



REBBE RESPONSA

The Rebbe's English Letters

Pesach Messages / Education Day USA

Expanded 100th Issue

Issue 100
11 Nissan, Pesach, 5785

A Word from the Publishers

In celebration of the Rebbe's 123rd birthday and the 3rd anniversary of the Rebbe Responsa app, we proudly present **Issue 100** of our weekly booklet.

This expanded milestone edition features a special collection focusing on **Pesach** and **Education Day**.

Published in the beginning of the booklet are two of the Rebbe's *Michtavim Klaliim* (communal letters), addressed to "to all sons and daughters of Israel, wherever they may be" on the message of Pesach and its eternal lessons.

The booklet's second section explores the remarkable history of Education Day USA – established as a result of the Rebbe's call for the United States government to improve the quality of education and infuse it with moral and ethical instruction. First commemorated in 1978, Education Day has been proclaimed annually on the Rebbe's birthday by every U.S. President and numerous officials and world leaders ever since.

The Rebbe's correspondence with American presidents spanning more than a decade, presented below with background and context, offers a glimpse into the Rebbe's visionary perspective on America's educational system and its universal educational responsibility.

All footnotes, titles, summaries, and introductions have been added by the publishers, unless otherwise noted

* * *

The Rebbe's English letters represent a little-known facet of the Rebbe's Torah, containing profound wisdom and practical guidance expressed in clear, accessible language. We encourage you to download the Rebbe Responsa app, which offers the only comprehensive collection of the Rebbe's English letters available to date. With of over 5,000 organized by both topic and date, the app makes finding the Rebbe's guidance and opinion simple and accessible.

The Rebbe Responsa Team

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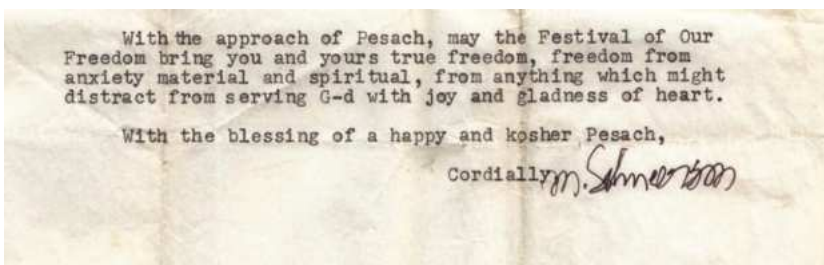
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1

Education Through the Pesach Lens

Parallel between Korban Pesach, Matzah, and Maror, to essential elements in education: Receiving essential daily nourishment of Torah and Mitzvoos in a manner of Kabalas Ol, at the same time rejecting harmful external influence

FREE RENDITION

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Nissan, 5737
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel, Everywhere,
G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

Pursuing the theme of the letter of Rosh Chodesh Nissan¹ on the significance of the Month of Nissan and Yetzias Mitzraim (the Liberation from Egypt) in connection with it being the time when Jews were born as a nation, and what we have to learn from it -in general terms – about the birth and education of Jewish children¹, as well as adults (inasmuch as in respect of things that have yet to be learned and achieved in spiritual development – everyone, regardless of age, is in the category of "children") --

It is fitting to consider some details encompassed within the general principles that had been deduced in the previous letter; details which are, none-the-less, basic elements that should

Source: Photocopy of the original. The Rebbe's Hebrew endnotes are published at the end of the letter.

Although this letter is presented as a Free Rendition (the Yiddish and Hebrew versions of this letter are published in *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 32, letters 12102-12103), letters typed on the Rebbe's stationery were meticulously reviewed and often edited by the Rebbe.

¹ Published in Issue 98.

permeate the education of children (and adults), and which are indicated in the details attending Yetzias Mitzraim and Pesach.

* * *

At the birth of our Jewish people, prior to settling on land, the first requirement was, of course, the provision of food — "food" in a wider sense, embracing all human needs² (food³, clothing, and shelter⁴), down to food in the ordinary sense.

In connection with Yetzias Mitzraim the Torah specified three kinds of food: Korban Pesach (the Passover sacrifice), Matza, and Moror (bitter herbs), (mentioned also in the previous letter). The correlation between these three items is underscored in the Torah by the commandment, "Together with Matza and Moror they shall eat it (the Korban Pesach)⁵."

It should be noted that these three items are essential elements of Yetzias Mitzraim, as well as of the Hagadah, that is, the Mitzva of relating the story of Yetzias Mitzraim (also for its instructive, edifying purpose). Thus it is emphasized in the Mishnah, Hagadah, and in the actual celebration of the Seder: "He⁶ who has not declared (explained) these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his duty, and these are they: Pesach, Matza, and Moror."⁷

Similarly, in the case of the birth of a child, the first requirement is to provide the child with food — both in the broad sense and in the plain sense, as mentioned above.

Food comprises three general categories: food that is required for normal development, or, moreover, is vitally needed to sustain life; food that is harmful, and must be excluded or even destroyed and food that while not indispensable, provides additional strength and delight.⁸

These three categories of food are alluded to respectively in the three special Pesach foods — Matza, Moror and (Korban) Pesach:

Matza is, of course, (unleavened) bread, as we hold it up and declare at the beginning of the Seder: "This is the bread..."; and "bread sustains a man's life."⁹ In a broader sense, the term "bread" is used for a whole repast¹⁰, and the entire daily food.

