

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

By the Grace of G-d
3rd Day of Selichoth
5711
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.

To my Jewish Brethren, Everywhere,
G-d Bless You All!

Sholom u'Brocho:

In the closing days of the year, and the beginning of the New Year, every Jew and Jewess, young and old, experiences a spiritual uplift which leads him to resolve that his mode of living henceforth would be on a higher level.

If this is so every year, then the coming year 5712 should call forth especial reflection and resolution, being the year of Shemittah.

Similar to the Sabbath day, the holy day in the week, the Sabbatical Year (Shemittah) is the holy year in the seven-year cycle.

The Torah prescribes a special order for the year of Shemittah, forbidding the tilling of the soil, etc.: "The earth shall keep a sabbath (rest) unto G-d" (Lev. 25:2).

So much for the material aspect of Shemittah.

In a deeper, spiritual sense, the Torah indicates that the year of Shemittah should influence the Jew to a lasting cessation and rest from all that is "earthly" and coarse; that he must become more spiritual and refined. This spirituality, moreover, should be dedicated to G-d, and not to the cause of false ideals and ideas which, high sounding though they may be, drag down humanity into the mire of materialistic selfishness and coarseness. Only the ideal of the Torah and Mitzvoth translated into every-day life leads to true refinement and elevation of the soul.

The message of the Shemittah year is, therefore, a call for lasting cessation from the earthly and material, and dedication to the higher things in life, in accordance with the Torah and Mitzvoth, a call to spirituality which should permeate every phase of one's daily life, one's thinking, speech and every action, including eating, business, and general conduct.

Let us heed this call and rededicate ourselves to a life which is spiritually fuller, richer and more perfect, bearing the imprint of the Torah and Mitzvoth in everything we do, in our thought, word and deed. With such resolution in our hearts, we may be confident of a happy and blessed year, both materially and spiritually.

With the blessing of
Kesivo vachasmo toivo,

Menachem M. Schneerson