

## **"And I will take you to Me for a nation." (6:7)**

With these two words "*to Me for a nation*", Hashem expresses the destiny of *Am Yisrael* for the first time. He simultaneously defines the unique quality of Judaism. People tend to classify Judaism under the category of religions in general. They are amazed to discover that so much within the dictates of Judaism lies outside the sphere of ordinary religions. "*To Me, to be a nation*". This *pasuk* declares that Judaism has been founded by Hashem as a way of life and it cannot be described as a religion. The Jewish people are to be a nation unto Hashem. While there are figureheads, rituals, and ceremonies which represent parallels to general religion, the concept of Judaism is infinitely broader and more distinctive. Religions encompass temples, priests, congregations, etc. In the category of nations, the relationships revolve around kings, presidents, governments, that are founded on the concept of statehood rather than on religion and G-d.

In this *pasuk*, Hashem is expressing the idea that a nation status means being totally centered around the relationship with Him. We belong to Hashem not only as a religion, but also as a nation. To divorce ourselves of this notion is to deform the very essence of *Am Yisrael*. When Hashem says "*And I will take you to Me for a nation*," it means that the conditions of our daily lives are to be guided by His judgment. These conditions include the revelation of Hashem's spirit, which permeates every perspective of our lives. While members of other "nations" maintain their bond in their loyalty to a country, the Jewish people have theirs in their common G-d. Judaism is not merely a religious sect requiring ritual and ceremony. Rather, it is a nation which belongs to Hashem in every respect.