

## **When the Most High gave the nations their portions, when He separated the children of man, He set the borders of nations according to the number of Bnei Yisrael. (32:8)**

Following the Flood that devastated the world, the few survivors rebuilt, and all the people who lived together sinned once again by creating the Tower of Bavel. Hashem dispersed and divided them into seventy nations, with seventy distinct languages corresponding to the number of souls that had descended together with Yaakov *Avinu* to Egypt. The Torah is conveying the message that when the nations sinned again, they forfeited their chance to be the human bearers of Hashem's mission for humanity. Instead, Hashem selected *Klal Yisrael* to replace the larger, more populous nations with the much smaller, but more distinct and holy *Klal Yisrael*. This means that as we are the bearers of His mission to the world, history will work in consonance with our needs. It, therefore, stands to reason that in all our subsequent wanderings/travels among the (seventy) nations of the world, wherever we may be, the potential to live a Torah life is preordained and will thus be available to us.

To underscore this idea, the *Bostoner Rebbe, zl*, relates how one day in the late 1970's a Harvard doctoral candidate sent him an urgent cable. Apparently, his brother and sister-in-law were involved in a six-month engineering project in Nepal. They wanted guidance on how to construct their own personal *mikvah*! Obviously, they were unaware that building a *mikvah*, even for someone with an advanced engineering degree, is not a simple task. Furthermore, it was not an endeavor that had the likelihood of being completed within their time frame.

The *Rebbe* sent someone to Harvard's main research library with the task of poring through atlases to locate a river near Katmandu (where they were staying) that met the specific *halachic* criteria for immersion. This meant identifying the river's sources, specifically to determine how much was spring water and how much was rain water. (The waters of a *mikvah* must gather together naturally, thus obviating tap water. They must be derived either from spring water or rain water, which may then be combined with tap water. If spring water is used, it may be flowing. If, however, rain water is used, it must be stationary.)

The student returned with a plethora of information concerning Nepalese geography, and they soon discovered a *halachically* appropriate river near their residence. Luckily, the Katmandu Valley enjoys nice weather throughout most of the year. Their problem was solved. Hashem had prepared the opportunity for a Jew to observe all the strictures of *halachah*, even in the distant Himalayan mountains.