

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Yitro, 5785

(Vol. 17)



VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS
788 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN, NY 11213
5785 • 2025

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתח'ל
Shagalov

DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Yisro

TEN COMPELS SEVEN

The Ten Commandments establish an exclusive relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. Since the Torah portion is named after a non-Jew, this indicates that the non-Jewish world benefits when the Jewish people fulfill the six hundred thirteen mitzvos. It also indicates that the Jewish people have an obligation to “compel” the seventy nations to observe the seven Noachide commandments.

The central event of the Torah – the revelation at Sinai – occurs in this week’s portion. By giving the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people, G-d establishes an exclusive relationship with Israel. Indeed, G-d declares, “Now therefore, if you will indeed hearken to My voice and you will keep My covenant, then you shall be mine own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”

There arises, then, a simple question: why is “Yisro” the name of the Torah reading? Yisro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a Midianite chief, a former priest for every form of idolatry. Given that the Ten Commandments emphasize G-d’s relationship with the Jewish people, that the Torah and the six hundred thirteen mitzvos define Israel as G-d’s “own treasure,” it seems odd that this Torah reading in particular should be called by the name of a non-Jew.

The Rebbe emphasizes many times the significance of names, emphasizing that the name of a Torah reading indicates the essential nature of that portion. Therefore, that Yisro is a non-Jew

indicates that even though the covenant and the commandments belong exclusively to the Jewish people, still the Torah is relevant to the non-Jew in some significant and essential way.

Now it is well known that there are seven universal laws that apply to all mankind. These seven Noachide laws are so named since all humanity descends from Noah and his children. Although the Torah applies only to the Jewish people, everyone must observe the seven Noachide commandments. In fact, because the Torah was given to the Jewish people, the rest of the world must be “compelled” to accept the seven universal laws. As Maimonides writes: “Moses gave the Torah and mitzvos as an inheritance only to Israel . . . someone else who does not wish to accept Torah and mitzvos should not be forced to. By the same token, Moses was commanded by the Almighty to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept the laws given to Noah’s descendants.”

At Sinai the Jewish people received – and accepted upon themselves – two categories of obligation. First was acceptance of G-d’s *Kingship* – and an automatic rejection of idolatry. Second was an acceptance of the mitzvos, G-d’s *commandments*. Moses – and therefore the Jewish people – are commanded to compel the nations to accept the first obligation, G-d’s Kingship.

The Torah was not given just so that Jews would accept the yoke of G-d’s Kingship and His commandments. The ultimate purpose of the giving of the Torah was to transform the world, so that ultimately – in the era of Moshiach – “G-d will be King over all the earth.” Since however, Torah – acceptance of G-d’s Kingship and His mitzvos – is a “Jewish thing,” the Jews alone have the ability and obligation to bring G-d’s Kingship to the whole world.

In short, the obligation to **compel** all the inhabitants of the world to accept the seven Noachide commandments, with all the

implications thereof, derives from the very fact the Jewish people were given the Torah. This obligation applies even today. Especially now, on the threshold of Redemption, must the Jewish people “compel” the non-Jews to accept and fulfill the seven mitzvos. (That now, for the first time in history, we are able to openly publicize and promote the Seven Mitzvos is itself a sign we are on the threshold of the coming of Moshiach.)

In this context, “compelling” means to persuade, to explain, to enlighten – to use the various media and means of communication to educate the non-Jewish world about the Noachide commandments. Everyone with a connection to a non-Jew, or who has an opportunity, should try to influence the b’nei Noach – the descendants of Noah – to accept his or her Divine obligation, the seven universal laws.

Previously, the Jewish people were unable to observe this law. Even in those countries which did not persecute the Jews, any attempt to influence the non-Jewish population was fraught with danger. When the government was neutral, so to speak, other so-called leaders, religious or otherwise, certainly were not interested in or tolerant of what Judaism taught regarding G-d’s commandments to the nations.

Now, however, the situation is different. In countries like the United States, when a Jew tries to enlighten his or her neighbor about the Seven Mitzvos, there is no danger of any kind. There is neither physical danger, nor the hazard of financial loss or penalty. Just the opposite: efforts to influence and educate non-Jews is beneficial, bringing both spiritual and material profit. In such a situation, the obligation “to compel [i.e., influence and inspire] all the inhabitants of the world to accept the laws given to Noah’s descendants” applies to every Jew in full force.

That Jews are not only able to educate, persuade and influence non-Jews, but also to benefit thereby is itself an indicator we are in the era of Moshiach.