Moror — in our context — signifies undesirable things which should, and must, be considered and felt as truly bitter¹¹, and, hence, must be rejected and eliminated.

The (Korban) **Pesach** had to be eaten 'al ha-sova'¹² — "on fullness," when one is already fully sated; it came as a "dessert" for an extra measure of strength and delight. For this reason the Korban Pesach had to be eaten sumptuously "in a manner of Royal Festivity."¹³

The above-mentioned qualities are further underscored by the distinctive instructions relating to Matza, Moror and Korban Pesach:

The obligation to eat Matza is always of the same force, as a Torah obligation, at all times and in all places, outside of Eretz Yisroel and in the times of the Golus (exile), exactly as in Jerusalem in the time of the Beis Hamikdosh.

The obligation to eat Moror is also valid in all times and places, but not with the same force¹⁴ as in the time when the Korban Pesach was offered.

The obligation of the Korban Pesach is valid only¹⁵ in the time, and in the place, of the Beis Hamikdosh, in the time and place when Jews enjoyed **sova'**, the **fullness** of G-d's blessings.

* * *

Applying the aforementioned aspects in connection with the education of a Jewish child — in the inner sense of "food," namely, spiritual food of the soul — the first vital need of the child is to receive its daily ration of staple nourishment, that is, Torah and Mitzvos, which are termed "bread," in accordance with the exhortation, "Come and eat bread of My bread"¹⁶ (alluding to two "breads" — the Written Torah and the Oral Torah; the "revealed" - nigleh — and "inner" — pnimius — of Torah; of both Torah and Mitzvos).

In conjunction with this, one should be ever watchful that the learning of Torah and the observance of the Mitzvos should be of the quality of "Matza" — with complete submission (kabbolas-ol) and self-effacement (**bittul**),¹⁷ without an admixture of **chometz** (leaven) that causes (the dough) to rise, expand, and swell.

At the same time, it is necessary to protect the child against undesirable influences from outside — through admonition, and the like — but only in a moderate form of "repelling with the (weaker) **left** hand," as alluded to in Moror, and not with the same force and measure of "drawing near with the (stronger) **right** hand,"¹⁸ that provides the daily nourishment of "bread and repast" of Torah and Mitzvos.

And as one follows the said guidelines in the education of the child (and of the self) step by step and from stage to stage — one becomes satiated with Torah and Mitzvos; and in the "fullness" thereof, at every moment, the in-dwelling G-dliness in the heart of every Jew¹⁹ (as it is written, "And I will dwell **within them**") comes to the fore, revealing the inner "Sanctuary and Altar"²⁰ (total commitment) to G-d. Whereupon he proceeds to learn Torah with even greater dedication and to observe the Mitzvos with even greater **Hiddur** (in the most "beautiful" manner), doing it all with true joy,²¹ as reflected in the Korban Pesach.

* * *

May G-d grant that every Jew and Jewess should act in all above with "wonderful alacrity"²² — in the manner attending Pesach, Matza, and Moror at Yetzias Mitzraim, as it is written, "And you shall eat it in haste,"²³

And this will hasten the fulfillment of the promise, "And²⁴ in Shalem²⁵ (Jerusalem) will be His Beis Hamikdash, and His dwelling in Zion," and the Korban Pesach will again be offered there, as prescribed, and we will eat there of the Passover and Festive offerings²⁶ — at the true and complete Geulo and liberation of our soul,²⁷ through our righteous Moshiach.

With esteem and blessing for Hatzlocho in all above, and with blessing for a Kosher and Joyous Pesach,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/

(1) יחזקאל טז, ד. ובסוטה (יא, ב) דורש אותו הכתוב על ילדי ישראל. ובשבת (קכט, סע"ב) גם להלכה למעשה. (2) להעיר מסנהדרין לח, סע"א. (3) ראה לקו"ת דברים (ט, ג) ובכ"מ. מים רבים תרלי"ו בתחלתו. (4) ראה ישע"י ד, ז. ירוש' סוכה פ"א ה"ה. (5) במדבר (ט, יא) — כן הוא בפסחים (קטו, א), בנוסח ההגדה (כורך) ובכ"מ. וכבר העירו דהכתוב מדבר בפסח שני! (6) פסחים קטז, סע"א. בנוסח הגדת הרמב"ם "וימורורים". וכ"כ בנוסח הברכה (הל' חומ"צ פ"ח. ובאותו הפרק גם בלי יחיד. (7) ראה כתבי האריז"ל במקומם. — ולהעיר מלקוטי לוי"צ לוח"ג (עי' רמט ואילך). (8) להעיר מטאו"ח סר"ז. שו"ע אדה"ז שם. (9) תהלים קד, טו. וראה לקו"ת שח"ש כד, ד ואילך. אוה"ת שם. ובכ"מ.

2

Obtaining True Inner Freedom

Pesach message on experiencing freedom in our time; Memory allows us to relive past events and experience their Divine influences; Daily spiritual liberation from material limitations; Only through Torah and Mitzvot can one achieve harmony and peace of mind

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Nissan, 5713
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.

To my Brethren Everywhere
G-d Bless You All

Sholom u'Brocho:

The days of the Festival of Our Freedom are approaching, when we shall again recall to our memory that great event at the dawn of our history, when our people was liberated from Egyptian bondage in order to receive the Torah as free men.

