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By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5736
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To All Participants in the Dedication of
The Chabad House in Amherst, Mass.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming Dedication of the new home of the Chabad House, taking place on the fifth of this month of Kislev. The date particularly underscores the timeliness and auspiciousness of the event, since it is taking place in the month which is highlighted by Chanukah, the Festival of Dedication of the Beth Hamikdosh.

Chanukah commemorates the miraculous victory of our people over the forces of darkness and assimilation that had threatened to extinguish the light of Torah and Mitzvos. It also reminds us that this victory was won by a few, but totally dedicated, Jews, and that the victory was celebrated by kindling lights in the Sanctuary with pure, undefiled oil, which gave us the meaningful Mitzva of the Chanukah Lights.

Our Sages of blessed memory say of these lights of Chanukah: "These lights shall endure and shine forever." For, whereas the seven-branched Menorah was lit only in the Beth Hamikdosh, and as long as the Beth Hamikdosh was in existence, and after that remained in effect only in a spiritual way -- the miracle of Chanukah is exemplified and celebrated in a visible way, through lighting the eternal Chanukah Lights ever since, both in the Holy Land and in the Diaspora, and in every Jewish home.

A Jew is expected to learn something useful and practical from all events; how much more so from such a major historical event which has given rise to the eternal festival of Chanukah.

One of the lessons of Chanukah (as emphasized in the Chanukah prayer v'al hanissim) is that although Jews are greatly outnumbered and disadvantaged physically ("few" and "weak" against the "many" and "mighty"), they come out victorious when they are "committed to G-d's Torah" and are "Tzadikim." In other words, it is our spiritual strength that counts - even in areas where physical superiority is usually decisive.

A further lesson is that Jewish strength begins at home, which is the abode of Divine Presence in an individual sense, very much as the Beth Hamikdosh in Jerusalem was in a collective sense. This was al-

ready indicated in the Divine command, "Let them make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them" - within each Jewish home and Jewish heart. This is also why ~~it is not enough to kindle the Chanukah Lights in Shul and public places, but they~~ must be kindled in every Jewish home. Moreover, the time of the kindling of the Chanukah Lights is "when the sun sets"; - when "darkness" falls outside, that is the time light up our homes with these sacred lights, symbolizing the light of Torah and Mitzvos, the life and strength of our people, of the individual Jew as well as of the Jewish nation. While the place of the Chanukah Lights - to be seen also outside - further indicates that the Torah and Mitzvos must not be confined within the walls of the home, but that their light must illuminate also the outside.

Yet another important lesson must be mentioned, namely, that however satisfactory the observance of Torah and Mitzvos may be at any day, a Jew is expected to do better the next day, and still better the day after, for all matters of Torah and Mitzvos are infinite, being derived from and connected with the Infinite. This, too, is underscored by the Chanukah Lights. For, although lighting one candle the first night of Chanukah is all that is required to fulfil the Mitzva to perfection, the next night of Chanukah calls for an additional light, and when another day passes, it is necessary to light one more, and so on, increasing the light from day to day.

Needless to say, the above practical lessons which are basic to Chanukah as to the Jewish way in general, are the basic principles of the Chabad House and the moving spirit that pervades all its dedicated activities for spreading the light of Yiddishkeit in an ever growing measure.

I am confident that with the fullest cooperation of all friends and of all who are aware of the vital need to preserve and perpetuate our sacred Jewish heritage, the Chabad House in Amherst will go from strength to strength in kindling ever more lights and torch-bearers of Torah-Judaism, who will in turn kindle further lights in an endless "chain reaction."

With blessing for Hatzlocho and
Good tidings,

M. Schwartz