



REBBE RESPONSA

The Rebbe's English Letters

A Mikvah Can't Wait

The Rebbe's Guidance and Urgent Call
to Build Mikvaos

Featuring Three Newly Released Letters

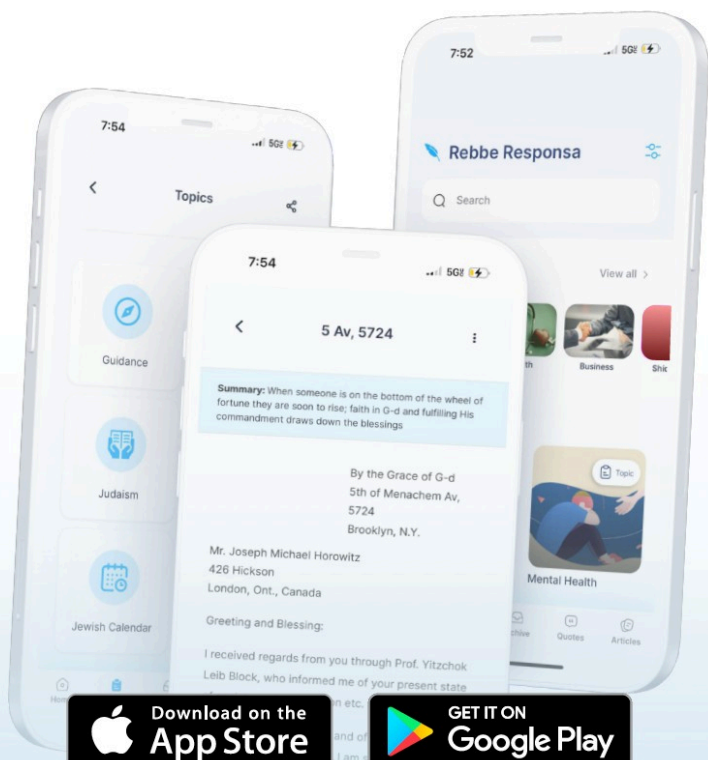
Issue 179



Rebbe Responsa

The Rebbe's English letters

Timeless guidance on
every topic and issue - at
your fingertips



ב"ה

A Word from the Publishers

We are pleased to present Issue 179 of Rebbe Responsa, a collection of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's English letters.

This week's Parsha recounts the story of the Mabul. Chassidus explains that the waters of the Flood served as a purifying Mikvah for the world, immersing it and washing away its impurity.¹ In this connection, we present a selection of the Rebbe's letters on the construction of Mikvahs.

This week's booklet also features a special newly released section dedicated to Mr. Max Schreiber, who devoted his life to building hundreds of Mikvahs. Included are three newly released letters from the Rebbe to Schreiber, together with a brief account of his close relationship with the Rebbe.

All letter titles, summaries, and footnotes were added by the publisher.

* * *

To enjoy the full collection of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's English letters, we encourage you to download the *Rebbe Responsa* app. With over 5,000 letters organized by both topic and date, the app makes finding the Rebbe's guidance and worldview on a vast array of topics simple and accessible.

May the study of these letters hasten the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days.

The Rebbe Responsa Team

Erev Shabbos Parshas Noach, 5787

¹ The forty days of rainfall also correspond to the forty *se'ah* of water required for a Mikvah. See *Torah Or*, Noach, 8d; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 4ff.

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1

Eternal Impact

Expediting the construction of a mikvah in Bangkok; the far-reaching impact of mikvah on future generations and its role in hastening the Redemption

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul,
5744. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Mayer H.A. Abraham
American Buying Co., Inc.
580 Fifth Ave., Rm. 1206
New York, N. Y. 10036

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you very much for the copy of your letter to Rabbi I. D. Groner² and of the Mikveh plan.