Memory and imagination is the ability to associate oneself with an event in the past, and in so doing to relive or experience those feelings and mental states which were experienced at the time of

10) דניאל ה, א (רש"י ויצא לב, נד). 11) פסחים קטו, ב. ולהעיר מצפנ"י לרמב"ם הל' חומ"צ פ"י ה"ב. 12) רמב"ם הל' ק"פ פ"ח ה"ג (ממכילתא בא יב, ח). 13) רשב"ם (פסחים קיט, ב) ד"ה כגון. וראה חולין קלב, ב תוס' סד"ה אין שם. 14) פסחים קב, א. ושי"נ לפוסקים. 15) אפילו למ"ד דאפשר להקריב פסח בזמנה"ז (כמה מהם צוייננו בתו"ש מילואים לחי"ב) אין חיוב בזה. והעדר המעשה — רב. וראה לקו"ש כרך יב ע' 216 ואילך. 16) משלי ט, ה. 17) לקו"ת צו (יג, ג). שער האמונה בכ"מ. 18) סוטה מז, א. ולפנ"ז: לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת. 19) כדיוק הלשון בתוכס ולא בתוכו (של"ה ש' האותיות אות ל. מסי' תענית רד"ה מענין העבודה. פ' תרומה חלק תו"א — שכה, ב. שכו, ב. ועוד. ראשית חכמה (שער האהבה פ"ו קרוב לתחלתו). וראה כתר ש"ט סו"ס שיט (מב, ג ואילך). 20) אבל תמיד ישנו במציאות. ראה יומא נו, ב (הובא בפרש"י עה"ת ויקרא טז, טז). 21) ואין בזה סתירה להביטול (מצה) כי יודע שהוא ערום וערי' אלא שואעבור עליו גוי' (ראה לקו"א להח"מ סרי"ב). וי"ל דזהו למטה הרבה מהדרגא דתענוגו הוא תענוג האדון שבהמשך רס"ו (ע' שי ואילך). 22) ראה תניא אגה"ק סכ"א. 23) שמות יב, יא. נתי' בארוכה בד"ה וככה (באוה"ת). המשך תרל"ז. ועוד. ד"ה כי בחפזון תשי"ח ועוד. ונוסח ההגדה דהרמב"ם בתחילתו: נוסח ההגדה .. מתחיל על כוס ב' ואומר בבחילו יצאנו ממצרים. 24) תהלים עו, ג. ובתרגום שם. ילי"ש שם. 25) ראה תוספתא ברכות ספ"א. זחי"א פו, ב (ובביאורו"ז לאדהאמ"צ ולהצ"צ שם). זחי"א קעב, ב. 26) פסחים ואח"כ זבחים, כיון שחל פסח במוצש"ק (אדה"ז בהגדה שבסידורו. וראה שו"ע שלו סתע"ג, סמ"ט הדעות בזה. ועי"פ מסקנת אדה"ז בסידורו מתורץ זה שנמצאת גירסא זו בכ"מ). 27) סיום ברכת אשר גאלנו (פסחים קטז, ב). וראה כל בו ואבודרהם (בסיום פ"ה ההגדה) ד"פדות נפשנו" — מדבר ביצי"מ, דמזכירין שתייהן (בגאולתנו) בימות המשיח.

Source: Photocopy of the original.

² The Hebrew version of this letter (with slight variations) can be found in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7, letter 2067.

the event. For only physically is the human being bound and fettered by time and space; mentally there are no spatial or temporal barriers, and the greater the supremacy of the spiritual forces over the physical, the closer one can associate oneself with a past event and more fully experience its message and inspiration.

Of the efficacy of remembrance our Sages stated, in commenting on the verse: "And these days shall be remembered and done" (Esther 9:28), that no sooner are those days remembered than their cause is done On High. In other words, the same Divine influences and benevolences that brought about those miraculous events of old, are stirred again by the process of recollection and remembrance.

This is one of the reasons why we have been enjoined to remember the liberation from Egypt in every generation, every day; it is, moreover, made incumbent upon the Jew to visualize himself as though he personally had been liberated on that day from Egypt, ransomed and freed completely. For every day the Jew must practice Yetzias Mitzraim ("Mitzraim" in the sense of "Metzorum") through escape from the material and physical distractions, obstacles and limitations imposed upon his spiritual self by the physical body and animalistic tendencies.

The counterpart of the "Liberation from Egypt" thus is the release of the Divine Soul from its corporeal imprisonment, and it must be experienced every day, constantly, in order to enjoy true freedom — freedom from enslavement, freedom from pain — in both the material as well as the spiritual sense.

When the Jew achieves such inner freedom — an accomplishment possible only with the help of G-d, who freed our people from Mitzraim, and through a life conditioned by the Torah and Mitzvot — he is in this way freed from both spiritual anguish — the tremendous inner conflict referred to, as well as from enslavement and pain of a material nature. Then, and only then, can he enjoy true freedom, a feeling of complete harmony and peace of mind, which is the prelude to freedom and peace on a wider scale.

With the blessing of a kosher and happy Passover, and may we soon enjoy true freedom that will come to us with our Complete and True Redemption through our Righteous Messiah,

M. Schneerson

Education Day

1978

Origins of Education Day U.S.A.

