

Sichos
in
English

MENORAH —
A SYMBOL OF THANKSGIVING

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SICHOS IN ENGLISH

Excerpts of Sichos delivered by
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

at his periodic public addresses,
translated into English

MENORAH — A SYMBOL OF THANKSGIVING

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On Yud-Tes Kislev, 5747, the Rebbe shlita addressed the issue of public menorahs in the U.S.A. and abroad. Showing how the themes of Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah emphasized the victory of the forces of righteousness over evil and the resultant need to publicize such miracles, he explained how the American holiday of Thanksgiving actually signifies the same idea. Thus, when the President of the U.S.A. supports the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach and the setting up of public menorahs, he is fostering a very American idea.

The Rebbe blessed President Reagan with continued good health and many vigorous years to continue to increase his benevolent deeds for America and humanity.

What is the remedy for lawlessness and rebellious behavior in society? The faith of the menorah eliminates the rebellious footsteps. A “Moment of Silence” to meditate on the Holy One, blessed be He — whose all-seeing eye and all-hearing ear watches and hears human actions — will inculcate fear of G-d in America’s children and raise a healthy, righteous generation who will personify the motto: “In G-d We Trust!”

Faith in G-d — Made in the U.S.A.

It is appropriate to reiterate that the character of this nation is based on faith in G-d. And we speak not of an abstract Super Being, but of G-d, Creator and Master of the world.

One can profess belief in a Creator while failing to recognize G-d's interest in the details of the world and in man's mortal actions. Our nation, however, is built on the principles established by the founding fathers. When they landed on these shores, one of their first acts was to set and proclaim a holiday of Thanksgiving to the Creator and Master of the world who had saved them from danger and brought them to these safe shores. Here they could live without fear, religious persecution, or oppressive decrees. Here they could conduct their lives according to their sacred beliefs. Their thanksgiving expressed this faith: G-d not only created the world but also directs the events of the world. They recognized the providence of G-d in their salvation.

This holiday has become tradition, and every year we offer sincere thanksgiving to G-d for showing those early settlers His abundant kindness.

Even estranged souls, who believe in G-d in their heart but outwardly boast of atheism or relegate G-d to the seventh Heaven, certainly participate in the customs of the holiday of Thanksgiving established by those original Americans.

The Importance of Public Menorah Lightings

Recently, we have seen another affirmation of faith in this land. The President who is given the Divinely-ordained mission of leading our country, as Scripture says: "The heart of kings (and rulers) is in the hand of the L-rd,"¹ officially proclaimed the

¹ *Mishlei* 21:1.

importance of observing the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach*, the basis of all morality. The President also issued a special proclamation endorsing the public lighting of Chanukah menorahs. Both proclamations were duly publicized.

Surely, the President's efforts will not go unrewarded, but will bring him G-d's blessing for success in all his duties. These good deeds will increase G-d's blessings for his physical health. Any medical treatment that may be necessary will be successful, and he will be able to increase his efforts on behalf of all the inhabitants of this land. This is truly his mission from G-d, who cares for the world, as the Baal Shem Tov taught: G-d takes personal interest in the individual human, animal, plant, and inanimate objects.

In matters of holiness and good deeds there is the important rule; one *mitzvah* brings another.² The same is true in the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach*. Good deeds engender an increase of goodness, quantitatively qualitatively, and with greater public acknowledgement. The merit of this increased good will enable the President to move beyond the recent entanglements, and in good health be able to do more good with uprightness and righteousness.

The President should begin with an official declaration, stating that wherever a Jew wants to set a menorah, to be kindled in an ever-increasing manner during the eight nights of Chanukah, he should be enabled to do so. For locating the menorah in a public place, thus giving the miracle of the candles maximum exposure, is in keeping with the spirit of the founding fathers and all those whose lives in this country began with a public expression of gratitude to G-d.

May G-d grant that these activities will be met with great success, and that the nations of the world be inspired by the example of the White House. For when these activities are

² *Pirkei Avos* 4:2.

performed with joy and enthusiasm G-d will reward us in like measure (and His measure is many times greater) with light, health, and the ability to grow in sheer goodness. Blessed are those who will assist in these matters by providing joyous encouragement and necessary support.

Those in leadership positions in a state, city, or neighborhood should also participate in these activities, with the knowledge that these will help eliminate lawlessness and rebelliousness against G-d and humanity.

The Rebbe's Solution

A feeling of weakness and uncertainty covers the land as we search for solutions to serious social problems, but **this** can be said with certainty: All morality must be based on an awareness of the Creator and Master of the world, the Eye that sees and the Ear that hears, Who, in His Divine Providence, watches over us at all times and in all places. This fact is based on empirical experience. For in our generation a powerful country attained the greatest scientific knowledge, philosophical advancement, and artistic excellence and yet perpetrated the horrors of what we now call the holocaust.

They committed acts too horrible for the human mind to comprehend or tolerate. The children of those people confronted with the documentation of the barbarism protest in disbelief. But it happened! How was this possible? There was no faith in a Super Being who oversees the world which He created.

Attending to the education of our children we must not deny them the only true resource for goodness and morality in their lives. They must be aware of the Eye that sees and the Ear that hears, Who judges the world justly and kindly. Even a child understands that one cannot deceive G-d. Rather, wanting to receive G-d's blessing, he or she will impress upon other children to act according to the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach*, laying the foundation for a just society.

This is the only way to raise children properly. Only in this way will the national epidemic of rebelliousness against the law in the land cease. Neither money nor special teachers, policemen nor threats will help. You can hide from a policeman but not from G-d.

It is, however, necessary that the child incorporate this knowledge into his daily thoughts and lifestyle.

When these truths cannot be transmitted directly to the children within the existing educational setting, they must be emphasized and meditated on in a “Moment of Silence” at the beginning of the school day. The child should be prepared for the moment of contemplation by the parents who have the right and responsibility to raise and train their children to be productive humans and not barbaric rebels against society.

These good efforts will bring good health to all who encourage and support these activities and when these efforts are increased with joy and gladness, with the proper publicity, it will bring blessing all over the land, and throughout the world.

And it will speed the fulfillment of the ruling of the *Rambam*:

“He (*Mashiach*) will prepare the whole world to serve the L-rd with one accord, as it is written:³ ‘For then will I give to the peoples a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of the L-rd to serve him with one consent.’”⁴

This idea is clearly represented by the American motto: “In G-d we trust!”



³ *Tzephaniah* 3:9.

⁴ *Mishneh Torah, Sefer Shoftim, Hilchos Melachim*, 11:4.

This essay is published
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With prayers for his
complete and speedy recovery.

