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FREE RENDITION

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Teshuvah¹,
5732. Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel, Everywhere,

G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

Coming from the days of Rosh-Hashanah, when all Jews, all as one, proclaimed their acceptance of the Kingship of G-d as a manifest experience in the daily life, in accordance with the prayer "Reveal (O G-d) Your glorious Kingdom upon us" -

Which comprises, as noted in the pre_rosh-Hashanah message², two aspects: a) the firm and united stand of all Jews together, all as one, in the day of Rosh-Hashanah, as indicated in the words "You are standing firmly this day, all of you together" (the opening words of the Sidra Nitzovim, preceding Rosh-Hashanah), and, at the same time (b) the diversity³ of Jews into "your heads" down to the "drawer of your water", both aspects being linked and interdependent, which makes our people one unified whole, in which all parts - from "head" to "foot" - attain completion, as explained in detail in the aforesaid message -

I wish to take up a further point brought out by the Alter Rebbe⁴ in discussing the subject, namely, that in certain respects the "foot" assumes the role of "head", the latter following the former. Indeed, this occurs also in the physical body, where the head, of course, directs the entire body, yet the legs and feet have the special quality of moving the body, together with the head, from place to place.⁵

That this analogy applies also in the spiritual realm - where the 'water-drawer' can rise to the level of "head" and serve as an inspiring example to be emulated by the "head" - requires an explanation. For 'heads,' in the spiritual sense, denotes intelligence, understanding and comprehension in depth, whereas the "water-drawer" refers to a person whose spiritual approach (the observance of the Mitzvoth) is often no more than mechanical, as also in the case of his physical counterpart, the actual water-drawer, whose job requires no thinking or special comprehension, but only faithful compliance with the task at hand. How, therefore, is it possible that the "water-drawer" should become "head," and "your heads" should follow him?

Moreover, in the category of "your water-drawer" - in the lowest order of

Jewish diversity - there are further subdivisions, down to the inclusion of Jews who are the spiritual counterparts of the water-drawer in the plain sense, and products of similar circumstances that made him into a water-drawer: he was born with a minimum of intellectual capacity, precluding him from engaging in an intellectual occupation; he grew up in poverty, without any means for intellectual pursuits. Consequently, he could do no better than become a water-drawer. However, since his absolute ignorance and simplicity were entirely no fault of his⁶ for he is a product of circumstances beyond his control, he is included in and united with the community of Israel as part of "all of you together." But how can also this kind of Jew rise to the level of "head", as above?

This leads to a further question: Inasmuch as G-d Himself has prescribed and enjoined upon each and every Jew the manner of Jewish conduct in the daily life - how is it altogether possible that there could be a situation wherein a Jew does not have the possibility of conducting himself, in all details of his daily life, in accord with the Will of G-d, the Master of the whole world⁷. Yet, as we all know and see it, in certain parts of the world, there is such a situation where Jews, with all their desire, and even Mesiras Nefesh (self-sacrifice), are actually precluded from adhering in every detail to the Will of G-d, because of circumstances beyond their control. To cite a well-known analogy: Self-sacrifice can spur a person to jump from the roof, but it cannot make him leap from the ground to the roof.

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The answer to the above questions - at any rate, briefly - is as follows:

To be sure, the essential thing is the actual deed. On the other hand, feeling and devotion are also of supreme importance. Thus, when a situation sometimes arises wherein a Jew finds it impossible, even with Meisras Nefesh, to carry out a Divine commandment in actual deed, it evokes in him a distress and anguish at being unable to perform the particular Mitzvah; a true and profound anguish that pervades him through and through to the core of his soul⁸. This brings him to such a close attachment to G-d, and to Torah and Mitzvoh and Yiddishkeit in general, the like of which he could not have attained without the said distressing experience. In such a case, not only is he deemed quite guiltless for not having actually fulfilled the Mitzvah - since he had no possibility whatever of doing it, but he is rewarded for his intense desire⁹ to fulfill it: and what is even more important: His soul-life henceforth¹⁰ gains a profundity and completeness¹¹ to which he might possibly never have reached in any other way.

8

Also in regard to actual performance⁸, it becomes evident that when G-d eventually takes him out of that situation and places him in circumstances where he is able to carry out also the Mitzvoh, or mitzvoh, which he was previously unable to fulfill, he now carries them out with a depth, enthusiasm and sincerity which he had not had before.

Thus, the "water-drawer" becomes a "head" in the performance of Mitzvoh to perfection, with all his heart and soul, so that those who had not been through this crucible of pain can emulate him and be inspired by him.

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A word of precaution must here be inserted, which is of extreme importance.