In 5736 (1975-1976), the Rebbe announced the start of “Shnas HaChinuch” – A Year of Education. Throughout this period and continuing into 5737 and 5738, the Rebbe consistently emphasized two key educational priorities: the responsibility of Jewish parents to provide their children with authentic Jewish education, and the broader need to elevate educational standards for all. This focused campaign sparked significant activity in educational development, resulting in the establishment of numerous schools and educational programs nationwide.

In 1977, the state of New York proclaimed March 20th, the Rebbe's birthday (11 Nissan on the Hebrew calendar) as “Education Day” in recognition of his work in the field of education.

Education Day was first recognized federally in 1978 when Congress passed a joint resolution (H.J. Res. 770) requesting President Jimmy Carter to proclaim the Rebbe's 76th birthday as “Education Day, U.S.A.” In its preamble, Congress noted the Rebbe's contributions – including Lubavitch's extensive educational work and the Rebbe's “Year of Education” – and emphasized the need for a day dedicated to education's importance. President Carter signed the resolution into law and issued a proclamation urging all Americans to mark Education Day and recognize education's vital importance to national welfare.

Political and educational leaders across the nation enthusiastically embraced Education Day. Many states and cities responded to the federal initiative by proclaiming their own Education Day observances. On April 17th, Vice President Walter Mondale chaired an “inauguration event” for Education Day on Capitol Hill.

During that year's Yud-Alef Nissan Farbrengen, the Rebbe expressed profound gratitude for the establishment of “Education Day, U.S.A.,” viewing it as meaningful recognition not only of Chabad's 200-year educational legacy, but more importantly as a national affirmation of education as one of America's highest priorities. The Rebbe emphasized that true education must transcend mere knowledge acquisition or career preparation, focusing instead on

character development with moral and ethical values at its core. He advocated for education that promotes fundamental human rights and the obligations of justice and morality – foundational elements of any truly human society.

The Rebbe also called for United States foreign aid programs to place greater emphasis on educational development, stressing that promoting moral values and humanitarian principles internationally would contribute to global peace. He expressed hope that Education Day would become a permanent American institution, inspiring ongoing dedication to education throughout the year, similar to how other special days serve as annual reminders of enduring commitments.

The American Friends of Lubavitch published the Rebbe's words in full-page newspaper advertisements nationwide, which prompted a response from President Carter. On September 18, President Carter wrote to the Rebbe:

I read with great interest the full page ad that appeared in the Washington Post on Monday, September 11, 1978, which reproduced portions of your response to the resolution passed by Congress designating April 18, "Education Day - U.S.A." I admire the thoughts which you expressed – and am grateful for your support and prayers. I am delighted that "Education Day - U.S.A." falls on your birthday. I would like to take this opportunity of extending to you my personal best wishes for many more years of good health and fruitful work.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

The following is the Rebbe's reply:

Letter 1

The Launch of Education Day

Letter to President Jimmy Carter in appreciation for proclaiming the first Education Day U.S.A.

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5739
Brooklyn, N.Y.

President Jimmy Carter
The White House Washington

My dear Mr. President:

I am honored and deeply gratified to receive your kind and thoughtful letter of September 18, 1978.

I particularly appreciate your laudatory reference to the resolution passed by Congress designating April 18 as "Education Day - U.S.A." Your personal interest in the cause of Education, coupled with the influence of your exalted position, goes a long way in promoting the vital importance of Education in general, and is a source of further encouragement to the dedicated activities of the movement which I am privileged to head. It is also in behalf of our movement, no less than in my own behalf, that I gratefully welcome your warm sentiments and good wishes.

At the appropriate occasion I will take the liberty of quoting your letter, for which I trust I have your permission in the public interest.

In this solemn season of our Jewish Calendar, on the threshold of the New Year 5739, I extend to you and to the First Lady and all your esteemed family prayerful wishes for good health and prosperity and the fullest measure of achievement in your most exalted position.

With profound esteem and with blessing,

Cordially,

M. Schneerson

Source: Photocopy of the original. Additional letters to President Carter include letters dated 29 Tishrei 5738, 12 Shevat 5739 and 13 Shevat 5740.

1979
A Department of Education

1979 marked a pivotal moment in the Rebbe's efforts to promote moral and ethical education through government policy.

For most of American history, education had been primarily a state and local responsibility with minimal federal oversight. By 1978, education was just one division within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, limiting its national prominence despite many attempts to create a dedicated department. This changed dramatically in January 1979 (Teves 5739) when President Carter announced plans for a standalone Department of Education in his State of the Union address.

Speaking at the farbrengen on Yud Shevat, the Rebbe directly linked this development to Education Day:

"...Since last year, when the U.S. Congress passed J.H. Res. 770, authorizing and requesting the President to proclaim 18th of April, 1978 (11 Nissan, 5738) as 'Education Day, U.S.A.,' we have witnessed a growing awareness of the importance of Education as one of the highest priorities of the nation. Nowhere has this awareness been more evident than in Congress and, especially, in the Executive Branch of the government..."

The Rebbe praised Carter's initiative and explained how a dedicated federal department would strengthen education nationwide. The Rebbe reiterated the message of his 11 Nissan remarks about the fundamental importance of grounding education in moral and ethical values, while also addressing America's responsibility to promote educational advancement globally.