There is surely no need to emphasize to you at length the great importance of a Mikveh, which is one of the essential Divinely-given Mitzvot, which has an impact not only on persons observing it, but also on their children and children's children to the end of posterity. It is also a Mitzva which hastens the Geula Shleima, which is connected with

Source: Photocopy of the original.

Behind the Letter: Mr. Mayer H. A. Abraham was an Afghan Jewish gem dealer based in New York, with business interests in several countries. In 1964, he and his brother Yehuda helped finance the construction of a synagogue and Mikvah in Kabul, Afghanistan, at the Rebbe's urging.

In the late 1970s, upon learning that Mayer frequently visited Bangkok on business, the Rebbe encouraged him to establish a Mikvah there as well. Despite repeated delays and challenges, the Rebbe continued to inquire about its progress and urge its completion every time they met. (See *The Edifice* (Hassidic Archives, 2019), p. 134.) In 5744, Abraham submitted building plans, prompting the present letter.

² Rabbi Yitchok Dovid Groner, the Rebbe's emissary to Melbourne, Australia. He would often stop in various countries at the Rebbe's behest while traveling to him in New York.

purity, as it is written, “I shall sprinkle upon you pure water, and you shall be pure” (Ezek. 36:25).³

There remains only to mention that it came in proximity to the Shabbat on which the month of Elul is blessed, the month of Divine Grace and Mercy, leading to the coming happy New Year.⁴

Wishing you, and through you all who are participating in the great endeavor, a truly good and sweet year, both materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

P.S. It so happens that Rabbi Groner is visiting here at this time. As I heard from him, he is going to do everything possible to expedite the realization of this great project.

³ See also English letter dated [12 Tishrei, 5743](#); *Likkut Maanos Kodesh* 5744, no. 327.

⁴ The Bangkok Mikvah was ultimately completed in 1990. For an additional account of the Rebbe's involvement in its construction, see *Living Torah*, Program 1032 (available on Jem.tv/video-player?clip=1395713957).

2

Not Even a Day's Delay

The urgency of building a mikvah without delaying even a single day; financial setbacks are all the more reason to proceed with sponsorship

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Chag Hassukos, 5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Joseph Margulius
170 McAdam Avenue
Winnipeg, Man.

Sholom uBrocho:

I just received your letter of 6 Tishrei, and hasten to reply to it despite the pressures of these days.

I refer particularly to your opening remarks regarding the Mikveh and Chabad House — I put it in this order advisedly. I regret very much to note that these objectives have not been achieved yet, and, it seems, not even initiated as yet.

It is difficult to dwell on a painful situation, especially in light of what the Talmud says about a delay of such a vital need even for *one* day (עירובין סג, ב). Nor is it necessary to elaborate on it to you.

I would like, however, to add that the explanation you mention, namely financial setbacks, is in itself a further reason for fulfilling the commitment regarding the Mikveh, as well as the Chabad House, all the sooner. For, as is well known, Tzedoko is a “segula” for preventing just this kind of financial reverses, and, indeed, for bringing increased

Source: Photocopy of original.

Mr. Joseph Margulius was a Winnipeg businessman and Jewish communal activist. A supporter of Lubavitch, he contributed to the Central Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva and Chabad activities in Winnipeg. For an additional letter addressed to Margulius, see English letter dated 14 Tammuz, 5735, on the Rebbe Responsa app.

Behind the Letter: In 5736, Margulius submitted plans for the Chabad House and Mikvah in Winnipeg. In a handwritten response, the Rebbe expressed his satisfaction and offered practical guidance regarding the building's design and future expansion (Teshurah, Altein-Gerlitzky, 16 Sivan 5776, p. 12).

affluence; especially Tzedoko that is for the benefit of many, and, even more so, for the benefit of future generations as well, as in the case of Mikveh and Taharas Hamishpocho. Thus, even if it were necessary to borrow money for such a purpose, it should have been done *cheerfully*, though I hope to G-d that there is no need for a loan.

