

By the Grace of G-d
24 Adar, 5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 7, in which you write in detail about the visit of our Lubavitch emissaries to the Jewish community of Wiesbaden, Germany, in connection with Purim. I was most gratified to read about the highly inspiring and lasting impression which they made on both the American Jewish personnel and the civilian Jewish community, not least their impact on the children.

Since "the essential thing is the deed," I am confident that the impressions you describe will be translated into actual deeds, in terms of Torah and Mitzvos in the daily life of each and all who shared in this experience.

I have had occasion to share some thoughts with Jewish chaplains, and these may not be new to you, but they are always timely and worth repeating. For the Mitzva of v'ohavto l're'acho kemoicho makes it the constant duty and privilege of every Jew to promote Torah and Mitzvos to the fullest extent of one's ability. This includes, moreover, the duty also to promote the observance of the so-called Seven Precepts (with all their ramifications) which are incumbent upon all mankind, in accordance with the Torah, Toras Chayim.

A military chaplain is in an especially favorable position to achieve a great deal in the above areas, because of the conducive conditions prevailing in military life.

What makes servicemen particularly receptive to the basic approach of Torah-true Judaism is, first of all, the very basic principle on which the military depends, namely obedience and discipline in the execution of an order by his commanding officer. Even though in civilian life a private may be superior to his c.o., the order must be executed promptly, whether or not the soldier understands its significance. This, of course, corresponds to the principle of na'aseh v'nishma, the condition on which Jews accepted the Torah and Mitzvos from the Supreme Commander, the Giver of the Torah and Mitzvos.

A further basic point in military life is the fact that a soldier cannot argue that his personal conduct and whether or not he obeys an order is his private affair, and he is prepared to suffer the consequences, etc. Whether he realizes it or not, his conduct ~~may~~ have implications for his entire unit and all the military. In case of an emergency of war, the personal conduct of a single soldier could very seriously affect his platoon and brigade and division and the entire military operation, the whole army and country. Thus it is not just a question of one soldier's personal moral attitude; it is of vital importance to the whole army, ^{sometimes} even in time of peace.

Applying the analogy to Jewish life, it becomes quite evident how vitally important is every Jew's commitment to Torah and Mitzvos in his personal life and in spreading Yiddishkeit to the fullest extent of his influence. It may be added that our people lives in a state of emergency, what with the general atmosphere of trends and ideas which are inimical to the Torah way, and a Jew having to fight to overcome all and sundry alien forces which tend to undermine his spiritual, hence also physical, existence.

In other words, every Jew must consider himself a "soldier" in G-d's Army (Tzivos haShem) and be on a constant alert to spread the light of the Torah and Mitzvos, until the time when "G-d's Glory will be revealed, and all flesh shall see," and "all the earth will be full of the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea" - which will come to pass with the appearance of Moshiach-tzidkeinu, may he come speedily in our time.

Wishing you Hatzlocho in all above,

With esteem and blessing,

M. Scherman