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By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos Kodesh
Sedra Vayera
15th of Cheshvan, 5744
Brooklyn, N. Y.

22 Oct 1983

To All Participants in the
Testimonial Dinner of
The Rabbinical College of America
Morristown, N. J.

Greeting and Blessing:

I extend congratulations and prayerful wishes to the distinguished Dinner Chairmen, Honored Guests, and all friends of The Rabbinical College on the occasion of this Annual Dinner event.

I note that the theme of this year's Dinner is "The Dawn of a New Day of Development" - in conjunction with the development and expansion program of this outstanding Torah institution.

It is a worthy, fitting, and timely theme, in light of the Torah reading on the Shabbos preceding the Dinner, focusing on the life of our first Patriarch Abraham. The Sedra begins with G-d's revelation to Abraham (on the third day after his circumcision, as our Sages explain), and it ends with the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, our middle Patriarch.

Abraham's entire life was dedicated to development in relation to himself, and expansion in relation to others. He was always on the move - physically and spiritually, epitomizing the constant striving for advancement and perfection in the service of HaShem and fellow man. So much so that, at the age of 99 years, he still considered himself in need of improvement; that was when he underwent circumcision, in the ordinary sense, as well as "circumcision of the heart" in the spiritual sense.

The Akedah too can be seen in the same light. While Abraham was the embodiment of chesed (loving kindness), he had yet to attain perfection in the attribute of Gevurah (self restraint); with their corresponding qualities of love of G-d and fear of G-d. This - the perfect blend of the two opposite qualities - Abraham attained through the trial of the Akedah, at the age of 137 years!

The Akedah, however, had a further dimension. It was vital to Abraham's development also because it involved his beloved son Isaac, since the Akedah was a milestone also in Isaac's development and Chinuch (education in the fullest sense of the term), a responsibility of which our Father Abraham was keenly aware.

"The experience of the Patriarchs are guidelines for the children," our Sages declare. We, all Jews, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, follow in their footsteps in a continuous and dynamic process of development and expansion - "Going from strength to strength" and "Keeping all matters of holiness on the ascendancy," to use two familiar phrases emphasizing the same principle.

Needless to say, what is true of the Jew as an individual, is certainly true of a Jewish institution, especially a Jewish Torah institution, and particularly when the Torah institution is The Rabbinical College of America, whose reputation and record of achievements speak for themselves.

I hope and pray that, with the concerted dynamic efforts of all friends of The Rabbinical College of America, the new development and expansion program will soon become a reality, and will pave the way for another "Dawn of a New Day of Development" for this great Torah institution and for all its dedicated friends and supporters.

With esteem and
blessing

M. Schneerson