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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

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ברוקלין נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
15th of Shevat, 5714
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

Mr. Kopel Bacher
59 Delvers Street
Johannesburg, S.A.

Sholom uBrocho:

I was pleased to be informed that you will celebrate your Bar Mitzvah this coming Shabbos, when the Sidra Yisro will be read. This being the Shabbos of Kabolas Hatorah, it will surely add to the significance and inspiration which the occasion will bring you. I send you my blessing that you should grow up into a fine Jew, which means one who lives his life in accordance with our holy Torah, observing the Mitzvoth. This road in life is full of light, but it should be further illuminated by the teachings of Chassidism, which reveal the richness and abundance of the light of our faith, our Torah and Mitzvoth.

Bar-Mitzvah is a festival marking the time when a Jewish boy becomes a fully qualified member of our holy nation. Yet it is not like the other festivals, for on the day of Bar Mitzvah - if it does not occur on Shabbos or on a festival, work is permitted, and Tachnun is said in prayer.

There is a lesson in this for the Bar Mitzvah boy:

Although Bar Mitzvah is a great and joyful event, it also places on the boy all the duties, responsibilities and privileges that belong to a fully qualified Jew. Such an event cannot be celebrated by a stoppage of work. On the contrary, it calls for increased efforts immediately, showing that the Bar Mitzvah boy has become an active member of our people, according to the requirements of our holy Torah.

But in the course of work, especially in the beginning, it is possible to make mistakes without knowing them. That is why the Bar Mitzvah boy says Tachnun on this day, even though it is his festival. For Tachnun is a confession of the mistakes which he may have made, and a prayer for forgiveness, together with a resolution never to repeat them again. It is a resolution to be better, purer, and holier, that is, to be worthier of the name 'Jew' in the fullest sense of the word.

With the blessing of Mazzaltov to you and all the family, and may your near and dear ones have lots of Yiddish Nachas from you,

By *Avraham Shindler*