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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Sivan,
5733. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Mordchai Shoel Landow
4340 North Bay Road
Miami Beach, Fla. 33140

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you very much for your letter and for the bound volume of your latest book Your People Are Your Business, topping off the gratifying reports about the Groundbreaking.

It is surely unnecessary to dwell at length on the significance of the Groundbreaking event in terms of what it means for our young generation in Miami and environs, as you so aptly interpreted it. According to my informants, your speech was impressive and well received. I hope and pray that the words spoken and the enthusiasm engendered will evolve into actual deeds, for it is action that really counts, especially in the area of Torah, called Toras Chayim, so termed because it is the Jew's practical guide in the daily life in this world of action, thereby making life worthy of being called "life" (not just "existence").

The emphasis on action is brought home to us particularly in these days of preparation for Mattan Torah. For the first word of acceptance of the Torah by all our people, in complete unanimity, was naaseh - "we will do." The fact that it was enunciated at a moment of the greatest spiritual elation, makes it all the more significant. It is a clear instruction for each and all of us not to let ourselves be carried away by enthusiasm alone, but immediately translate it into the reality of tangible deeds. Which is why a Jew begins his day not with lengthy contemplation or meditation, but with actual doing Mitzvos. Indeed, Kabbolas haTorah (our receiving the Torah) is a daily experience, which is also the reason why one of the earliest Morning Blessings is to thank G-d for having chosen us from all peoples, to give us His Torah, the benediction concluding

in the continuous present tense ("Giver of the Torah"). And since we receive the Torah every day, it is only right that we start the day with naaseh. But, of course, on the anniversary of our receiving the Torah at Sinai, on Shovuos, the principle of naaseh (before v'nishma) is the focal point, the very soul, of Kabbolas haTorah, from which we draw renewed vitality and strength throughout the year.

I would also like to take this opportunity of referring to the idea of Groundbreaking - in the light of the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that everything in a Jew's experience should serve as a stimulus in Avodas haShem.

"Groundbreaking" seems to^{be} an American innovation, for traditionally it is rather the "laying of a corner stone" that was celebrated in such cases, to which there is reference also in T'NaCh. Yet since Groundbreaking has become a legitimate and useful initiation of a Torah institution, it can be very instructive. For one thing, digging up a piece of earth for a sacred purpose can be thought-provoking - if we stop to think how a small piece of matter contains a tremendous amount of (atomic) energy which, if used constructively, can achieve so much for humanity.

More close to home, and specifically relating to further teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and of Chasidus, is the thought which Groundbreaking evokes in relation to human endeavor in general, and spiritual advancement in particular. For, in order to achieve fullest productivity, an individual must often begin with breaking his outer shell or crust (formed by habits, natural dispositions, environmental influences, etc.), so as to release the tremendous inner powers and resources, which are infinitely greater than those on the surface, and, more importantly, are infinitely more stable and durable, since they are closer to the individual's self and are anchored in the essence of the soul itself.

Finally, "Groundbreaking" is particularly symbolic of the nature of the Jewish people, called by G-d "desirable earth." As the Baal Shem Tov explained it: Just as the earth is the repository of the greatest natural treasures and resources, so incalculable are the treasures with which G-d has endowed every

Jew, His own "desirable land."

Being permitted to "state only part of one's deserving praise to one's face," I will say only that, while I never doubted the hidden potentialities which you possess, it has been very gratifying to see their emergence into the open, particularly as reflected in your activities since our personal meeting, leading up to the Groundbreaking. I am confident that these are the forerunners of further discoveries and revelations of hidden treasures which you will put to good use, in a growing measure, with G-d's help. The Zechus Horabim will additionally stand you in good stead.

Wishing you and yours a joyous and inspiring Yom Tov of Kabbolas haTorah, and to receive the Torah with joy and inwardness.

M. Schwartz

P.S. I was, of course, especially pleased to hear that your wife and children were present at the Groundbreaking. Their presence must have surely strengthened the involvement of all participants, including commitment to the principle advocated by the title of your book, namely, that Your People - the Jewish people - should truly be Your Business.