The Rebbe subsequently wrote to President Carter expressing his support for the proposed department and actively advocated for it among political leaders. In the letter to Vice-President Walter F. Mondale published below, the Rebbe clearly articulates his vision for this new department:³

³ For the complete address and comprehensive overview of the Rebbe's advocacy for the Department of Education, including additional correspondence on this subject, see Rebbe Responsa Weekly, Issue 87.

Letter 2

What Is Our Educational System Lacking?

Letter to the Vice President: Interest in remarks at DOE committee meeting; Educational System must be restructured to focus on the main goal of morality and ethics; Recognition of such will help gain support for the initiative

By the Grace of G-d
29 Shevat, 5739
February 26, 1979

The Honorable Walter F. Mondale
Vice-President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice-President:

I read with profound interest your Remarks at Meeting of Ad Hoc Committee for a Cabinet Department of Education, Jan. 24, 1979. Needless to say, I fully endorse the substance and urgency of your message. Indeed, in light of the saying of our Sages, "Words coming from the heart penetrate the heart and are eventually effective," I am confident, Mr. Vice-President, that your words will find the proper response they deserve.

You will surely recall, Sir, the meeting at the Caucus Room of Congress, which you graciously chaired, in celebration of the H.J. Res. 770, authorizing and requesting the President to issue the Proclamation designating April 18, 1978 as "Education Day, U.S.A." I trust you also read some of my remarks in this connection that appeared in the Congressional Record, the thrust of which, permit me to reiterate, was:

Education, in general, should not be limited to the acquisition of knowledge and preparation for a career, or in common parlance "to make a better living." We must think in terms of a "better life," not only for the individual, but also for society as a whole. The educational system must, therefore, pay more attention, indeed, the

main attention, to the building of character, with emphasis on moral and ethical values,

The above principle, which is surely indisputable, assumes added significance now that the Administration is making an all-out effort to promulgate the required legislation to implement the President's proposal for a Cabinet-level Department of Education - for the following reason:

The skepticism on the part of those who, at present, oppose the Administration's educational program (of which you make mention in your Remarks) is, I believe, in large measure due to the shortcomings of the educational system in this country, which leaves much to be desired in the way of achieving its most basic objectives for a better society. In a country, such as ours, so richly blessed with democracy, freedom of opportunity, and material resources, one would expect that such anti-moral and anti-social phenomena as juvenile delinquency, vandalism, lack of respect for law and order, etc., would have been radically reduced, to the point of ceasing to be a problem. Hence, it is not surprising that many feel frustrated and apathetic.

I submit, therefore, that the Administration's resolve to restructure the Federal education role - long overdue - would be well served if it were coupled with greater emphasis on the objective of improving the quality of education in terms of moral and ethical values and character building that should be reflected in the actual everyday life of our young and growing generation.

I take the liberty of enclosing a copy of a brief memorandum on the subject, which I trust you will find of interest.

With prayerful wishes and blessings for success in your endeavors to upgrade the educational system, and in all your public and personal affairs,

I remain, Mr. Vice-President,

Cordially yours,

1982 *National Day of Reflection*

When Ronald Reagan took office, he continued the tradition of Education Day U.S.A. that his predecessor had established. Reagan, who deeply appreciated the Rebbe's emphasis on spiritual values, maintained this observance while placing additional focus on the Rebbe's advocacy for education infused with divine moral principles.⁴

In 1982, marking the Rebbe's 80th birthday, Congress unanimously passed a Resolution designating April 4, 1982 (11 Nissan 5742) as a "National Day of Reflection." This resolution acknowledged the Rebbe's eight decades "devoted to the service of world Jewry and humanity," and established the day for all Americans to "reflect upon the ancient ethical principles and moral values which are the foundation of our character as a nation."

President Reagan issued an official proclamation for this National Day of Reflection, praising the Rebbe as "one shining example for people of all faiths of what education ought to be." Reagan commended the Rebbe's demonstration that "knowledge is an unworthy goal unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual wisdom and understanding," and specifically highlighted the Rebbe's promotion of the Seven Noahide Laws as a universal moral code.⁵ The day was celebrated nationwide with an emphasis on prayer, ethics, and charitable "sharing" alongside traditional education.

On April 2, 1982, Reagan wrote personally to the Rebbe:

Dear Rebbe:

Nancy and I are pleased to share in the joy and celebration which surrounds your 80th birthday on this 11 Nissan. On behalf of all Americans, we offer our most heartfelt congratulations.

⁴ Although 1981 did not feature a high-profile proclamation due to the President's recovery from an assassination attempt in late March, Reagan wrote to the Rebbe congratulating him on his birthday and concluded: "With your emphasis on moral and ethical values and your interest in education, you have contributed greatly to both the intellectual and spiritual development of our nation." For the Rebbe's reply, see letter dated 12 Nissan, 5741.

⁵ For a collection of letters on the obligation to promote the Seven Noahide Laws, see Rebbe Responsa Issue 23 (Noach, 5784).

You have so much of which to be proud. Since your first moments in the United States in 1941, you have shared your personal gift of universal understanding to the benefit of all. Time and again, your love and spiritual guidance have brought hope and inspiration to those confronted with despair. In bringing solace and comfort to the human spirit, you have helped to strengthen the foundation of faith which is mankind's most vital asset. Your life's work has been a response to that special calling few are privileged to hear.

