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חננים חנונדל שניאורסאהן
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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Chanukah, 5733
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Pinchas Meir Kalms
45 Sheldon Avenue
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London, N. 6.

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter of Nov. 28 from Jerusalem, and may G-d grant that all the matters about which you write should get ever brighter, in keeping with the spirit of the Chanukah Lights increasing in number and brightness from day to day.

As has been often said before, all matters of Torah are an inexhaustible source of lessons and inspiration for our daily life, especially when they take the form of practical Mitzvot, since the Torah and Mitzvot are infinite, being derived from the Infinite [En Sof]. I mention this here apropos of the Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah, specifically in relation to one particular aspect which, at first, appears quite puzzling.

I am referring to the fact that although Chanukah recalls many miracles and wonders, the main event for which Chanukah was instituted was the miracle with the cruse of oil, the one and only that was found in the Beth Hamikdash, that was intact and undefiled by the enemy, which was then kindled and which lasted for eight days, until new, pure and holy oil could be prepared.

What is puzzling about it is that the oil was not required for human consumption, nor for the consumption of the Mizbe'ach (Altar), but for fuel in the Menorah to be burnt in the process of giving light. It would seem, at first glance, of no consequence, in so far as the light is concerned, whether or not the oil had been touched and defiled, for, surely, the ~~physical~~ quality and intensity of the light could hardly be affected by the touch?

Yet, when the Talmud defined the essence of the Chanukah festival, the Sages declared that the crucial aspect was the miracle with the oil. Not that they belittled or ignored the great miracles on the battlefields,

when G-d delivered the "mighty" and "many" into the hands of the "weak" and "few", for these miracles are also emphasized in the prayer of "V'al Hanissim." Nevertheless, it was the miracle of being able to light the Menorah with pure, holy ~~and~~ oil, without any touch of uncleanness, which gave rise to the Festival of Lights.

The obvious lesson is that in the realm of the spirit, of Torah and Mitzvot, as symbolized by the Chanukah Lights, there must be absolute purity and holiness. It is not for the human mind to reason why, and what difference does it make, etc.

Much more could be said on the subject, but it will suffice to lend further weight to our conversation during your visit here, when the point was made how most vital it is that the right person should head the institution which Divine Providence has privileged you to establish in the Holy Land, and even holier City of Jerusalem, as a center for the dissemination of Yiddishkeit in its purity. The purity and holiness of the oil must be ensured.

To carry the analogy further, it is the purpose of the central Beth Hamikdash to illuminate and bring holiness and purity into the individual "Beth Hamikdash" - i.e. every Jewish home and every Jewish person, which is also the obligation of every Jew towards his fellow Jew, in accordance of the Mitzvah of "v'ohavto lre'acho komoicho." But special precautions are necessary that the Beth Hamikdash itself should be illuminated with the purest, sanctified oil, so that even the Kohen Gadol, if he should happen to be tame, could not enter the Beth Hamikdash, much less kindle the Menorah.

May G-d grant you Hatzlocho in establishing the said institution in fullest accord with G-d's will, in the spirit outlined above, truly reflecting the spirit of the Chanukah lights, lighting ever more candles and increasing their glow from day to day.

With prayerful wishes for the utmost Hatzlocho in all above, and

With blessing *m. Schwartz*

P.S. The enclosed copy of my general Chanukah message has an obvious bearing on some of the points touched above.

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