The Yetzer-hara is an expert in his trade, an extraordinary specialist, particularly when he injects a most effective "bribe" - the person's natural self-love. One of the seducer's tricks is to delude a person into thinking that he is unavoidably prevented from performing a Mitzvah, bolstering this delusion by various arguments and "proofs," giving no rest or respite.

And since a person tends to be partial to himself, and it is very difficult to be objective in a matter concerning his own self, a person must be always aware that what seems to him a case of being a victim of circumstances, is not necessarily so in actual fact. Therefore, in order to clarify his true position, he must turn to a person who is beyond such bribery and corruption, not corrupted also by a desire to be popular, but one who is permeated by the spirit of Toras-Emes, and Emes (truth) brooks no compromise - for only such a person can evaluate the situation and determine whether it is indeed a case of unavoidable constraint, or delusions stemming from the "old fool," the Yetzer-hara.¹²

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May G-d grant that, as we now find ourselves in the days when Teshuvah is very opportune and immediately accepted¹³, each and everyone should take advantage of this auspicious period, when G-d addresses Himself to Jews¹⁴: "Seek G-d when He is readily found, call unto Him when He is near." And that the essence of Teshuvah - the return of every Jew, man and woman, to his and her true "self"¹⁵, constituting "verily a part of G-dliness Above"¹⁶ - should be expressed in every aspect of the daily life, in thought, word and deed, in the fullest measure, as explained above.

And may G-d give, and He will indeed give, each and everyone the fullest ability, and in circumstances of good health and happiness, to study the Torah and fulfill the Mitzvot, in their true essence¹⁷ as G-d willed them.

With prayerful blessing to each and everyone,
in the midst of all our people Israel, for a
Chasimo uGmar Chasimo Tovo, for a good and
sweet year, both materially and spiritually -

Signed /Menachem Schneerson/

- (1) י"ל שכל ימים אלה הם - בכמה דברים - ענין אחד ממש (נקודה אחת). ולכן מזכירים נשמות (רק) ביוהכ"פ, משא"כ בזה"פ וזה"ש, אף שגם הם המשך וענין אחד (ראה תנחומא ס"פ פנחס). וגם יוהכ"פ נק' ר"ה (יחזקאל מ,א. תוד"ה ואת (נדריים כג,ב). ובירוש' (ר"ה בתחלתה) פליג אפשטי' דקרא אבל לא על הענין. ועיין לקו"ת ר"ה (נח,א. סד,א). ועבדים יוצאים לחירות - בשנת היובל - בר"ה ויוהכ"פ (ראה ר"ה ח,ב). וראה ג"כ זח"ג (ק,ב). ואכ"מ. (2) דימי הסליחות, ה'תשל"א. (3) ראה תניא פ' לב ובהערות לתניא בלקוטי לוי יצחק שם. (4) לקו"ת ר"פ נצבים. (5) בלקו"ת שם: יתרון ומעלה להרגלים שצריך להלך בהם. וי"ל שהכוונה לאמתית ענין ההליכה שהיא בלי גבול (ד"ה אם בחוקותי, ש"ת. ובכ"מ). (6) וע"ד לפי פרש"י (מתנחומא) עה"פ שזהו כנענים שנתגיירו - הרי סורם (טבעם) רע (כנענים) בתולדותם. ומש"כ ברא"ם וכו' שלא קבלם משה - צע"ג שהרי מפורש שהכניסם בברית גו'. (7) להעיר מדבר המרגלים שאמרו אין בעה"ב יכול להוציא כו' (סוטה לה,א). (8) להעיר מקונטרס העבודה פ"ה. (9) קדושין מ,א. (10) ע"ד מש"כ בתניא פ"ז בנוגע לבעל תשובה: כי עד הנה הייתה כו'. (11) זח"א ר"פ וישב. (12) רמב"ם הל' תשובה פ"ב ה"ו. ומסיים שנאמר דרשו ה' בהמצאו. ובכו"כ כת"י הרמב"ם מובא גם סיום הכתוב: קראוהו בהיותו קרוב. ועפ"ז תובן ראייתו במילואה: יפה ביותר - ממש"נ בהמצאו, מתקבלת מיד - ממש"נ בהיותו קרוב. (14) שזהו גם נתינת כח - שהרי הקב"ה עוזרו לקיים המצווה עליו. (15) ראה רמב"ם הל' גרושין ספ"ב. להעיר מלקו"ת ר"פ האזינו. (16) תניא רפ"ב. ולהעיר מהערות הצ"צ שם. (17) ראה המשך וככה פי"ז ואילך.