May G-d grant that you will take up this matter with the joy and gladness of heart it deserves, and that very soon indeed the Mikveh and Chabad House will be completed and put into operation, and with such success that it will be said, "the place is too small."⁵

Thank you for the good news about your daughter and granddaughter, and may you have good news to report about all the matters mentioned in your letter, and with joy gladness of heart, as above.

Wishing you and all yours a Happy Yom-Tov,

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

⁵ The Mikvah was completed the following year.

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Chag Hassukos, 5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Joseph Margulius
170 McAdam Avenue
Winnipeg, Man.

Sholom uBrocho:

I just received your letter of 6 Tishrei, and hasten to reply to it despite the pressures of these days.

I refer particularly to your opening remarks regarding the Mikveh and Chabad House - I put it in this order advisedly. I regret very much to note that these objectives have not been achieved yet, and, it seems, not even initiated as yet.

It is difficult to dwell on a painful situation, especially in light of what the Talmud says about a delay of such a vital need even for one day. Nor is it necessary to elaborate on it to you.

(ע'ר ו'ג)

I would like, however, to add that the explanation you mention, namely financial setbacks, is in itself a further reason for fulfilling the commitment regarding the Mikveh, as well as the Chabad House, all the sooner. For, as is well known, Tzedoko is a "segula" for preventing just this kind of financial reverses, and, indeed, for bringing increased affluence; especially Tzedoko that is for the benefit of many, and, even more so, for the benefit of future generations as well, as in the case of Mikveh and Taharas Hamishpocho. Thus, even if it were necessary to borrow money for such a purpose, it should have been done cheerfully, though I hope to G-d that there is no need for a loan.

May G-d grant that you will take up this matter with the joy and gladness of heart it deserves, and that very soon indeed the Mikveh and Chabad House will be completed and put into operation, and with such success that it will be said, "the place is too small."

Thank you for the good news about your daughter and granddaughter, and may you have good news to report about all the matters mentioned in your letter, and with joy gladness of heart, as above.

Wishing you and all yours a Happy Yom-Tov,

With esteem and blessings

M. Schneerson

3

Before a Synagogue

Why building a mikvah takes precedence over a synagogue; the Divine command itself assures that its construction is within the community's reach

By the Grace of G-d
26th of Sivan, 5742
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. [Ezra A. Toeg]
Philippines

Greeting and Blessing:

Many thanks for your letter. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in keeping me posted on the developments in connection with the new Shul and, what is no less important, the construction of the Mikveh.

There is surely no need to point out to you the particular importance of the Mikveh, which has a priority even over a Shul. For, insofar as a Shul is concerned, Jews can Daven in congregation even in

Published: *The Letter & The Spirit*, vol. 3, p. 458

Note: Letters printed in *The Letter and the Spirit* are drawn from the archives of Rabbi Nissan Mindel, the Rebbe's secretary who was entrusted with transcribing the Rebbe's orally dictated letters. The archive includes secretarial copies, some of which may not contain the Rebbe's final edits, as well as drafts and unsent letters.

Behind the Letter: In the late 1970s, Rabbi Berel Levy, a Lubavitcher Chossid and director of the OK Kashrus organization, traveled to Manila, the capital of the Philippines, to certify local food production. Before his departure, he informed the Rebbe of his trip, and the Rebbe asked that he speak at the local Shul while there, giving him \$180 as his participation.

In Manila, Rabbi Levy met Mr. Ezra Toeg, a local Iraqi Jew who served as the community's unofficial leader, leading services and reading from the Torah. When Mr. Toeg brought Rabbi Levy to Shul on Shabbos, Rabbi Levy saw that it did not have a Mechitza. After speaking with the congregation, they decided to erect one, using the Rebbe's contribution toward its purchase. At Rabbi Levy's urging, the community later agreed to build a Mikvah as well. For another English letter concerning the Mikvah, addressed to Mr. Toeg, see letter dated 28 Elul, 5741, on the Rebbe Responsa app.

a private home, whereas a Mikveh is absolutely essential, and one can simply not overestimate its importance.

