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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Sivan, 5732
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessings:

I trust you recall our meeting some time ago and our conversation, which though fairly lengthy, was certainly not unduly so in view of the importance of the matters discussed.

I come here to refer to one of the topics of our conversation which will, presumably, come as a surprise to you. However, it is more surprising that I did not return to this topic much earlier.

The topic referred to centered on the convention in Boston which had taken place shortly before our meeting, and in which you actively participated. One of the matters deliberated at the convention was the demand of young groups for substantial involvement in education on the part of the Federations and for a representation in that body. As I gathered from our conversation, you were quite enthused about these demands and, needless to say, I was perhaps even more so. I added at the time two important points: Firstly, the importance of the time element in this area. The crying need for substantial funds for Jewish education could not be delayed, even if it were necessary to borrow money in advance of collections. For, obviously, a loan can be repaid, and a deficit could be covered at any time in the future without serious consequences, whereas a delay in promptly meeting educational needs entail irreversible consequences. Who can tell whether a boy or girl now knocking at the door of Jewish education, yet must be turned back for lack of facilities, will still be available tomorrow, or next week, or next month? Who can vouchsafe that these Jewish children and adolescents will not be irretrievably lost to us, either because of the various ill winds that lurk all around, or that their own receptiveness might evaporate?

The second point I made was that there is no need whatever to embark upon research projects in the area of Jewish education, as it is customary, unfortunately, in other areas, where tremendous amounts of money, time and effort are expended on research projects and subsequent detailed reports which consume most of the valuable resources. There is no need for such waste in the area of Jewish education. Anyone looking into the situation without prejudice can see at a glance how much the American Jewish community has lost because of the lack of adequate educational facilities.

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Our Sages declared that some of a person's praise may be said in his presence. I will say this much of my impressions of you during our meeting, that I was left with the impression that in your personal life you are a man of action and energy, and are not afraid to take up a challenge, even if it means being at variance with conventional attitudes, etc. I therefore had hoped that all these qualities would come to the fore in regard to the problem at hand, namely, to the end that an immediate very substantial allocation for Jewish education would be made available by the Federations.

Unfortunately there has been no ^{real} change in the policy of the Federations since that time, and you can well imagine "my" profound disappointment. To say "disappointment" is a gross understatement, for it is the cause for the deepest sorrow that days, weeks, and months are passing by without change in the attitude of the Federations towards the vital need of Jewish education. Yet, Jewish youth are still clamoring for identity, eagerly searching for the truth, and for true and uncompromising leadership, but the challenge and opportunity are left unheeded by the communal leaders who should know better, and who do not seem concerned that large numbers of our young are swept away by all sorts of freak movements and new "religions" which prey on them.

I do not know who is specifically to be blamed for this state of affairs, nor is it important to place the blame where it belongs. The important thing is that there should be an immediate change and immediate appropriate action. Even if some research on the matter is being conducted on a high scientific level, it cannot mitigate the situation. What ~~the~~ ^{you} need is actual allocations of truly substantial funds for Jewish education on all levels.

It should be also clear and evident even without saying, that the purpose of this letter is not to "take you to task" for the time that has been lost. It is quite possible, as I hope, that you have been active in the said direction, but have not met with success. If this is the case, the purpose of my writing to you now is to urge you and encourage you to continue your efforts with redoubled vigor, corresponding to the crying need of the situation. Certainly if, for some reason, you have not given this matter your fullest attention, I trust that this letter will stimulate you into most vigorous action, to make up also for the lost time.

Our Sages assure us that "words coming from the heart penetrate the heart" and are eventually effective, especially where the good of the many is at stake.

Before concluding this letter, I hope you will forgive for the boldness of addressing myself to you on the basis of

only one meeting with you. The truth of the matter is that I blame myself for not having written to you sooner and for writing with such measured tones on such a vital issue which should have evoked more agonizing expressions.

If this letter should more properly have been addressed to someone else, I trust you know to whom it should be directed. I can assure you that whenever I have an opportunity to speak to any influential person who can be of help in this matter, I have not missed the opportunity. I hope and pray that on your part, too, you will do all you can, and even more, in this direction, and may G-d grant that you should meet with success also in a greater measure than you might anticipate.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schwartz

P.S. I recall, of course, our conversation regarding the personal way of life, and I trust that in this area too, you will have good news to report.

P.P.S. What finally made me overcome my hesitation to write to you this letter was the news that I learned of your new appointment to the Board. Inasmuch as everything is by Divine Providence, ~~and~~ an appointment to an important office, it is expected of a Jew that the new honor and influence that goes with it will be expressed in terms of strengthening all the positive forces in Jewish life, especially the dissemination of the eternal values of the Torah and the Jewish way of life which are so vital to the preservation of our people.