

REACHING THE UNREACHABLE

Text:

“Noah was a perfectly righteous man ... Noah walked with G-d”

[Bereishis 6:9]

“And Noah found favor in the eyes of G-d.”

[Bereishis 6:8]

“And Noah found favor” – to save even his sons and daughters... Not because he was worthy of it; G-d granted this to him as a favor... **For although Noah rebuked [his contemporaries] for their behaviors which were destructive to society, he did not teach them to know G-d and to follow in His ways [and thus he failed to save them]**...But a righteous man who perfects others as well has the merit to save others too, for there is hope thereby that he can bring them to repentance...

[Commentary of S'forno]

Question:

Noah rebuked his contemporaries for destroying society – and his words fell on deaf ears, How, then, could Noah possibly have taught them “to know G-d and follow in His ways”?!

Answer:

People can be reached in different ways. When exposing their degenerate behavior failed, Noah *could* have tried another tactic – portraying the beauty of spiritual ideals and noble character traits.

Message:

An individual may appear too coarse for lofty concepts, too corrupt to appreciate refined ideals. Not so, the Torah tells us. A human being possesses an indestructible spiritual core, that can be suppressed and buried but never extinguished. We never know what will reach someone – and we must never fail to try.