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By the Grace of G-d
15 Kistlev, 5738
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To All Jewish Detainees, Everywhere
G-d be with you -

Greeting and Blessing:

In connection with the forthcoming days of Chanukah, I extend to each and all of you prayerful wishes for a bright and inspiring Chanukah, coupled with the fulfilment of your hearts' desires for good in every respect.

Chanukah brings a meaningful message of encouragement - in keeping with all the festivals and commemorative days in our Jewish Calendar, which are meant to be observed not just for the sake of remembrance, but ^{also} for the practical lessons they provide in our daily life. One of the practical teachings of Chanukah is as follows:

The special Mitzvah pertaining to Chanukah is, of course, the kindling of the Chanukah Lights, which must be lit after sunset - unlike the Shabbos candles which must be lit before sunset; and unlike also the lights of the Menorah that were kindled in the Beis Hamikdosh even earlier in the day.

The meaningful message which this emphasis on kindling the Chanukah Lights after sunset conveys is:

When a person finds himself in a situation of "after sunset," when the light of day has given way to gloom and darkness - as was the case in those ancient days under the oppressive Greek rule - one must not despair, G-d forbid, but on the contrary, it is necessary to fortify oneself with complete trust in G-d, the Essence of Goodness, and take heart in the firm belief that the darkness is only temporary, and it will soon be superseded by a bright light, which will be seen and felt all the more strongly through the supremacy of light over darkness, and by the intensity of the contrast.

And this is the meaning of lighting the Chanukah Lights, and in a manner that calls for lighting an additional candle each successive day of Chanukah - to plainly see for oneself, and to demonstrate to others passing by in the street, that light dispels darkness; and that even a little light dispels a great deal of darkness, how much more so a light that steadily grows in intensity. And if physical light has such quality and power, how much more so eternal spiritual light.

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What has been said above pertains to our Jewish people as a whole, as well as to each individual Jew, man or woman, in particular. The conclusion that follows from it is, that though our Jewish people is still in a state of Golus (Exile), and "darkness covers the earth," a time when "nations rage and peoples speak vain things," etc., there is no reason to get overly excited by it; we have only to strengthen our trust in G-d, the "Guardian of His people Israel, who slumbers not, nor sleeps," and be confident that He will protect His people wherever they be, and will bless them with Hatzlocho in all things, and in a growing measure; and that He will hasten the coming of our Righteous Mosiach to bring us the true and complete Geulo (Redemption) which is fast approaching.

Similarly in regard to each individual, those who find themselves in a state of personal Golus - there is no cause for discouragement and despondency. G-d forbid; on the contrary, one must find increasing strength in complete trust in the Creator and Master of the Universe, that their personal deliverance from distress and confinement is on its speedy way.

All the more so when this trust is expressed in a growing commitment to the fulfilment of G-d's Will in the daily life and conduct in accordance with His Torah and Mitzvos - of which the Mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah Lights is particularly significant in that it symbolizes the illumination of the soul, the "Lamp of G-d," with the light of the Torah and Mitzvos, "for a Mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light," - illuminating it in an increasing measure from day to day, to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy: "The people walking in darkness (of the Golus) will see a great light" - the light of the Geulo.

With blessing for Hatzlocho and good tidings
in all above *M. Schwartz*