Certainly the Jewish people benefit when non-Jews accept and observe the seven Noachide laws. Every Jew is still affected by the Holocaust. Although the events are fifty years past, to this day the terror and horror leaves its trace in Jewish life, its shadow over the Jewish people. Yet one could see clearly during those times that there were righteous gentiles, individuals and groups who refrained from murder and thievery, and through whose efforts thousands of Jews were saved.

From those times – G-d forbid they should ever be repeated, and we should all see only good – we have a living example of the benefit Jews receive when the nations observe the Seven Mitzvos. How much more so, then, will the Jewish people benefit when there is no danger to the non-Jew, when the interaction is “only” a business transaction. In such a situation, when a Jew conducts himself in a pleasant and amiable manner, certainly the Jews will benefit from the non-Jews’ observance of their mitzvos. In such circumstances as we find ourselves now, it is not only possible, it is imperative to try to “compel” the non-Jew to accept G-d’s Kingship and observe the Noachide commandments.

Simply put, if a gentile has the opportunity to harm or help a Jew, but feels that there is “an Eye that sees and an Ear that hears,” obviously he will choose to help the Jew. When he knows he must observe his Seven Mitzvos – as a Jew must observe his six hundred thirteen – automatically the relationship between the Jew and non-Jew will improve.

By making the effort to “compel” the non-Jews to observe the Seven Mitzvos, thousands and thousands of gentiles will come to observe G-d’s commandments. Then the world will see that G-d “has made Israel a light unto the nations.”

Indeed, fulfilling this Divine commandment to influence and “compel” the non-Jews sets the stage and prepares the way

for fulfillment of the prophetic promise that G-d “will make the peoples pure of speech that they will **all** call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose” in the complete and final Redemption.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 26, pp. 132-144)

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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"A great congregation will return here,"¹ to our holy land, "a land that the L-rd your G-d constantly observes; the eyes of the L-rd your G-d are on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year."²

Therefore,³ also before the Redemption the children of Israel dwell in it **in security**, without fear from "the nations of the world [who] are in terror and turmoil" because "the kings of the nations of the world struggle with each other" since the Holy One, Blessed be He "says to them (to Israel), my children, do not be afraid, all that I have done I have done only for your sake... (and the subject is repeated in the Midrash) do not fear, the time of your Redemption has arrived,"⁴ "the King Moshiach stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash [Holy Temple] and he proclaims to Israel, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived.'"

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 18 Shvat, 5751)

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At this time, as we stand immediately preceding the true and complete Redemption... as mentioned frequently of late, that already all conditions have been met and now there only has to be the actual Redemption.

* * *

It has been mentioned many times that a possible acronym of

1. *Yirmiyahu* [Jeremiah] 31:7.

2. *Ekev* 11:12.

3. [*Because the land of Israel enjoys special Divine supervision. Translator's note.*]

4. *Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayahu*, remez 499.

"MiYaD"¹ is **Moshe, Yisroel** (the Baal Shem Tov) and **Dovid**, the king Moshiach. This means that the first generation, that of the giving of the Torah (the generation of Moshe) is bound up with the last generation (that of the Redemption through Dovid, the king Moshiach) by means of the revelation of Chassidus from the Baal Shem Tov and our Rebbeim and leaders who succeeded him. Thus when your wellsprings overflow, "the master will come," the king Moshiach.²

One might say that, according to the meaning of the word "MiYaD" (immediately), the three letters are not connected with three different times (Moshe in his generation, Yisroel the Baal Shem Tov in his generation and Dovid the king Moshiach in his generation). Rather they all come together, actually simultaneous ("MiYaD" - immediately) in every generation and at all times. That the word "MiYaD" is also the acronym for "**Moshe, Yehoshua, Doram** [their generation]" all three in the same generation, alludes to this as well.

One can also apply this to our generation. For in this same generation one has the revelation of all three: Mem (the first letter of Moshiach³), Yud (the first letter of both names of my sainted father-in-law) and Daled (Doram). Combining [Mem] the Moshe of our generation (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation) with the concept of [Yud] ten (tenth of Shvat), which also includes his revelation of the Torah of Chassidus (the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov), one has as well the revelation of the aspect of eleven, "the first Redeemer is the final Redeemer,"⁴ Dovid King Moshiach.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 20 Shvat, 5752)

1. [The Hebrew word "miyad" means immediately. It consists of three letters: Mem, Yud and Daled. Translator's note.]

2. The well known holy letter of the Baal Shem Tov - *Keser Shem Tov* at the beginning and several places.

3. It should be noted that "**Menachem is his name**" (Sanhedrin 98b).

4. See *Shmos Rabba* Chapter 2:4, 2:6. *Zohar*, vol. 1 253a. *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, the verses, *Parshas Vayechi. Torah Or Mishpatim* 75b.