Since our Torah tells us, and it is also a matter of common sense, that Hashem does not request anything that is beyond human capacity, it is certain that the requirements of the Torah and Mitzvot in general, and of a Mikveh in particular, are certainly within the capacity of a Jewish community. Thus, in the final analysis, it is basically a matter of will and determination, and there is the assurance⁶ that when a Jew is determined to do something good, he receives aid from On High and succeeds even better than expected. I am looking forward to continued good news in all above, and may G-d grant that it should be with the utmost hatzlocho.

With blessing,

⁶ See *Shabbos* 104b; *Yoma* 38b.

4

It Must Be Local

The need to establish a local mikvah, even when another exists within traveling distance, to remove obstacles to observance; the impact of Taharas Hamishpacha on the health of children and parents

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Adar II, 5741
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rabbi Yeruchum Rosen
c/o Carmel College
Mongewell Park
Wallingford Oxfordshire OX10 8BT
Berkshire, England

Greeting and Blessing:

After not hearing from you for some time, I was pleased to receive your letter of the 16th of March, and to read the good news about the possibility of building⁷ a new Mikveh at Carmel.*

* Original footnote of the Rebbe: מצו"ב השתתפות סמלית בהוצאות [translation: Enclosed is a symbolic participation in the expenses].

Source: Photocopy of the original.

Rabbi Yeruchum (Jeremy) Rosen (b. 5702/1942) is a British rabbi, author, and lecturer. His parents, Rabbi Dr. Kopul and Mrs. Beila Rosen, founded Carmel College (1948–1997), a Jewish boarding school in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, England. In 5731 (1971), following the resignation of the school's Headmaster, the Rebbe wrote to Mrs. Rosen suggesting that her son be considered for the position. Rabbi Rosen was subsequently appointed Headmaster and worked to strengthen the school's religious standards. See letter dated 8 Teves, 5731.

⁷ In a private audience with the Rebbe following his appointment, Rabbi Rosen described the difficulties he faced in strengthening the school's religious character, including the fact that most of its teachers were not religiously observant. The Rebbe advised him to separate the boys and girls, as the school had become coeducational after his father's passing, and to build a Mikvah on the premises to attract religious Jewish teachers. The present letter, written approximately ten years later, concerns his efforts to establish the Mikvah. See Rabbi Rosen's interview, "[The Young Headmaster](#)," *Here's My Story* (JEM), Ki Savo, 5776.

I appreciate of course, the difficulties connected with this undertaking. But, on the other hand, considering what this means in terms of the purity of Jewish family life and the purity of the Jewish children, and future progeny — of what consideration can any difficulty be! Some may argue that there is no need for a Mikveh there, since one is available elsewhere within travelling range. But there is no need to point to the prayer we all say at the *beginning* of the Morning Prayer, “Bring us not to temptation,” and having a Mikveh on the spot will preclude the tempting excuse to skip the Mikveh occasionally because of the problem of transportation, etc.

The point that should be underlined is that a Mikveh is a vital necessity to ensure the well-being of children, both physically and spiritually. Parents will regard nothing as too difficult, if it concerned the well-being of their children. Even in these confused times, when some parents may use contraception and the like, it nevertheless is explained in our Torah, *Toras Emes*, that this too has a tremendous impact on the parents and on Jewish family life. There is no need to elaborate on this painful subject, nor is it necessary to do so here.

I would only add that in such a matter, time is of the essence, as is obvious, even for the sake of saving one Jewish family for the cause of Taharas Hamishpocho. May G-d grant you Hatzlocho in this important endeavor, and it will also bring you an additional measure of consolation in your recent loss.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report very soon about having actually started to build the Mikveh and that it is progressing satisfactorily and will soon be completed on the highest level of Kashrus and Hiddur, including also external Hiddur, which is especially important in our time in this case.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

אייסערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Adar II, 5741
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rabbi Yeruchum Rosen
c/o Carmel College
Mongewell Park
Wallingford Oxfordshire OX10 8BT
Berkshire, England

Greeting and Blessing:

After not hearing from you for some time, I was pleased to receive your letter of the 16th of March, and to read the good news about the possibility of building a new Mikveh at Carmel.

