Levi (Bereishis Rabbah 26:2