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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d

7th of Teves 5740

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Newark, N.J. 07112

Greeting and Blessing:

Following our recent brief personal meeting, I take this first opportunity after Chanukah to convey to you my feelings in connection with your warm response and generous contribution towards the latest Lubavitch Project in our Holy Land. I was both gratified and impressed by the spirit of your response. For, since I characterized the project as a seemingly "Wild Project," your response in fulfillment of a "Wild Thought," as you described it, is truly a response in kind. The official receipt is enclosed herewith.

The term "wild" in this context can best be explained in terms of the teachings of Chanukah, when the Project was announced:

It is significant that the Chanukah Menorah has eight lights, although it reflects the Miracle of the Oil which occurred in connection with the re-kindling of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdosh, which had only seven lamps. As explained in our sacred sources, there is an inner symbolic significance in the numbers seven versus eight. Seven represents the natural order, since G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, thus completing the natural order in seven days and imbuing it with the holiness of Shabbos. Eight, on the other hand, represents the supra-natural, the extra-ordinary. Thus, the seven-lamp Menorah, corresponding to the seven days of the week, symbolized the natural world order, which is geared to, and must be perpetually illuminated by, the light of the Torah and Mitzvos during each and all of the seven days of the week. Chanukah, on the other hand, recalls a very extraordinary situation in Jewish history, when the Jewish people faced a crucial challenge that threatened them not with physical, but with spiritual extinction, to be engulfed by the pagan Hellenistic culture that had swept the world at that time. The danger was all the more insidious because it happened while the Jewish people were in their own land, the Holy Land, and the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence; and the enemy did not aim to destroy the Beis Hamikdosh, nor to put out the Menorah, but "merely" to contaminate them with their own ideas and mores. This extraordinary situation therefore called for an extraordinary response in terms of real Mesiras Nefesh. Hence Chanukah is celebrated for eight days, and the lighting of eight lights, in a manner of increasing them in number and brightness each night of Chanukah until all the eight lights of the Chanukah Menorah shine brightly on the eighth night of Chanukah.

We find the same thing in other aspects of Torah and Jewish life. For example, the dedication of the Mishkon and Mikdosh took eight days - because the idea of a House of G-d for the Divine Shechinah (Presence) within the confines of a measured and limited space is most extraordinary, as King Solomon, the builder of the first Beis Hamikdosh, expressed it: "Surely, the earth and all the heavens cannot contain You, yet this House will!"

This is also the inner significance of Shemini Atzers, the Eighth Day (following the seven days of Succos), which is the culmination and retention of the Divine service of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the essence of which is Teshuvah - that extraordinary Divine gift whereby a Jew breaks through all natural limitations, both within and without, and rises to the highest degree of spiritual achievement.

In all these instances (and others, too numerous to mention here) the number eight is not just one more than seven, or an additional 24 hours, but it symbolizes the extra-ordinary, supra-natural and infinite, as distinct from the ordinary and natural, hence limited, as symbolized by the number seven.

It is in this sense that I characterized the new Project as seemingly "wild" - not in the ordinary sense of being wild and far-fetched from the viewpoint of practical consideration, but in the sense of being extraordinary also from the viewpoint of sacred considerations. By this I mean that, at first glance, considering our responsibilities for the existing institutions, especially the educational institutions, struggling with deficits and having to be not only maintained but also expanded, for what could be more vital than Chinuch? - one would think that these institutions command top priority on all our resources. Yet, I am convinced that the present world situation, and the Jewish situation in particular, is so extraordinary that ordinary means cannot cope with it, and a "wild" approach is required. Hence the said Project, as a first step. It will reflect, emphasize and demonstrate in a concrete and tangible way our profound Bitochon and trust in the eternal strength of Yiddishkeit to overcome all difficulties, and in the wholeness and inviolability of Eretz Yisroel as the Divinely given eternal inheritance of our people, and of Jerusalem, our Holy City, which belongs to all our Jewish people everywhere, with every Jew having a share in it, as also emphasized by the fact that while the whole Land of Israel was divided among the twelve tribes - ירושלים לא נחלקה לשבטים, Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes, but every Jew has an equal share in it. And this we proclaim not merely in words and protestations, but by concrete action, in a manner which is understood by all, namely by the fact that American Jews, especially successful businessmen, who are known for their acumen and practical knowhow in business affairs, are willing and ready, and do indeed, invest substantial resources in building a Shikun for Jews permeated with Yiddishkeit precisely in Jerusalem, our Holy City, in our Holy Land, thereby also involving the cooperation of Governmental agencies in this "wild" project, though the Government has other vital projects connected with defense, which ordinarily command top priority.

I trust, indeed I am quite confident, that this "wild" Project will bring forth G-d's blessings in a correspondingly "wild" and extraordinary measure, so that the Project will be implemented and completed much sooner than expected, and that it will serve as a living testimony to the vitality and strength of our Jewish people transcending all limitations and bounds; living testimony to Jews and non-Jews alike.

I have not yet embarked on a public campaign for the said project for various reasons, one of which being that I waited for a "Nachshon" - like Nachshon ben Aminodov who at the crucial moment jumped into the sea and caused it to part asunder for all the Jews to follow. It is your great Zechus to be this Nachshon, and this Zechus will certainly stand you and all your family in good stead in all your needs, including the fulfillment of the prayerful and confident wish which I expressed to you, that G-d should bless you and enable you to double your contribution by next year, with joy and gladness of heart, in happy circumstances of affluence both materially and spiritually. And I do not mean "double" in the strict sense, but, as above, in the sense of the symbolic number "eight," i.e., above all ordinary calculations.

May G-d grant that - as expressed during the Farbrengen - that in the Zechus of Chanukah and the lighting of the eight Chanukah Lights, symbolizing the light of the Torah and Mitzvos, we should all be Zocheh to see the Lights of Zion in the third and eternal Beis Hamikdosh, at the complete and true Geulah through our Righteous Moshiach.

With esteem and blessing *M. Schneerson*

P.S. I trust you understand why I constrained myself from taking "public" note of your letter and enclosure when you handed it to me. I was not sure whether those present with you knew of its content, or that you wished it to be known, and thought it wiser to leave to your own discretion.

PP.S. As usual, I am sending this letter through our mutual friend, Rabbi M. Herson, your confidant in these matters, not knowing if your mail reaches you directly.