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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

B. H. 5th of Shevat, 5736
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rabbi Av

Greeting and Blessing:

After the long interval, I was pleased to receive your letter of 25th of Teves, though I had inquired about you from time to time through mutual friends. But, of course, indirect information can only be general and superficial and cannot substitute for direct communication.

I appreciate the kind sentiments expressed in your letter. But I am mindful of the dictum of our Sages of the Talmud (B. M. end of p. 84a) to the effect that compliments and approbations, however justified, do not help to clarify issues, whereas a question or challenge, requiring an answer or explanation, can be more helpful to bring out important practical points and elucidations.

Following this principle, and especially in view of the opening lead of your letter, referring to the well-known question (and challenge) איכה , in light of the Alter Rebbe's explanation of it, which reappears again in the concluding paragraph of your letter, the course of my response is already chartered.

There is no need, of course, to point out to you that when the question איכה is posed to a private individual, it is likely to refer to the individual personally and to his immediate family, while the same question put to a person of influence and communal responsibility, to whom many look up for inspiration and guidance in their daily life and conduct, the question has much wider implications. It also אא calls for an assessment as to where he stands and what he has accomplished in the public domain. Indeed, perhaps the latter is the more significant challenge, for it is there that the person's fullest achievement is expressed, as it comes to light in those who benefited from his influence, and it is more significant for many reasons.

Needless to say, the foregoing is not contradicted in the least by the popular adage קשוט עצמך ואה"כ קשוט אחרים - "first correct yourself, then correct others." Certainly in this country, and in these days, it is the duty of everyone who has any influence in his surroundings to take an active part in promoting Torah-Chinuch, bearing in mind that even a slight improvement during the formative years may well result in significant benefits in

later years to the extent of affecting one's whole life and that of one's family, etc. The prospect is not the same, of course, for the person who is influencing the younger generation, since he is already a mature person with a defined course in life, though he, too, is capable of a radical change and advancement to an incomparable degree.

As you are surely aware, the contemporary young generation, more than at any other time in the past, is not afraid of a challenge, even if it should entail radical change and great hardship. It is rather those who are supposed to present the challenge to them who fail to give our youngsters credit, thinking that if it is offered in a diluted form, it will be more appealing and acceptable. Their fear of חפצת מרובה has got them down so much that all that they offer is מיעוט שבמיעוט, not realizing how self-defeating their approach is.

I should not be at ease with my conscience, both for my sake and yours, if I were not to put it in plain words. I am confident that you will not take it amiss.

I speak of living Yiddishkeit in the daily life and conduct in terms of actual observance, what our Sages call מעשה עיקר - the essential thing is the practice of the Mitzvos; not the kind of Judaism that is practised on certain occasions, or on certain days of the year, but every day, until the habit becomes second nature - in this case, actually the essential nature.

I recall seeing in your book (I believe you also mentioned it to me personally) about your spending some time with the Neturei Karta in Jerusalem. Thus the question איכה should include also an appraisal of the distance between them and others in terms of total commitment and dedication. As for some negative aspects which you found there in your estimation, I believe that if a fair assessment is made, one would have to admit that there are more negative aspects in circles of the other extreme.

Now a word about my איכה, to which you refer at the end of your letter. Certainly it includes all that has been said above, and more. I wonder what were the practical results of our meeting and discussion, with you and your wife, when I was not only a listener but also a speaker. My איכה makes me ponder to what extent were my words effective - not in terms of pleasant recollections, but in terms of מעשה עיקר. I will not dwell on this point, not out of any apprehension that it may embarrass you, but because there is no need to elaborate on it to you.

But I do wish to mention another pertinent point, though I may have mentioned it in the course of our conversation. I have in mind the matter of דברים בטלים, "useless words," which, like all expressions of our Sages, is a precise and meaningful term. Whenever we come across this term in Halacha, and even more so in Pnimius haTorah, it is of course

in a rather negative and reprehensible sense, and in some respects it has to do with קדושת הלשון , the sanctity of language. At first glance, a more appropriate expression would seem to be דברים אסורים , "forbidden words," or דברים מגואלים , "obscene words," or some similar term as "unbecoming language," and the like. But this is precisely where the meaning of דברים בטלים comes in, namely, that it refers not to the quality of the words, but to their effect, whether they are useful or useless. One may speak good words, even quoting words of Torah, but if they do not impress the listener and do not affect him in terms of מעשה עיקר , then they are דברים בטלים . The blame must be placed on the speaker, since we have the rule that "words coming from the heart penetrate the heart and are eventually effective."

I trust that this letter finds you and your family in good health. If you should think it worthwhile to convey some points of my letter to your wife, I would be gratified, of course.

With blessing,

P. S. After writing the above, I have just received your telephone message about the medical treatment suggested by your doctors, and your request for my advise.

It is well known that in a case of ulcer a very important factor is peace of mind; and this is mainly up to the patient. I therefore suggest that you should strengthen your Bitochon (real trust) in G-d, the Healer of All Flesh Who Works Wondrously. And the way to do it is by reviewing appropriate texts on this subject, such as, for example, Shaar Habitochon in Ibn Pakuda's) Duties of the Heart, and the like, and reflect deeply on this subject.

In addition, it is also well known that a suitable diet is helpful in such a condition, and I believe helpful in all cases, the difference being only in degree.

Hence, inasmuch as the condition has been with you for some time, I suggest that you should first give a try to the above two remedies and see to what extend they can relieve the situation.

In any case, the auspicious month of Adar is only three weeks away, and in the meantime you can observe the results of the two measures suggested above.

To ease your anxiety sooner, this letter is being dispatched by S. D.

(more)

Incidentally, the content of the above letter, though dictated before your telephone message, may well be the "preemptive cure". For everything is by Hashgocho Protis, and among human beings - even non-Jews - there is something that is called "premonition," or, what our Sages describe as נביא ולא ידע מה נביבא .

יום הבהיר כ"ח סיון — תש"ז

לפנינו תעודה של שלטונות ארה"ב, המעידה כי ביום ב' כ"ח סיון תש"ז ניצלה הרבנית הצדקנית מרת חנה נ"ע מעמק הבכא האירופאי והגיעה צלחה לארצות־הברית, "חצי כדור התחתון", בליווי בנה בכורה — יבלחט"א — כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א, שם חייתה את שבע־עשרה (טו"ב) שנתי' האחרונות כ"אם המלכות".

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 0300 K 80534
497404

CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the immigration records show that the alien named below arrived at the port, on the date, and in the manner shown, and was lawfully admitted to the United States of America for permanent residence.

Name:	Chana Schneerson
Port of entry:	New York, N. Y.
Date:	June 16, 1947
Manner of arrival:	SS Mauretania

I FURTHER CERTIFY that this certificate of arrival is issued under authority of, and in conformity with, the provisions of the Nationality Act of 1940 (Pub., No. 853, 76th Cong.), solely for the use of the alien herein named and only for naturalization purposes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this certificate of arrival is issued September 12, 1947

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ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR ...

FPI ATLANTA—6-9-47—30M—8864

1946-47 — (5707) ה'תש"ז

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