

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

לתקן עולם
במלכות ש-ד-י

A Light **unto the** **Nations**

OUR DUTY OF TEACHING
SHEVA MITZVOS B'NEI NOACH

Celebration 40

YUD SHEVAT 5750

In the Presence
of Royalty

PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS
WITH THE REBBETZIN



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A LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS

SHEVA MITZVOS B'NEI NOACH

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי
לרגל יום הולדתו ביום י"ג טבת
שיגדל להיות חייל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריו הרה"ת ר' **יצחק דובער**
וזגתו **שיינא מושקא שיחי**
גלאסנער



HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

On Yud Shevat, 5711, the Rebbe delivered the maamar Bosi L'gani, setting out the charge of this generation, *dor hashvi'i*: to finally and completely bring the *shechinah* down to this world—*ובתחתונים דוקא*—specifically to the lowest of all worlds.

It is this mission that drives Chassidim to this day, to transform the world into a more G-dly place, and to teach the inhabitants of the world about the existence of the Creator and to live by His word, until the whole world will be filled with knowledge of Hashem. Obviously, included in our mission is a broader reach to *all* the inhabitants of the world, a majority of which are non-Jews.

In the words of the *novi*: *כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרא כלם בשם ה' לעבדו שכם אחד*—For then I will transform the peoples to a pure language that all of them call in the name of Hashem, to worship Him of one accord.

In connection with Yud Shevat, we take a look at the underlying meaning of this unique effort to spread the universal ethical laws, known as the *sheva mitzvos Bnei Noach*, among all the peoples of the world—a theme passionately discussed by the Rebbe at almost every major *farbrengen*, especially in the 5740's, and particularly the televised *farbrengens*.

We are now at a unique moment in history.

For thousands of years the Jewish people have been persecuted—from when Nimrod threw Avraham into the furnace and Eisav threatened Yaakov's life, to the expulsions and massacres of the Middle Ages, to their oppression under the Soviets and the extermination of six million Jews in the Holocaust just 70 years ago.

In the past few decades, however—a mere blink in the history of a nation—Yidden everywhere live in freedom. No longer are Yidden locked in ghettos and limited to specific trades, no longer are they barred from higher echelons of society, officially or otherwise; a Yid can behave and practice and run his life however he sees fit. For the first time ever, Yidden have the opportunity to deal with and mix with non-Jews on an equal level, including in government and commerce.

Faced with this unprecedented reality, most Yidden have largely continued as before. When it comes to their Yiddishkeit, when they are davening in shul, the non-Jew is not involved. Out in the world of business, on the other hand, Yidden now have the opportunity to play a role in society—not when it goes against Yiddishkeit, *chas veshalom*, but when there is no contradiction.

The Rebbe, however, taught us something almost shockingly simple: now that these new opportunities have been opened before us, we have the duty and responsibility, as is *paskened* by the Rambam, to share a universal message of ethics and morality to all people, based on the teachings of the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*.

In addition to the simple halachic obligation, this represents a monumental shift in how a Yid deals with the world. Whereas, in the past few thousand years, many Jews looked at a non-Jew with fear, or at least faint suspicion, now is a time when also a non-Jew can have a prominent role in Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe explained that when a Yid encounters the world, though he may be tempted to try “playing the game” at the world's rules, he should in fact act himself: a proud Yid, a believer in Torah, who is always ready and eager to share the message of Yiddishkeit with every person. Far from sacrificing prestige and success, he will find that he will only gain respect in the eyes of others, leading to success, financially and otherwise.

These new freedoms, this new era in history is far from a coincidence, the Rebbe explained. The fact that we now have an unprecedented ability to share a universal message of morality with our gentile neighbors is part of a much larger picture. After years of refining the world and preparing it to realize its purpose of being a divine home, a *dira betachtonim*, we are now standing at the threshold of the time of Moshiach, when the entire world will indeed be a *dira betachtonim*. A world that will have no more famine, nor war, no envy nor malice,” because *all* inhabitants of the world—Yidden and *goyim*—will not be “busy with anything but knowing Hashem,” as Yeshaya states “the world will be filled with Divine knowledge as the waters cover the sea.” Hashem has given us the opportunity to get ready, to begin the process of bringing every human being into the service of Hashem by teaching the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*.

