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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
7th of Menachem Av,
5740. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter and Pidyon, and will remember you in prayer when visiting the holy resting place of my father-in-law of saintly memory, for the fulfillment of your hearts' desires for good, especially to bring up your children to a life of Torah, Chuppah and Good Deeds, in good health physically and spiritually.

Although what follows is self evident, its importance requires to be emphasized, at any rate briefly.

To begin with, it is obvious that the said blessing of healthy offspring both physically and spiritually is largely dependent upon the conduct of the parents. For, just as the physical health and constitution of parents have an impact on the physical health of the children, so it is also mentally and spiritually.

Indeed, as every intelligent person understands, the spiritual aspect is stronger than the body, so that the order should be reversed, namely, that the spiritual impact is predominant.

Inasmuch as the Torah, Toras Emes, declared that Jews are "Believers, the sons of believers," meaning that in addition to one's own belief in G-d, one has the cumulative heritage of countless generations, beginning with our Father Abraham, the first believer, that the Source of blessings is G-d, the Creator and Master of the universe. If a human being who introduces a certain system must give guidelines as to how the system works, ~~how much more~~ so is it to be expected that G-d would provide ~~guidelines as to~~ how a human being, and especially a Jew, must live. These guidelines were revealed at Sinai with the Giving of the Torah and Mitzvoth, which were transmitted from generation to generation, not only in content, but also in the exact terms. Thus, the Torah provides the guidelines as to how Jews have to conduct their life, especially their family life. But inasmuch as a human being, however perfect he may be, is liable to fail occasionally, G-d has provided the way in which it can be rectified, namely by way of Teshuvo which, as our Sages declare, was created even before the world. And Teshuvo is effective not only in respect to the future, but also retroactively to a large extent, inasmuch as G-d is omnipotent and is not restricted in any way.

It is a matter of common experience that it is part of human

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nature that parents will make every sacrifice for the benefit of children, even in a case where the benefit may not be certain, but has prospects.

All the above is by way of introduction to my earnest plea that regardless how it was in the past, you will strengthen your commitment and adherence to the Will of G-d, the Creator and Source of all blessings, particularly in the area of the strict fulfillment of the laws and regulations of Taharas Hamishpocho which, aside from the essential aspect of their being Divine imperatives, have the Divine Promise of reward in terms of healthy offspring, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Needless to say, when it comes to carrying out the commandments of G-d, it is absolutely irrelevant what neighbors or friends might say when they see a radical change in the everyday life.

Herein is also the answer to many questions, including the question of why this or that Mitzvo has to be observed. For a human being to question G-d's reasons for His Mitzvoth is actually contradictory to common sense. If one accepts them as Divine commandments, it would be presumptuous, indeed ridiculous, to equate human intellect with G-d's intellect, which would mean limiting G-d's intellect to that of a human being. By way of a simple illustration, which I had occasion to use before; one would not expect an infant to understand the importance of nutrition as set forth by a professor who has dedicated his life to this subject, even though the difference between the infant and the professor is only relative in terms of age and education, and in fact, the infant might some day even surpass the professor. There can be no such comparison between a created human being and the Creator, where the difference is absolute. *Chardil*

It should therefore be a matter of common sense to understand what the Torah, Toras Emes, explains clearly, that whatever doubts and difficulties a Jew may have in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth are only tests of his faith in G-d, and that a person is equipped with the capacity to overcome such tests and distractions, for it would be illogical to assume that G-d would impose obligations which are beyond human capacity to fulfill. Indeed, if one has more difficult tests, it only proves that he has greater capacities to overcome them.

In summary, just as when we received the Torah and Mitzvoth at Sinai, we accepted them on the basis of Naaseh, first and then, V'Nishma, namely on the basis of unconditional obedience and readiness to fulfill G-d's Mitzvoth regardless of our understanding them rationally, so has our commitment been ever since. And while we must learn and try to understand as much as possible, prior knowledge and understanding must never be a condition to living up to the guidelines which G-d has given us in regard to our actual way of life and conduct.

Your letter and Pidyon reached me during the period of the "Three Weeks" and, in fact, during the "Nine Days." Herein is also a timely message in that the observance of these sad periods commemorating the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash is not meant to simply cause us grief, but in order that we should rectify the causes that brought it about. And since the main cause of it was, as we say in our prayers, "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land," the way to rectify it is for every Jew to strengthen adherence to the Torah and Mitzvoth, both in his and her personal life, as well as to strengthen and spread Yiddishkeit wherever one has any influence. In this connection, it is well to remember the Great Principle enunciated by our Sages, and which the Rambam, our Great Teacher and guide for all times made a rule in his Code, namely that a person should consider himself and the whole world as equibalanced, so that one good deed could tip the scale in favor of himself and the whole world. Thus, if a single individual should think what can I achieve by a single act in one way or another, the answer has already been given by the Rambam.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlocho and good tidings in all above, and may every one of us, in the midst of all our people, soon see the fulfillment of the Divine Prophecy that these days of sadness will be transformed into days of gladness and festivity, with the Geulo Shleimo through our righteous Moshiach.

With blessing,

M. Schneyerson