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By the Grace of G-d
15th of Iyar, 5724
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dr. Velvl Greene
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Greeting and Blessing:

I was sorry to hear from R' Moshe Feller that you have not been feeling up to par recently. I trust that this letter will find you in improved health, and may G-d grant you a speedy and complete recovery, so that you should be able to continue your good work for a better and happier environment, in good health and with joy and gladness of heart. If you suspect that by saying "a better and happier" environment I have in mind something that has to do with the Torah and Mitzvoth, you are quite right, for the Torah is the true good, and the source of true happiness.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge receipt of your letter in which you wrote about your participation in a symposium on the future of the American Jewish community as it will be one hundred and twenty years hence. Generally speaking, I take no pleasure prognosticating, even in regard to a more immediate future than one hundred and twenty years. For one thing, there is the consideration that it is one of our basic principles of faith to wait and expect Moshiach every day, when the whole world will be established under the Reign of the Almighty. But apart from this, everyone, even a non-religious person, can see clearly what unforeseen changes have taken place "over night". Therefore, it serves no useful purpose to forecast what the state of affairs will be ~~#####~~ a century from now, ~~#####~~ However, this is a point of which you are not unaware, as is indicated in your letter.

I wholeheartedly agree with you that when a Jewish audience can be gathered together, the opportunity should not be wasted on empty platitudes, but should be made use of to the utmost, to provide them with a lasting inspiration which should be expressed in the daily life. Of course, I do not know what kind of an audience there is going to be in this particular instance. I believe, however, that the following observations are valid for any type of Jewish audience:

It is customary to find fault with the present generation by comparison with the preceding one. Whatever conclusions one may arrive at from this comparison, one thing is unquestionably true, namely that the new generation is not afraid to face a challenge. I have in mind not only the kind of challenge which

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would place them at variance with the majority, but even the kind of challenge which calls upon sacrifices and changes in their personal life. Some of our contemporary young people are quite prepared to accept this challenge with all its consequences, while others who may not as yet be ready to accept it, for one reason or another, at least show respect for those who have accepted it, and also respect for the one who has brought them face to face with this challenge. This is quite different from olden days, when it took a great deal of courage to challenge prevailing popular opinions and ideas, and a person who had the courage to do so was often branded as an impractical individual, a dreamer, etc.

Furthermore, and in my opinion this is also an advantage, many of our young people do not rest content with taking up a challenge which has to do only with a beautiful theory, or even deep thinking, but want to hear also about the practical application of such a theory, not only as an occasional experience, but as a daily experience; and that is the kind of idea which appeals to them most.

A further asset is the changed attitude towards the person who brings the challenge. Even though it seems logical that the one who brings the challenge to the young people should have a background of many years of identification with and personification of the idea which he promulgates, this is no longer required or expected nowadays, when we are used to seeing quick and radical changes at every step in the physical world. If this is possible in the physical world, it is certainly possible in the spiritual world, as our Sages of old had declared, "A person may sometimes acquire an eternity in a single instant". Thus, no individual can ignore his duty to share his newly-won truth, even if he has no record of decades of identification with it. As a matter of fact, this may even be an added advantage, in that it can impress on the audience a precedent.

You will surely gather that the preceding paragraphs are in reference to the beginning of your letter, in which you express your discontent at the lack of deeper knowledge of the various aspects of the Torah. Besides, you surely recall the saying of the wisest of all men about true wisdom, "The more the knowledge, the more the pain". For, in regard to the knowledge of the Torah, which represents the infinite wisdom of the Ein Sof, the more one learns, the more one becomes painfully aware of the distance which is still to be covered, a distance which is indeed infinite. As a matter of fact, even in the so-called exact sciences, every discovery uncovers a new unexplored world; and raises more questions than it answers. Yet, this is what provides the real stimulus and challenge to learn and probe further. How much more so in regard to the Torah, Toras Chaim, the true guide in life, both the physical and spiritual life.

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Incidentally, the present days of Sfira, which connect the festivals of Pessach and Shevuoth, have a bearing on the subject matter. For, just prior to the departure from Egypt, the Jews were in a state of slavery in its lowest form, being slaves in a land which the Torah calls "The abomination of the earth". Indeed, anyone familiar with the conditions in Egypt in those days knows how depraved the Egyptians were in those days, and much of this had tarnished the character of the Jews enslaved there. Yet, in the course of only fifty days, the Jews rose to the sublimest height of spirituality and true freedom, both physical and spiritual. Furthermore, the spiritual freedom which the Torah had brought them, and which has also illuminated to some extent the rest of the world, was linked with material freedom, namely freedom from any material problems, as the Torah tells us that the children of Israel had the Manna and the Well, and all their material needs were provided in a miraculous way. The narratives of the Torah are not simply stories for entertainment, but are in themselves part of the general instruction and teaching which the Torah conveys in all its parts. And in these narratives we find also the answer as to how the situation might be under certain conditions at some time in the future. If the conditions would be similar to those which existed at the time when the children of Israel left Egypt, with complete faith in G-d, following the Divine call into the desert, leaving behind them the fleshpots of Egypt and the fat of the land, not even taking any provision with them, but relying entirely on G-d, and in this state of dedication to the truth they followed the Pillar of Light by (day and by) night - should these conditions be duplicated, or even approximated, then one may well expect a most radical change, not only over a period of years, but in the course of a number of days.

With blessing *M. Schneerson*