

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
16th of Shevat, 5724
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dr. Velvl W. Greene
c/o Rabbi Moshe Feller
1404 Washburn Ave. N
Minneapolis, 11, Minn.

Greeting and Blessing:

It was a pleasure to meet you at the Farbrengen, and it was gratifying to receive regards from you subsequently through Rabbi Moshe Feller. Recently, he also informed me that you addressed a gathering at the home of the Memtzovs, at which you gave your impressions of your visit here, and stimulated your audience towards greater activity to strengthen Yiddishkeit in your community in general, and the work of the Regional Merkos Office in particular. I understand that you spoke, as our Sages said, with "words coming from the heart", and I therefore hope that they have penetrated the heart, and have found fertile soil to take root and produce good results.

Although I have not heard from you since our meeting, I + that this will also come eventually, for there is really no substitution for one's own impressions when delivered personally, rather than through a second party, even if it is an eyewitness account.

At any rate, I wanted you to know that I was very gratified to receive your regards, as well as the report about the said meeting.

Now that we are in the weekly portion of Mattan Torah, we can all draw inspiration from it, as indeed we ought to, in accordance with the teaching of the Old Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, that the weekly portion of the Torah should be a source of timely inspiration and instruction to every Jew, in all his affairs of that week. Mattan Torah has the further significance in that it has to be regarded and accepted as a new experience every day. This is also evidenced from the Brocho over the Torah which we make every morning in our morning prayers נותן התורה - in the present tense. As you know, our Sages declared that the words of the Torah should be as new every day.

One of the basic messages of the Ten Commandments is contained in the fact that they begin with "I am", i.e. the profound principle of monotheism, which in itself was a tremendous revolutionary idea in those days of idolatry, dominated by the polytheistic culture of Egypt (as indicated in detail in the Second Commandment), where all forms of idolatry are strictly prohibited. Incidentally, the emphasis on monotheism, and the denial of polytheism, is to be seen not only in the fact that these ideas form the subject of the first two Commandments, but also in the quantity of words and detail which they contain. At the same time, the Ten Commandments conclude with such apparently simple and obvious injunctions as "Thou shalt not steal", etc.

Dr. Velvl W. Greene

The profundity of monotheism, with which the Ten Commandments begin, and the simplicity of the ethical and moral laws, with which the Ten Commandments conclude, point to an important lesson, namely:

a) The true believer in G-d is not the one who holds abstract ideas; but the one whose knowledge of G-d leads him to the proper daily conduct even in ordinary and commonplace matters, in his dealings with his neighbors and the respect for their property even if it be an ox or an ass, etc.

b) The ethical and moral laws, even those that are so obvious as "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not murder", will have validity *actual* and will be observed only if they are based on the first and second Commandments, that is to say, based on Divine authority, the authority of the One and Only G-d.

If in a previous generation there were people who doubted the need of Divine authority for common morality and ethics, in the belief that human reason is sufficient authority for morality and ethics, our present generation has, unfortunately, in a most devastating and tragic way, refuted this mistaken notion. For, it is precisely the nation which had excelled itself in the exact sciences, the humanities and even in philosophy and ethics, that turned out to be the most depraved nation of the world, making an ideal of murder and robbery, etc. Anyone who knows how insignificant was the minority of Germans who opposed the Hitler regime, realizes that the German cult was not something which was practiced by a few individuals, but had embraced the vast majority of that nation, who considered itself the "super race," etc. Surely it is unnecessary to elaborate on this at greater length.

With all good wishes, and

With blessing *M. Schneerson*