

Nissan 13, 1946
April 14, 1946

Mr. Julius Stulman,

My dear Mr. Stulman:

On the occasion of your forthcoming birthday on the second day of Pesach (Nissan 16, corresponding to April 11, 1946), I take great pleasure in extending to you in behalf of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and in my own name, our heartfelt blessings for your and your family's welfare and happiness, spiritual and material.

There is a special Mitzvah connected with the day on which you were born which, during the time when the Beth Hamikdash was in existence in Jerusalem, was carried out in deed, but which is now carried out in spirit only. This special Mitzvah is the Mitzvah of the "omer" - a certain measure of the newly harvested barley crop brought to the Beth Hamikdash as a thanksgiving offering on behalf of all the people of Israel. It was only after this offering had been brought to the Beth Hamikdash that the new harvest was permitted to be enjoyed by all the people. (This is the only occasion when an offering of barley was made on behalf of all the people).

The significance of this Mitzvah may be briefly outlined as follows:

Barley is primarily a crop used for fodder (unlike wheat which is the staple crop used for human food). In the spring month of Nissan, the month of the barley harvest (in Palestine and surrounding lands), when nature seemingly comes back to life with all its physical forces, we Jews celebrate our Festival of Liberation from physical bondage. Significantly, this celebration is followed immediately on the second day by the Mitzvah of the "Omer". This gesture means the following: We know that we have two souls within us, the "animal" soul and the "divine" soul. But before we allow our

-2-

Mr. J. Stulman

Apr. 14, 1946

physical body and "animal" soul to enjoy the new harvest (all material things), we offer the first Omer as a thanksgiving to G-d. This is not merely an expression of gratitude, but also an indication of our realization that G-d has first claim upon our material possessions. The fact that the "Omer" was a small measure goes to show quantity is not always of primary importance here, but rather the spirit and joy that lie behind the fulfillment of this Mitzvah.

As for the reward of this Mitzvah, our Sages have said: "Pesach is the time of the harvest; said G-d to Israel, 'Bring Me one Omer of Pesach so that your crops in the field may be blessed.'" So we see that G-d's blessing is immeasurably greater than the little sacrifice which we are asked to bring by the fulfillment of G-d's command.

On your birthday, the day of the bringing of the Omer, I wish you that the significance of this unique Mitzvah and its reward find expression in your daily life in full measure, both spiritually and materially.

Wishing you and yours a kosher and happy Passover,

I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Rabbi Mendel Schneerson
Chairman, Executive Committee

RMSbk