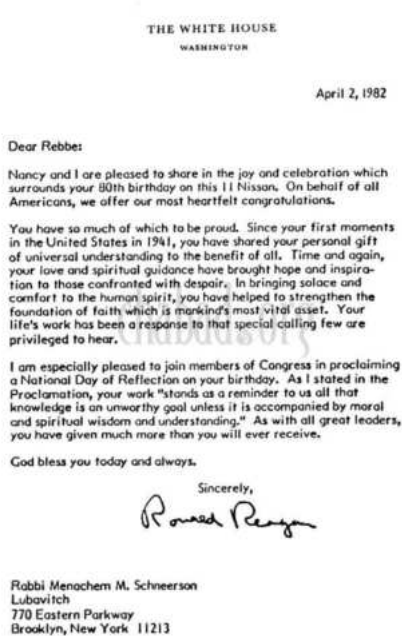
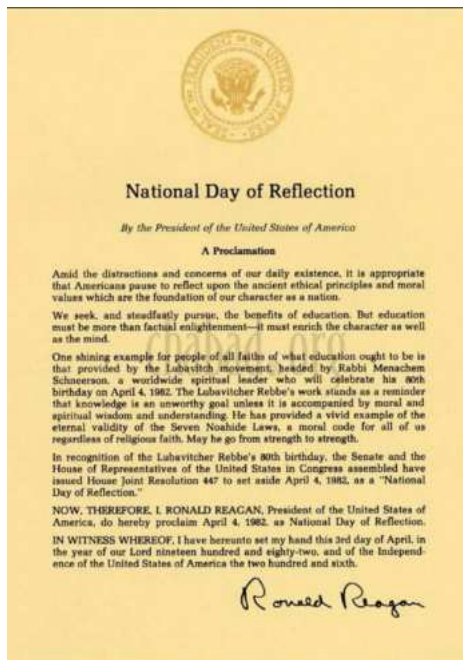
I am especially pleased to join members of Congress in proclaiming a National Day of Reflection on your birthday. As I stated in the Proclamation, your work "stands as a reminder to us all that knowledge is an unworthy goal unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual wisdom and understanding." As with all great leaders, you have given much more than you will ever receive.

G-d bless you today and always.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Below is the Rebbe's reply:



Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
 Lubavitch
 770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn, New York 11213

Letter 3

America As a Spiritual Superpower

Letter to President Reagan: National Day of Reflection; the civilized world should look up to America as a spiritual superpower

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Nissan, 5742
Brooklyn, N. Y.

President Ronald Reagan⁶
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Because of the intervening Passover season, the Festival of Our Liberation, this is my first opportunity of acknowledging your gracious letter of April 2, 1982. I wish to assure you, Mr. President, and the First Lady, that I deeply appreciate your warm felicitations and good wishes on the occasion of my birthday.

I particularly appreciate your thoughtful and profoundly meaningful message that serves as the preamble to your Proclamation of a National Day of Reflection, in conjunction with the said occasion.

Following, as it does, your Proclamation of a National Day of Prayer,⁷ your Proclamation of a National Day of Reflection is not only eminently consistent with it, but indeed a corollary thereof. By focusing attention on "the ancient ethical principles and moral values which are the foundation of our character as a nation," and on the time-honored truth that "education must be more than factual enlightenment – it must enrich the character as well as the mind," while reaffirming the eternal validity of the G-d-given Seven

Source: Photocopy of the original.

⁶ For additional letters to President Ronald Reagan, see below; letters dated 12 Nissan 5741, 15 Iyar 5741, Between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur 5742, 12 Nissan 5745, 12 Elul 5747; 30 Shevat 5748.

⁷ President Reagan had proclaimed May 6, 1982, as a National Day of Prayer.

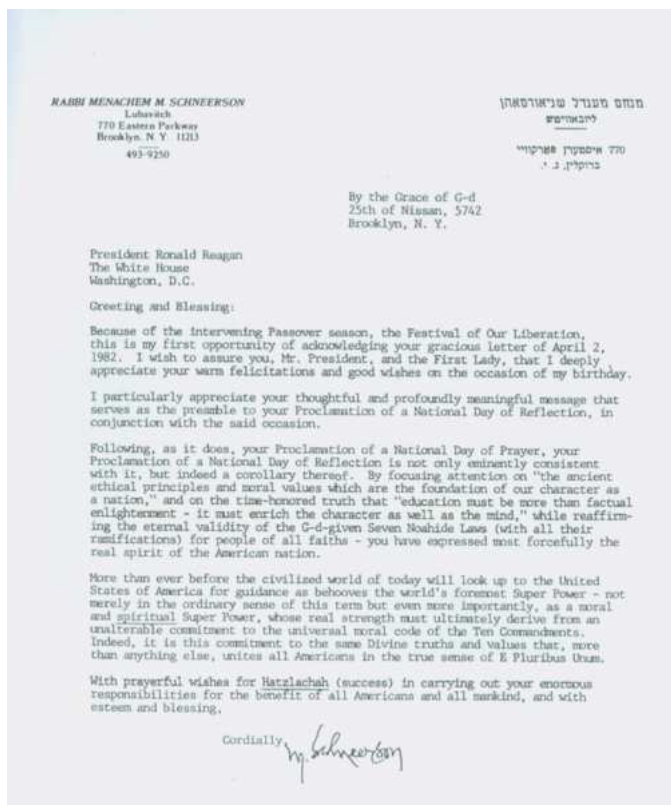
Noahide Laws (with all their ramifications) for people of all faiths - you have expressed most forcefully the real spirit of the American nation.

