

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.



VIA AIR MAIL
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Miss S. R. Posner
c/o Rav G. M. Garelik
Via Giulio Uberti, 41
Milano (418)
ITALY



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RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
28th of Teveth, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Miss Sarah Rifkah Posner
c/o Garelik
Via Giulio Uberti, 41
Milan

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your recent letter, and the previous one. Needless to say, I was somewhat taken aback by the tone of your letter. It is a good illustration of how it is possible for a person to read and to learn and to receive instructions from books and teachers, and yet when it comes to actual experience, all this instruction goes by the wayside.

I refer to the things which you have surely learned in books of Mussar, and especially Chassidus, about the tactics of the Yetzer Hara to instill a spirit of depression, discouragement and despondency, in order to prevent the Jewish person from fulfilling his Divine mission. This is the most effective approach, and if the Yetzer Hara would attempt to dissuade the person directly from fulfilling his mission, he would not be easily misled. However, instead, the Yetzer tries to discourage the person in all sorts of ways, using "pious" arguments, which unfortunately, often proves effective, at least in some degree.

This is exactly what has happened in your case, and I am surprised that you do not realize it. The proof is that from the information that I have received, I can see that you have accomplished a great deal more than you imagine. Incidentally, at the Annual Dinner of the Lubavitch Yeshiva last night, Rabbi Lookstein spoke of his visit in Milan and how impressed he was with the Lubavitch work there, and his address was one of the highlights of the Dinner.

Let me also add another important and essential consideration. You surely know of the saying of the Baal Shem Tov that a soul comes down to live on this earth for a period of 70-80 years, for the sole purpose to do another Jew a single favor, materially or spiritually. In other words, it is worthwhile for a Jewish soul to make that tremendous journey and descent from heaven to earth in order to do something for one fellow-Jew. In your case the journey was only from the U.S.A. to Milan, and can in no way be compared with the journey of the soul from heaven to earth, and however pessimistic you might feel, even the Yetzer Hara would have to agree that you have done not only a single favor but numerous good deeds, and even only your work with the children of the Gan would have justified it. Considering further that every beginning is difficult, especially where there is a change of place, environment, language, etc., and yet the beginning has proved so successful, one is surely justified in expecting that as time goes on and the initial difficulties are minimized and overcome, there will be a more

Miss Sarah Rifkah Posner

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than corresponding improvement in the good accomplishments. Not to mention the fact that your arrival in Milan has undoubtedly considerably encouraged also your sister and brother-in-law, and has inspired other young people on similar missions.

As for your mentioning the fact that no one seems to be interested in your work, etc., surely you will admit that G-d, Whose knowledge and Providence extends to every one individually, knows and is interested in what you are doing, especially as you are working in the field of education of Jewish children, boys and girls, which is so much emphasized in the Torah, for after all, to teach children to make a Brocha and say the prayers, etc., this is living Yiddishkeit. [I need hardly add that I, too, am interested in your work]. If it seems to you that you have been left to "carry the ball" yourself, it is surely only because there is confidence in you and that since you have been sent to Milan, you undoubtedly have the ability, qualifications and initiative to do your work without outside promptings, etc.

Since one is only human, it is not unusual to relapse occasionally into a mood of discouragement. But, as has been explained in the Tanya and in other sources, such a relapse should only serve as a challenge to bring forth additional inner reserves and energy to overcome the tactics of the Yetzer Hara, and to do even better than before.

I trust that since you wrote your letter, your mood and outlook have considerably improved, and that this letter will find you in a completely different frame of mind. Nevertheless, I am sending you this letter, since one is only human and subject to changes of mood, as mentioned above.

Finally, I want to say that the above should not be understood to mean that if you do find yourself in such a frame of mind, you should try to conceal it and not write about it. For our Sages have said "When a person has an anxiety, he should relate it to others," for getting something off one's chest is in itself already a relief.

One should also bear in mind, as the Old Rebbe has stated most emphatically in the laws of learning and teaching Torah, that a person who is engaged in teaching children should especially take care of his health, since it directly affects the success of the work. I trust, therefore, that you are looking after yourself in matters of diet and rest, etc., and that you will always be in a state of cheerfulness and gladness.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing

M. S. Schmaron