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Our generation is the last generation of exile and the first generation of the Redemption. As my sainted father-in-law, the one whose yahrtzeit we commemorate, announced and publicized many times, all requirements have already been completed and all that is necessary is to actually greet our righteous Moshiach. Obviously then, if in the meantime there was a physical removal, as was the case on the twenty-second of Shvat four years ago (5748)¹, this is surely only to bring the only elevation that still remains - the elevation of the true and immediate Redemption.

...The amazing innovation and advantage of this generation - the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption - has been mentioned frequently, that it completes and concludes "our work and our Divine service"² of the Jews of all previous generations. It completes the last purification of exile, as expressed by my sainted father-in-law,³ "polishing the buttons." Our Divine service consists of bringing the Redemption into reality, for this generation and for all generations preceding it! This means, that this generation concludes the work and Divine service of all preceding generations of Jews.

...The generation of the leader of our generation itself comprises several stages and periods. In general, there are three stages:) the tenth day of the eleventh month (10th of Shvat, 5710), the conclusion of the period of my sainted father-in-law's Divine service during his life in this world; 2) the day after - the eleventh day of the eleventh month (the first complete day after his passing), particularly commencing with the eleventh year (5711)⁴, when the

1. *[Passing of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. Translator's note.]*

2. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

3. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.

4. See *Sefer HaSichos*, 5750, vol. 1, p. 255, note 99.

progression and innovation of a new period began, and "the lights were hung" of the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe (or the ninth generation from the Baal Shem Tov); 3) the period after the passing of the daughter of my sainted father-in-law on the twenty-second of the eleventh month (22 Shvat 5748).

...The tenth day of the eleventh month is connected with and completes the Divine service of purifying the last "remnants" of exile, "polishing the buttons."

...The day afterwards, the eleventh day of the eleventh month, signifies that in addition to and after the Divine service of the tenth day of the eleventh month, one has achieved and been elevated (according to the principle, "elevate in holiness"⁵) to the revelation of the eleventh (day) as well.

...One comes afterward to yet a higher level. After the Divine service of all the purifications has already been completed, and we have already also "polished the buttons," etc., we need only stand ready to receive our righteous Moshiach. This is the perfection of eleven (completely incomparable to ten)... as alluded to in **22** Shvat - eleven doubled.

...After the 22nd of Shvat (the day of passing of his daughter), the last stage in preparing the world (as a dwelling place for G-d here below) for the Redemption has been accomplished. The completion of this matter comes through and in the merit of the wives and daughters of Israel.

Therefore, the lesson for the wives and daughters of Israel in general, and in particular for the *shluchos* [emissaries], may they live and be well, of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, who have gathered from all corners of the world for the

5. *Brochos* 28a. See cross references there.

"International Convention of Shluchos" At this time, the last moments before Redemption one must raise one's own awareness and that of all the wives and daughters of Israel concerning the great merit of the wives and daughters of Israel to actually bring the true and complete Redemption, imminently and immediately. This comes "in the merit of the righteous women of the generation,"⁶ as mentioned above.

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 20 Shvat,
and Sunday night and Monday, 22 Shvat, 5752)*

6. *Yalkut Shimoni Rus, remez 606 at the end (from Midrash Zuta Rus).*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FREIND
Reb Pesach Betzalel ben Reb Leib ע"ה Fleischman
Passed away on 3 Elul, 5784

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel שיחי Shagalov**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

Reb Yitzchok (Isadore) ben Reb Nochum Tzvi ע"ה Plotkin

Passed away on 19 Shevat, 5765

Mrs. Yenta (Yetta) bas Reb Nochum ע"ה Plotkin

Passed away on 11 Tevet, 5764

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN שיחיו

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER

Mr. Ephraim ben Reb Avrohom ע"ה Hoffman

Passed away on 23 Shevat, 5755

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN שיחיו

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mrs. Sheva bas Reb Yitzchok Isaac ע"ה
Passed away on 21 Shevat, 5747

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HER CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN
Mr. & Mrs. Zalman Leib and Esther Hencha שיחיו Roth
and family שיחיו

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER
HaRabbonis Alte Chana bas Reb Asher Zelig Halevi ע"ה Schevelowitz
Passed away, on 22 Shevat, 5775

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HER LOVING CHILDREN
Rabbi & Mrs. Mordechai Tzvi HaLevi and Esther Zelda שיחיו Nashofer
Mr. & Mrs. Mattisyahu Naftali and Simcha Yehudis שיחיו Stavsky
and her grandchildren & great-grandchildren שיחיו

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