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World's chief rabbis issue joint call for Jews to set aside differences before shavuot

Letter signed by seven chief rabbis calls on Jews worldwide to take practical steps to overcome both personal and communal conflicts.

Contact Editor Arutz Sheva Staff , 27/05/20 16:03



Jews around the world

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The world's chief rabbis have joined together in an unprecedented call to Jewish communities across the globe to set aside their differences and unite in honor of the upcoming festival of Shavuot, and in recognition of the common challenges that have beset communities in the wake of Covid-19.

A joint letter signed by seven chief rabbis from across the world encourages individuals to take “very practical steps” towards healing existing rifts and divisions with others.

“If you are in a situation of conflict, tension, resentment or anger with another,” states the letter, “reach out to them to peacefully resolve the matter. If you know of anyone in similar strife – encourage them to do the same.”

The initiative takes its inspiration from the unity that prevailed among the Jewish people when they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Torah.

“Our sages describe the Jewish people at this sublime moment as being “Like one person with one heart”, explains Russian Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar. “Leading up to Shavuot, we are calling on Jews everywhere to do everything possible to return to this state of complete unity.”

The initiative comes as the world continues to face down the biggest global crisis in decades.

“The Covid-19 crisis has many dimensions – medical and financial, but also social and spiritual,” says South African Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein. “These are challenges we’re all facing, no matter who we are or where we come from, and we saw it as a crucial time for Jews around the world to set aside our differences and overcome conflicts, both communal and personal.”

He emphasizes that Jewish unity isn’t an abstract idea – that it requires concerted action.

“The idea here is that unity is not a noun – it is a verb; it’s not something we simply talk about –





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it's something we do. If we are to settle our differences and create true harmony with our fellow, we need to love peace – and practically pursue it.”

Rabbi Goldstein believes the time is ripe for these peace-making efforts.

“In our respective positions as chief rabbis across the world, we humbly call on Jews everywhere to seize this unique moment in history to strengthen Jewish unity and togetherness in every way possible.”

“In the merit of our joining together,” says Rabbi Lazar in closing, “may we bring down Heavenly Blessing to each one of us, and to the entire world, for health and healing, and for the ultimate blessing of all – the final redemption of all humankind.”

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