I appreciate, of course, the difficulties connected with this undertaking. But, on the other hand, considering what this means in terms of the purity of Jewish family life and the purity of the Jewish children, and future progeny - of what consideration can any difficulty be! Some may argue that there is no need for a Mikveh there, since one is available elsewhere within travelling range. But there is no need to point to the prayer we all say at the beginning of the Morning Prayer, "Bring us not to temptation," and having a Mikveh on the spot will preclude the tempting excuse to skip the Mikveh occasionally because of the problem of transportation, etc.

The point that should be underlined is that a Mikveh is a vital necessity to ensure the well-being of children, both physically and spiritually. Parents will regard nothing as too difficult, if it concerned the well-being of their children. Even in these confused times, when some parents may use contraception and the like, it nevertheless is explained in our Torah, Toras Emes, that this too has a tremendous impact on the parents and on Jewish family life. There is no need to elaborate on this painful subject, nor is it necessary to do so here.

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May G-d grant that you should have good news to report very soon about having actually started to build the Mikveh and that it is progressing satisfactorily and will soon be completed on the highest level of Kashrus and Hiddur, including also external Hiddur, which is especially important in this case.

With blessing

M. Schneerson

our time in

ה'תש"א
אדר ב' כ"ה
ל' אדר ב' תש"א

5

Beauty Matters

The importance of beautifying a mikvah and its adjoining rooms to encourage observance and remove excuses

[5730]

Mr. ...
Manchester, England

Greeting and Blessing:

After the long interval, I was pleased to receive your recent letter.

Thank you very much for the good news in regard to the progress of the Mikvah. May G-d grant that all things advance at an increased tempo, until completion, with all the hiddurim. I refer to hiddurim in the external aspects as well, something of which my father-in-law, of saintly memory, often emphasized the need, especially in regard to a Mikvah, where the work of beautification should extend to all the adjoining rooms. For there are individuals for whom external beauty and comfort are important factors in the observance of the Mitzvah. And whether they are right or wrong, it is a fact that has to be reckoned with, and nobody should be provided with an excuse to neglect such a vital Mitzvah. Needless to say, no external hiddurim should be introduced at the expense of essential hiddurim, but surely both can be achieved...

* * *

– Newly Released –

“Mikvah Max”

Mr. Elimelech Mordechai (Max) Schreiber (c. 5664-5739/c. 1904-1979) was an Orthodox Jewish businessman and philanthropist who dedicated his life to building Mikvahs.⁸ Investing his heart, soul, and financial resources in the cause, he helped facilitate the construction of over 350 Mikvahs, primarily in Eretz Yisrael.

Schreiber, known affectionately as “Mikvah Max,” served as chairman of the American Committee for Taharas HaMishpacha in Israel, a fundraising affiliate of the *Merkaz HaArtzi Lema’an Taharas HaMishpacha*. In addition to enlisting donors, he contributed substantial sums of his own money and frequently traveled to Eretz Yisrael to personally oversee the projects.

At a time when Mikvah received little attention in public discourse, Schreiber often struggled to secure contributions and support, even from religious individuals and organizations. Despite his tireless efforts, he sometimes felt that few others shared his sense of urgency and commitment to the cause.

In the Rebbe, however, Schreiber found an enthusiastic ally and an invaluable source of encouragement. Schreiber first met the Rebbe in 1960 and developed a close relationship that continued through extensive correspondence over nearly two decades. For Schreiber, the Rebbe’s support was an almost singular source of *chizuk*, giving him the encouragement and motivation to persevere.

The Rebbe took a personal interest in Schreiber’s work, contributing a symbolic \$18 toward each new mikvah. He regularly requested updates on the projects and would often inquire whether his contributions toward the new Mikvahs were up to date.

