

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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ליובאהיים

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ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d
5th Light of Chanukah
5717, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is in reply to your letter in which you refer to the views expressed by your son David with regard to the Chassidic get-togethers, particularly on Shabbos when Rosh-Chodesh is blessed, etc. It is difficult to explain fully in the course of a letter, the significance of these occasions, but, briefly at any rate:

I am sure it is unnecessary to emphasize to you the holiness of Shabbos. This means that on this day, more than on any other day of the week, every Jew has to derive holiness. One of the ways to derive an extra measure of holiness is through learning the Torah, for which Shabbos is particularly auspicious. This is why, as our Sages tell us, Moshe Rabbeinu, at G-d's instruction, gathered congregations on Shabbos in the houses of prayer and of study, to teach his people Torah.

Moreover, it should be noted that community-study, rather than private study, is here emphasized. It stands to reason that Torah study will be more successful in the company of friends and in the proper atmosphere. For after the days of work, the temptation is great to spend the "day of rest" in complete inactivity, or in physical pleasures, at the expense of spiritual enrichment. Experience has shown that the pitfalls can best be avoided in the right company and the right atmosphere.

If even in the days of Moshe Rabbeinu, and later also during the time when the Beth Hamikdash was in existence in our Holy Land, this practice was followed, we can imagine how vitally important this is at this time when we are in Golus, in an un-Jewish environment, when the forces of materialism and darkness threaten to engulf the world at large, and the world of the individual.

What has been said above is true of every Shabbos, since the Shabbos generates influence for the whole week; how much more so in regard to Shabbos on which Rosh Chodesh is blessed, which is a source of influence for the whole coming month. Clearly this one Shabbos in the month has a special significance, and a special measure of Torah study is called for. This is one of the reasons why my father-in-law of saintly memory instituted that on this Shabbos the whole book of Tillim should be recited

in the morning in community, and that later in the day we should again gather to hear words of Torah and words of inspiration.

I trust therefore that as you surely raise no objection to the extra prayers which are said on Shabbos and the longer period of time required for the service on Shabbos-Mevorchim, surely the additional Torah-study, etc. on this day are similarly motivated and there can be no objectionable reflections or considerations involved.

I may add that inasmuch as every additional effort in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth bring forth additional channels for G-d's ~~blessings to one's self and to all the members of the family~~, the whole family thus benefits from it, directly or indirectly.

Needless to say, everything has to be dealt with in the ways of pleasantness and peace, and this should not be difficult considering the important points mentioned above, about which there can hardly be any difference of opinion.

Having heard, also, that you have both brought sacrifices for Shabbos observance and the proper Jewish education of your children, I am sure you will have no difficulty in explaining to all concerned the circumstances involved, and will also suitably encourage your son David.

With best Chanukah wishes, and

With blessings

Mr. Schmarson