More than ever before the civilized world of today will look up to the United States of America for guidance as behooves the world's foremost Super Power – not merely in the ordinary sense of this term but even more importantly, as a moral and **spiritual** Super Power, whose real strength must ultimately derive from an unalterable commitment to the universal moral code of the Ten Commandments. Indeed, it is this commitment to the same Divine truths and values that, more than anything else, unites all Americans in the true sense of E Pluribus Unum.

With prayerful wishes for **Hatzlachah** (success) in carrying out your enormous responsibilities for the benefit of all Americans and all mankind, and with esteem and blessing,

Cordially,

M. Schneerson



1985-1987
Letters to President Reagan

In the following years of Reagan's presidency, Education Day proclamations increasingly emphasized America's responsibility to promote moral and ethical education, particularly highlighting the Seven Noahide Laws. In 1985, the President Reagan again proclaimed Education Day, and on March 29, 1985 wrote to the Rebbe:

Americans have always know that education is the golden key that opens the door to achievement and progress. It is very fitting that the Congress has recognized the important role of education in our society by the passage of this resolution. It is especially fitting that April 20, the date selected as "Education Day, USA," coincides with your 84th birthday. This designation reflects the high esteem in which you are held and the deep respect for the wisdom you have shared with us over the years.

I am very pleased to join the Congress in proclaiming "Education Day, USA" on your birthday.

On 12 Nissan, 5745 the Rebbe wrote to the President, expresses appreciation for this honor, and continues:

... May G-d continue to bestow His generous blessings on you and all yours – which includes all of us who are privileged to live in this blessed land, so generously favored with an abundance of blessings, materially and spiritually, as to giving it an extraordinary historic role to lead the world, particularly in these sadly confused times, when scientific and technological advancement has outpaced moral and spiritual advancement.

You, Mr. President, have consistently and vigorously worked to bridge the said gap, which is so necessary for the achievement of the proper balance and harmony between might and right. I believe, Mr. President that these efforts and notable success you have attained in this direction, will surely rank among your highest historic achievements...

Below are the Rebbe's letters to the President Reagan from the years 1986-1987.

Upon taking office, President George H. W. Bush continued the Education Day tradition.

Education Day has since been marked annually by every US President, in States throughout the Union, and countries around the globe.

12C7D 308110
ACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
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493-9250

308110
מחם מענדל שניאורסאהר
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
12 Nissan, 5745
Brooklyn, N.Y.

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Greeting and Blessing:

I am immensely impressed with your letter of March 29, 1985, and deeply appreciative of your most generous sentiments. I welcome your encouraging remarks particularly as a tribute to the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, which I am honored and privileged to head, and which has found such fertile soil since its Headquarters was transferred to the USA forty-five years ago, where it has thrived and developed at an unprecedented pace in its 200 years' history.

In the name, therefore, of our movement no less than in my personal name I extend to you, Mr. President, and to the First Lady, a heartfelt "thank you."

I sincerely reciprocate your good wishes in the words of our Sages: "Whoever blesses others is blessed by G-d Himself, the Source of All blessings." May G-d continue to bestow His generous blessings on you and all yours - which includes all of us who are privileged to live in this blessed land, so generously favored with an abundance of blessings, materially and spiritually, as to giving it an extraordinary historic role to lead the world, particularly in these sadly confused times, when scientific and technological advancement has out-paced moral and spiritual advancement.

You, Mr. President, have consistently and vigorously worked to bridge the said gap, which is so necessary for the achievement of the proper balance and harmony between might and right. I believe, Mr. President, that these efforts and the notable success you have attained in this direction, will surely rank among your highest historic achievements.

With prayerful wishes for your continued success in carrying out the awesome responsibilities of your most exalted Office in good health and prosperity, with joy and gladness of heart, and in all respects - "going from strength to strength" (Ps. 84:8),

Cordially and
With esteem and blessing

M. Schneerson

Letter 4

The Key Ingredient of True Education

Praise for the President's emphasis on moral and spiritual dimensions in education; the President's leadership in promoting values and Seven Noahide Laws worldwide; blessings for success, health, and strength

By the Grace of G-d
10th of Iyar, 5746
19 of May, 1986
Brooklyn, N. Y.

His Excellency President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington

Greeting and Blessing:

It is a distinct pleasure, Mr. President, to acknowledge receipt of your kind letter of May 9, 1986.⁸

I deeply appreciate the warm sentiments expressed therein, particularly in reference to the House Joint Resolution 582, designating April 20th as “Education Day, USA.”

Your Proclamation, dear Mr. President, implementing the said House Joint Resolution, provides renewed emphasis on excellence

Source: Photocopy of the original.

⁸ In his letter, president Reagan wrote: “Your prodigious gifts of scholarship and leadership have given the Lubavitcher movement powerful impetus, to the benefit of the entire nation. Through you, the spiritual enthusiasm of Chassidism reinforces Judaism's irreplaceable moral code and contributes to our inner strength. Without spiritual resources, all our material might is worth little. We must arm ourselves with the sword of the spirit. In your own words, this country must be a **spiritual** superpower.

