

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Sefira,
5736. Brooklyn, N. Y.

Miss Brocho Silverman
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Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to see you at the Convention of Neshei u'Bnos Chabad here. In this connection and also in reply to your note, I want to convey to you the following thoughts.

It has often been emphasized that sometimes it is difficult for a human being to understand G-d's ways. Actually this is not surprising, because a human being, even the wisest, is limited in all his capacities, as are all created beings. No created being could possibly understand the Creator. On the other hand, it is quite certain, as our Torah declares, that everything has a reason and an explanation, and that G-d is always good and just.

One point should be emphasized here, which you may have heard from thoughts I expressed in letters in similar cases, that the attachment and affection among people, especially children and parents, is not a physical one, that is to say, not for the flesh and blood of the other person, but rather for the spiritual (qualities) of that person. For the physical body is only an outer shell and a medium through which human beings can communicate and reach out to the inner spiritual qualities, and to respond to one another.

It is ^{certain} also follows that the soul of a person cannot be affected by any disease or the death of that outer shell in which the Neshama is housed, which can only bring about the separation of the Neshama from the body, while the Neshama continues its eternal life.

From the above, it is also understandable that the Neshama retains the ability to know what is happening to the members of the family left behind in this world. Indeed, this ability is infinitely greater, since it is no longer limited by the physical limitations of the body. It is of course painful to the surviving members that they cannot have the same immediate responses and relationship with the dear departed soul, but they should know what things in their own conduct and reactions can bring real gratification to the soul, or otherwise.

In light of the above, it should be clear that when the bereaved members exceed the time or manner of mourning than that which is prescribed by the Torah, it does not bring pleasure to the Neshama, which is aware of what is happening, as mentioned above. Those who think that by excessive mourning and grieving they express greater attachment to the departed soul, are obviously mistaken, especially since the Torah explicitly states the

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periods of mourning, such as Shiva and Shloshim, etc.

To be sure, it may appear difficult to carry it out in actual practice, but inasmuch as this is the instruction which our Torah, Toras Emes, clearly stipulates, it is certain that with effort it is possible to overcome the emotional difficulty and to continue the daily life in accordance with the Torah's instructions.

In light of what has been said above, it is also clear that the greatest joy that children can bring to the dear departed soul which is in the World of Truth, is to conduct their daily life in accordance with the Torah, including the points which we discussed when we all met here in New York.

At this time, approaching Shovuos, the Festival of Our Receiving the Torah, may G-d grant that you, in the midst of all our people, should receive the Torah in the proper spirit, which will also bring G-d's blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

With blessing *M. Schneerson*

P.S. Actually, the letter is intended also for your mother, but it is addressed to you in reply to your letter. But I hope you will be able to convey the contents of this letter to your mother, with my good wishes for a long life and good health, and, in the essential aspect, to have true Yiddish Nachas from each and all of her children.

My first audience with the Rebbe, was with my father, in March of 1976. I was a student at Stern College, my father was visiting NY for Purim, and to bake matzos in Crown Heights. Rav Moshe arranged for my father and me to have an audience with the Rebbe together, so we traveled from Manhattan to Crown Heights, and we were both stunned by the large lines of people that wrapped around 770!

All of a sudden, Moshe appeared at the front door and quickly ushered us inside, straight into the private offices of the Rebbe and his secretary. We were given quick Instructions, told how to write a "kvitel", how to stand, not to sit, right hand left hand, walk backwards....it was a lot to absorb for us but as we were told it would only last 1-2 minutes, we were somewhat relieved that we could

handle that! But it wasn't 1 or 2 minutes inside with the Rebbe...according to Moshe (who was timing it!) it was a full 11 minutes! My father and I looked at each other as we exited, and both of us were speechless. That meeting elevated our *Emunah* and *bitachon* to another level.

This audience with my father that Rav Moshe arranged, was approximately 1 month before my father was *niftar* on the 4th day of Pesach, as he was immediately diagnosed with leukemia upon his return from NY. I'm not sure I ever thanked Moshe properly for arranging that visit... but I just hope he knew how meaningful it was for us.

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