The Rebbe also offered guidance on fundraising and construction priorities. In 5725 (1965), he provided Schreiber’s organization with a list of approximately 2,500 Lubavitcher Chassidim and supporters in the

⁸ In the Rebbe’s words, it was his “principal concern in life” (23 Shevat, 5722), “favorite activity” (3 Cheshvan, 5734), and a cause for which he was “moser nefesh” (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 31, p. 131 – emphasis in the original).

United States to approach for contributions. On one occasion, the Rebbe even financed the entire cost of a mikvah.

Schreiber once wrote: “If I only had 25 Rabbis in the U.S.A. like the Lubavitcher Rebbi, my problem of Mikvahs in Eretz Israel would be answered.”

To garner support for his work, Schreiber would share copies of letters he received from the Rebbe with Jewish activists and prospective donors. As a result, copies of these letters were preserved in various archives. To date, more than a dozen letters from the Rebbe to Schreiber have been discovered and published.

In preparing this week’s issue, we reached out to Max Schreiber’s family, who graciously shared valuable information, personal recollections, and additional letters from the Rebbe. We are especially grateful to his son-in-law, Mr. Zane Alpert, and granddaughter, Mrs. Hindee Rosner, for their time and generous assistance.

The brief account above can hardly do justice to Schreiber’s remarkable life and work, or to the depth of his relationship with the Rebbe. We hope, *b’ezeras Hashem*, to publish a more comprehensive account of his life, his relationship with the Rebbe, and their correspondence. For now, due to space limitations and time constraints, we are presenting three newly released letters in this issue, with additional letters to follow.⁹



⁹ Additional English letters addressed to Schreiber, available on the Rebbe Responsa app, are dated: 29 Tishrei 5722; 21 Adar I 5722; 22 Sivan 5725; 19 Adar II 5727; 13 Menachem Av 5730; 18 Menachem Av 5731; the days of Selichos 5731; 25 Tishrei 5732; 8 Teves 5732; 3 Cheshvan 5734; 21 Iyar 5734; Chanukah 5736; and 12 Shevat 5737.

Among the letters scheduled for publication in the coming days are those dated Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5721; 17 Kislev 5721; 4 Shevat 5723; Chanukah 5724; and 15 Menachem Av 5728, with many more to follow, *b’ezeras Hashem*.

For additional correspondence between the Rebbe and Schreiber published in Hebrew translation, see *Kfar Chabad*, issue 1404 (8 Shevat 5734); *Hiskashrus*, issues 1213 (21 Adar I 5725; Erev Sukkos 5737) and 1247 (11 Nissan 5721). Issue 1213 also reproduces an undated excerpt from the Rebbe’s correspondence.

6

A Personal Share

*The Rebbe's personally participate in the construction of new Mikvahs in
Eretz Yisrael*

By the Grace of G-d
17th of Kislev, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. M. Schreiber
55 Wilbur Avenue
Newark 12, N. J.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive your letter of November 23rd, with the enclosures, concerning the good news of the building of an additional Mikvah in the Holy Land.

In accordance with the text in Tillim,¹⁰ "I am a companion of all who fear Thee and of those who observe Thy commandments," I want, if I may, to participate in a personal way in this Mitzvah, and enclose my check as my symbolic participation.

I trust you know of the history and significance of the illustrious day of Yud Tes Kislev. In any case, I am sending you the brochure which we published in this connection, which I trust you will find of timely interest and inspiration.¹¹

Wishing you success in your work for this holy cause of increasing purity and holiness in the Holy Land — may it soon be rebuilt through our righteous Moshiach.

Wishing you a happy and inspiring Yud Tes Kislev and Chanukah,

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

Source: Photocopy of the original.

¹⁰ 119:63.

¹¹ Yud-Teth Kislev: *The Story of the Universally Famous Chasidic Festival of the 19th Day of Kislev* (Kehot, 1941).

