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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

5th of Teveth ב"ה
5712
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Students Study Group
New York City.

Sholom u'Brocho:

In reply to your request for a message in connection with Chanukah, in view of your recent visit I trust I may regard our conversation on that occasion as having, in part at least, satisfied your request.

However, inasmuch as Chanukah extends to the beginning of this week, belonging to the weekly Sidrah of Vayyigash, I take this opportunity to convey to you a thought apropos of this Sidrah, which may serve as a Message not only for the festival of "Dedication," but which is also of fundamental significance in our daily life.

The Sidrah of Vayyigash contains the climax of the story of Joseph and his brothers.

Joseph, as you no doubt recall, had been torn from his happy home in the Holy Land and delivered into slavery in Egypt. However, he overcomes all trials and temptations, being guided by the high moral code which he brought along with him from his home. Eventually, he emerges as the Grand Vizier and ruler of all Egypt, who saves not only his brothers from famine, but also all Egypt and the world around. When finally his identity is revealed to his brothers, he tells them - and herein lies the key to the great and mysterious drama - not to feel sorry for all that had befallen him, "for G-d has sent me as a sustenance to you."

There is a profound message in these words for all humanity, and for Jews in particular. The whole episode may serve as an illustration and answer to the mystery of our life on this earth.

It is man's soul that represents the essential part of his existence. The soul, which is a "part of G-d above," is torn from its heavenly abode, its real "Holy Land," and sent down to the earthly and corporeal world (its "Egypt"), where it becomes largely enslaved by the physical body.

Needless to say, the purpose of it is not to torture the soul.

The soul is sent down to be a "Joseph" who both in slavery and glory remains loyal to his fatherly home in the "Holy Land." It

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should never acquiesce or despair in slavery, but should remember its mission: to become the ruler of "Egypt" and the giver of "sustenance" - Divine food - to his own body and to all with whom it comes in contact.

The way to achieve this is to be constantly conscious of one's "origin" and "home," and always remain receptive to the vibrating influences emanating from the parental home in the "Holy Land," until the moment when the shackles of slavery are completely broken, the soul-Joseph becomes Ruler of "Egypt"-body, the materialistic world, and the Divine goal is thus fully attained.

I trust that each one of you will try to be a "Joseph" in this sense.

With blessing,

Cordially,

M. Schneersohn