

A Moral Code to Unite Mankind

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A Moral Code to Unite All Mankind

From a 1990 Address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

By the Grace of G-d

We find ourselves now at a turning point in history. Changes have swept the world as dissolving repressive regimes have given way to a climate of increased moral consciousness. It is thus an appropriate time to reflect upon the dynamics of these changes and thereby draw encouragement and guidance to affect them fully. In explaining the purpose of Creation, our sages say that G-d, the Essence of all good, created the world as a result of His desire to do good. As it says in Psalms 145, "The L-rd is good to all, and His mercies are over all his works." For as it is the nature of good to do good unto others, the creation of the universe was a Divine expression of goodness. In this way, the universe and all life are recipients and objects of Divine goodness.

Hence, everything that occurs in the world, even the apparent bad, such as natural disasters, must ultimately have redeeming good. Similarly, the negative inclination within human beings, who essentially desire to do good, is but a "mechanism" by G-d's design, to establish free choice. For had G-d created a world that is totally and exclusively good, without any

efforts on the part of mankind to achieve it, there would be no or little appreciation of goodness. In light of this, it is important to realize that in the individual's struggle with evil, within the world at large or within one's self; the approach should not be one of confrontation. Rather, by emphasizing that which is good in people and in the world, and by bringing the positive to the fore, the evil is superseded by the good, until it eventually disappears.

Although G-d created the world giving people free choice, He nevertheless has given us the tools and the guidance we need to encourage us to choose the good: a Divine moral code, one that predates all human codes, and the only one that has timeless and universal application for a good, moral civilization. This Divine code, known as the Seven Laws of Noah, establishes an objective definition of "good" – one that applies to all people. For as recent history has proven, a morality that is based on human ideas of good, is relative, subjective and essentially not persuasive. Furthermore, as is abundantly clear to educators and law-enforcement agents, neither intimidation nor threat of punishment can foster a deep sense of moral obligation. This can only come from the knowledge – through education, that there is an "Eye that sees and an Ear that hears" to Whom we are all accountable.

The Noahide Code of seven basic Divine laws was given to Noah and his children after the deluge. These laws would assure Noah and his children, the forebears of the new human race, that humanity would not degenerate into a jungle again. The laws, which command the establishment of courts of justice and prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, incest, robbery, and eating the limb of a live animal (cruelty to animals), are the foundation of all morality. And they extend, by laws derived from these, into all aspects of moral behavior.

A particular task [is] to educate and to encourage the observance of the Seven Laws among all people. The religious tolerance of today, and the trend towards greater freedom,

gives us the unique opportunity to enhance widespread observance of these laws. For it is by adherence to these laws, which are in and of themselves an expression of Divine goodness, that all humankind is united and bound by a common moral responsibility to our Creator. This unity promotes peace and harmony among all people, thereby achieving the ultimate good. As the Psalmist said: "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity."

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