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
17th of Kislev, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. M. Schreiber
55 Wilbur Avenue
Newark 12, N. J.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive your letter of November 23rd, with the enclosures, concerning the good news of the building of an additional Mikvah in the Holy Land.

In accordance with the text in Tilling, "I am a companion of all who fear Thee and of those who observe Thy commandments," I want, if I may, to participate in a personal way in this Mitzvah, and enclose my check as my symbolic participation.

I trust you know of the history and significance of the illustrious day of Yud Tes Kislev. In any case, I am sending you the brochure which we published in this connection, which I trust you will find of timely interest and inspiration.

Wishing you success in your work for this holy cause of increasing purity and holiness in the Holy Land - may it soon be rebuilt through our righteous Moshiach.

Wishing you a happy and inspiring Yud Tes Kislev and Chanukah,

With blessing, *m. Schneerson*

*Excerpts of the Rebbe's letters to Mr. Max Schreiber
regarding his personal contributions:*

I was pleased to read in your letter about the establishment of two new Mikvahs, the 52nd and 53rd — may their numbers grow. As before, I once again, and Bli Neder, wish to associate myself with a symbolic contribution of Chai towards each of these new additions.

Chanukah, 5724

I do not know if I am behind my participation in one or more Mikvahs. Consequently, I am enclosing a check representing my participation in two Mikvahs, and if I owe more, *please* let me know.

15th of Menachem Av, 5728

I am somewhat suspicious about your not mentioning the addition of a new Mikvah in the Holy Land, as you always inform me. Perhaps you do not want to remind me about my participation — Bli-Neder — though I explicitly asked you to do so. At any rate, I am enclosing my symbolic participation of twice Chai, so that if in the interim two new Mikvahs have been added, I will not be in arrears; otherwise, this will be an advance for the two new Mikvahs in the future.

13th of Menachem Av, 5730

As usual, I take this opportunity of asking you to let me know where I stand in regard to my symbolic participation, since it is difficult for me to keep track of it. Surely this is no matter for etiquette; on the contrary, the proper manner is for one Jew to be mezake another all the sooner. At any rate, a check is enclosed, and you will surely let me know if I am in arrears.

3rd of Cheshvan, 5734

As usual, I hope to receive from you definite advice as to my status in regard to my symbolic participation in each new Mikvah. At any rate, I am enclosing a check on account of several, and if I am still in arrears, you will surely let me know.

21st of Iyar, 5734

7

Mikvah in Need

An appeal to help complete a long delayed Mikvah in East Flatbush; every day is of essence

By the Grace of G-d
23rd of Shevat, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Elimelech Mordechai Schreiber
55 Wilbur Avenue
Newark, N.J.

Sholom uBrocho:

Last night I was visited by representatives of the Rabbinical Board of East Flatbush to discuss the situation of the Mikvah in that section. The building of the Mikvah had been started a long time ago, but for lack of funds only the walls and roof have been completed so far, and they are in need of a substantial sum of money to complete the project.¹²

I need not tell you how difficult it is, unfortunately, to raise money for a Mikvah. Your own experience, as well as mine, leave no doubt as to the prospects of raising a substantial sum for Taharas Hamishpocho expeditiously.

I am writing to you, since you have made Taharas Hamishpocho your principal concern in life, which is, of course, to your eternal Zechus. I know that your main concern is for Eretz Yisroel, but I think you will agree that where a whole neighborhood is concerned closer to home, a neighborhood where many young Jewish couples live and attracts new couples, deserves special consideration. I trust therefore that you will make an exception in this case and come to their assistance with a substantial contribution from your Foundation.