Furthermore, by teaching this to the nations of the world, their superior numbers have the ability to reach every corner of the world. In order to ready the *entire* planet to be a *dira batachtonim*, it is imperative that the non-Jews also carry the message.



PART 1: THE HALACHIC OBLIGATION

The halachic basis for *sheva mitzvos*, quoted countless times by the Rebbe, comes from the Rambam in Mishne Torah, Hilchos Melachim. The Rambam writes:

Moshe commanded, by the word of Hashem, to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept the commandments given to Noach's descendants.¹

Then the Rambam continues:

Anyone who accepts upon himself the fulfillment of these seven mitzvos

and is precise in their observance is considered one of *chassidei umos ha'lom* ['the pious among the gentiles'] and will merit a share in the world to come.

This applies only when he accepts them and fulfills them because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah and informed us through Moshe Rabbeinu that Noach's descendants had been commanded to fulfill them previously.

However, if he fulfills them out of intellectual conviction, he is not a *ger toshav*, nor of *chasidei umos ha'olam* ['the pious among the gentiles'], nor of their wise men. [In another version this reads "...

rather of their wise men."]²

In the next *perek*, the Rambam lists them:

Six mitzvos were commanded to Adam:

- 1) the prohibition against worship of false gods;
- 2) the prohibition against cursing Hashem;
- 3) the prohibition against murder;
- 4) the prohibition against forbidden relations;
- 5) the prohibition against theft;
- 6) the command to establish laws and courts of justice.
- 7) the prohibition against eating flesh from a living animal was added for Noach.

Thus there are seven mitzvos.

Most of these mitzvos are general and include many details. The list also

...The Yidden alone cannot reach every corner of the world. It is imperative that the non-Jews also carry the message so we can ready the entire planet to be a *dira betachtonim*.

The big question is obvious: What happened in all the years and centuries following the Rambam? Why was this halacha not quoted in Shulchan Aruch and its nosei keilim, nor in most shaalos u'teshuvos throughout the generations?

only includes negative mitzvos³; however, *b'nei Noach* are obligated to fulfill other positive mitzvos as well, including (according to most *meforshim*): *tzedakah*, *kibbud av va'eim*, and others.

In these short *halachos* the Rambam lays out the fundamental definition of *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*: these mitzvos are to be fulfilled not merely because one understands it intellectually, but because they are commanded by Hashem.

Being that this is so, the Rebbe said, when a Yid is teaching about the *sheva mitzvos*, he must “put in the effort and explain the mitzvos in a way that the ‘how’ and ‘why’ will be accepted. This takes much

thought and exertion.”⁴

The great reward for fulfilling these mitzvos should also be explained, and that in addition to the reward in this world, those who fulfill them will also merit in the world to come.⁵

And although, on the face of it, these mitzvos are self evident and obvious to any human being, the finer details of these mitzvos aren't so self evident at all. As the Rebbe said: “In order to convince someone to give up on his honor, jealousy and *taava*, that he shouldn't do an act of *hasagas gvul* [unfair competition], that he shouldn't even have a ‘nice talk’ that is negative about someone else... [In order to influence him] in a way which will have lasting

impact throughout the rest of his life; this is only possible if the decision is based on fulfilling the will of the Creator.”⁶ [More on this below.]

This can be done through conversation. “One must work at it over and over again,” the Rebbe said, “and not suffice with speaking about it one time in order to ease off the obligation. If a person spoke about it once, twice, and three times, they may argue: ‘*Vifil iz a shiur!*’ How long must I continue with this? I have other things to do!”

“But as we have seen, sometimes, speaking to a person three times did not accomplish the desired result, but on the fourth or fifth try they became

