

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Selichoth
5716. Brooklyn, N.Y.

To my Brethren, Everywhere
G-d bless you all,

Greeting and Blessing:

As the old year draws to a close and the new year draws near, every person draws up a "balance-sheet" for the year gone by, which guides him in his resolutions for the forthcoming year.

In order that such a "balance-sheet," and the resolutions based on it, be as close to the truth as possible, one must be wary of overestimating one's virtues and accomplishments. But neither should one exaggerate one's deficiencies and failings, for a depressing mood, not to say despondency, G-d forbid, is one of the serious obstacles on the road to self-improvement.

It is possible, however, that even without exaggeration the "balance-sheet" may reveal that the liabilities' side is quite substantial, perhaps even outweighing the assets' side. But even in such a case there should be no room for despondency. For together with the feeling of sincere repentance and a firm resolution to change for the better - which must be the necessary outcome of such self-searching, there is an encouraging feature in the general conduct of man, which should be borne in mind at this time. It is, that every positive and good action - positive and good in accordance with the definitions of our Torah, the Law of Life - is indestructible and eternal, being connected with, and stemming from, the Divine "spark" that is in man, the Neshamah (soul), which is eternal; while any negative and destructive action, being connected with, and stemming from, the Nefesh habahamit (animal soul) and evil inclination in man, which are essentially limited and transient, is likewise of a temporary and transient nature, and can and must be corrected and completely wiped out through sincere and adequate repentance.

Bearing this in mind, every one, regardless what his personal "balance sheet" reveals, will find encouragement and renewed hope in the future, knowing that his good deeds in the past year are eternal, as is the light and benefit which they had brought into his own life, into his family and all our people, since all Jews are closely related and form one whole.

In the light of the above, moreover, this helpful feeling is further enhanced in that it is of a universal nature. All good actions unite to make the world as a whole progressively better. Even when a religious and moral relapse seems very much in evidence, with many yet to become wiser and more religious, the world as a whole is essentially becoming more purified with every passing year, every day and every minute, for no instant passes without many

good deeds.

No matter what the state of affairs seems to be at any given moment, eventually the good must triumph and the evil eradicated, as this is the avowed will of the Creator and Master of the Universe. Eventually every one must repent, and G-d "who forgives abundantly," will accept repentance, "for none shall be rejected by Him."

Through sincere repentance for the past and good deeds in the present and future, every one has the ability to make the coming year, a year of very great accomplishments. Indeed, and G-d, "who desires repentance," helps to carry out such determined resolutions.

And on the scale of Divine justice on the forthcoming Rosh-Hashanah, such determination will ensure still further the repenter's acquittal and his being inscribed for a happy and pleasant new year.

With the blessing of

בחיבה ורחמים טובים

/Signed/ Menachem Schneerson