I gladly pay tribute to the joy you have given your followers and the fine sense of pride you have instilled in them. Your work in education is impressive for the number of schools you have founded across the country, but even more impressive for infusing religious principles and civic responsibility into the lives of your disciples, young and old. Once again, this is a vital contribution to our nation, and I can only thank you...”

in education in its many facets. Indeed, your forceful declaration that, "No true education can leave out the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving," is particularly timely in this day and age. It will surely find a ready response in the hearts of all right-thinking Americans, and, hopefully, reverberate in many countries around the globe. It reflects the convictions of a world leader, the President of the USA, whom Divine Providence has elevated to head the leading superpower in the world, who is committed to making it "super" also in the realm of the "moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving."

I am glad to note that your consistent emphasis on improving the quality of education of the young and growing generation, and your most valuable support to the dissemination of the Seven Noahide Laws, so basic to the well-being of any human society worthy of its name, have already had an impact in many parts of the world, where the emissaries of our Lubavitch organization have the freedom to spread the message.

Once again, dear Mr. President, please be assured of my profound appreciation of your warm regards and good wishes, which I heartily reciprocate by invoking the Divine promise to the Patriarch Abraham, "I will bless them that bless you" (Gen. 12:3).

May G-d bless you in a generous measure to carry on and carry out the enormous responsibilities of your exalted position, in robust health, and with joy and gladness of heart.

With high esteem and
prayerful blessings,

M. Schneerson

Letter 5

Keeping Pace with Technological Advancement

Letter thanking President Reagan for his birthday wishes and Education Day proclamation; Appreciation for the President's emphasis on moral values in education; Discussion of the Sabbatical Year as a time for increased study and moral pursuits; The need for ethical standards to keep pace with technological advancement

By the Grace of G-d
Lag B'Omer, 5747
May 17, 1987
Brooklyn, N.Y.

His Excellency
President Ronald Reagan
The White House,
Washington D.C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Once again, dear Mr. President, it is a genuine pleasure to acknowledge your kind felicitations on the occasion of my recent birthday.¹

I was impressed with your meaningful Proclamation of "Education Day, USA" in connection with the Joint Resolution of the United States Congress, and I sincerely appreciate your heading the roster of signatories to the "International Scroll of Honor" affiliated with it. Its mention of "the historical tradition of ethical values and principles, which have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws, transmitted through G-d to Moses on Mount Sinai," is a clarion call vital to all mankind.

Furthermore, it is particularly gratifying that you use this occasion to bring to the attention of the Nation and of the International community the need of upgrading education in terms

of moral values, without which no true education can be considered complete.

Consistent with your often declared position, that “no true education can leave out the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving,” you, Mr. President, once again remind parents and teachers, in the opening paragraph of your Proclamation, that their sacred trust to children must include “wisdom, love, decency, moral courage and compassion, as part of everyone's education.” Indeed, where these values are lacking, education is – to use a classical phrase – “like a body without a soul.”

May I add, Mr. President, that the current year in the Jewish Calendar (5747) is a “Sabbatical Year” (Leviticus 25:1-7). One of the underlying purposes of this unique institution, which calls for rest from certain agricultural activities, is that it provides additional time which should be spent on more intensive study, and on activities dedicated to morally uplifting pursuits. This lesson has special significance in this day and age, when, largely as a result of what you rightly call incomplete education, moral and ethical standards have not kept pace with technological advancement.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you, dear Mr. President, that I deeply appreciate your personal warm sentiments and good wishes, which I heartily reciprocate in the words of our Sages,² “Whoever blesses others is blessed by G-d Himself,” the Source of All Blessings, in a generous measure.

With prayerful wishes for your and the First Lady's good health and prosperity, and

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

On August 25, the President replied to the Rebbe's letter:

Dear Rabbi Schneerson:

I'm sorry to be so late responding to your letter of May 17, but I'm now having some quiet time to catch up.

I Was pleased to receive your message and to have the benefit of your reflections on the important role moral and spiritual values must play in the realm of education. The renewed attention being paid to these questions, not only in debate among public policy makers, but in academic and intellectual circles as well, is encouraging. I believe this trend is virtually certain to continue as the American people look for ways to apply the lessons of tradition to the problems facing our educational system and so many other areas of our national life.

I appreciate your contribution to these welcome developments and all that the Lubavitch movement has done to foster the inculcation of high morals and ethical standards."

The following is an excerpt of the Rebbe's response (letter 12 Elul 5747 – published in full in *Rebbe Responsa* Issue 23):

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your very kind letter of August 25, 1987.¹⁶ Your thoughtful and warm sentiments are certainly most encouraging and stimulating.

I want you to know, dear Mr. President, that from the reports reaching me from our emissaries in most States of the Union and in many major centers and outposts in various parts of the world, it is particularly gratifying to note that your consistent, often courageous, leadership in areas of the traditional American and universal values is finding an increasingly receptive response. This is even more evident in the realm of education, as you rightly note in your letter.

Similarly, we have reason to believe that your forceful supportive stance to help upgrade the moral standards of human relationships on the basis of the so-called Seven Noahide Laws (with all their ramifications) as imperatives of a Supreme Being who monitors all human conduct, has made a great impact on the consciousness of the contemporary troubled generation of mankind...



Rebbe Responsa

The Rebbe's English letters

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