If, as I hope, you will accept in principle the above, I leave it to your decision whether you wish me to sit as go-between, that is to say, to inform me of your favorable acceptance of the idea, so that I can pass

¹² Plans for constructing the Mikvah first began in 5718 (see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 17, letter 6243). Building resumed around Chanukah of 5722 (see *ibid.*, vol. 22, letter 8286).

it on to the Rabbinical Board of East Flatbush with a view to their getting in touch with you to discuss the matter further; or, if you prefer it, you may indicate your interest direct to them, through their Treasurer, Rabbi Shalom Zvi Barenholtz (202 E. 37th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.). As for as I am concerned, I shall be only too happy to act as go-between to bring you together, so that a kosher Mikvah may be installed without delay. For, as I told the visiting delegation, in the case of any Mitzvah, especially such as a Mikvah, every *day* is of the essence. In view of this, I emphasized the need to install, without delay, a kosher Mikvah for actual use, as the first priority under the project.

I trust that you will forgive me for “imposing” on you a problem of Mikvah in the USA, but after all, the Jewish people are one organism, and strengthening any limb or organ of the body contributes to the wellbeing of the whole body.

Because of the importance of the time element, as mentioned above, I am sending this letter Special Delivery.

With blessing

M. Schneerson

2'

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8

A Call Must Be Answered

*Persevering in mikvah activism despite repeated lack of cooperation;
supporting worthy causes beyond one's own priorities; the Rebbe's
practice of responding positively to every request for help*

By the Grace of G-d
2nd of Adar I, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Elimelech Mordechai Schreiber
55 Wilbur Avenue
Newark 12, New Jersey

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your special delivery letter and your previous correspondence, including enclosures, copies from letters received by you, etc.

Unfortunately I can well appreciate your painful disappointment at the lack of response on the part of religious organizations and individuals to your appeals for funds for Mikvahs in the Holy Land. I believe we discussed this problem in the past. Needless to say, you do not have to emphasize to me that you are telling me the honest truth, for from my own painful experience I know how disappointing is sometimes the response not only to the cause of Mikvah but to other vital causes such as Torah education and the like. However, there is one consolation, which also offers a strong hope, that inasmuch as every Jew has a particular affinity with some part of the Torah and Mitzvoth, and inasmuch as one Mitzvah brings another Mitzvah in its train,¹³ it is to be hoped that eventually these people will respond. We also know the teaching of our Sages regarding the Commandment to admonish — “up to one hundred times”.¹⁴ This is not only a figure of speech, but it contains also the lesson that if ninety-nine times have failed, it is still necessary to try the hundredth time to attain success.

Source: Photocopy of the original.

¹³ Avos 4:2.

¹⁴ Bava Metzia 31a.

I do not find a clear answer to my special delivery letter to you regarding the situation in East Flatbush. I only find the following statement in your letter:

“Now they are asking me to take funds and send it to them rather than send it to Eretz Israel for Mikvahs.”

Not finding among the enclosures any letter that might have a bearing on this statement, I assume that these words refer to my letter to you requesting help for the Mikvah in East Flatbush. I believe that I pointed out in my previous letter that it is not a case where the delegation from East Flatbush requested me to approach you, for actually they did not even know about your Foundation. It was completely my own idea to approach you in behalf of the East Flatbush Mikvah.

As I am not a diplomat I will write to you quite frankly and candidly, for which I trust you will forgive me. If the above quoted lines are actually intended as a reply to my letter to you, I must say that I am very much disappointed. After all you, yourself, have suffered from the fact that your appeals to religious persons and organizations in behalf of the cause of Taharas Hamishpocho in Eretz Yisroel fall on apparently deaf ears, [being that?] religious people are in some way connected with some other good cause. Therefore, one might have expected that you, yourself, would not have a trace of such an attitude, even if the appeal to you were not in the area of Taharas Hamishpocho, much less in this area.

As for the matter itself, this is not merely a question of priority, but, as our Sages expressed it in their own way, one should not give all the contributions to one “Kohen.”¹⁵ The application of this principle surely needs no further elaboration.

Now let me clarify my own position in regard to this matter. Whenever I approach anyone with any kind of request, I try it on myself first, to the extent that this is possible, namely, what would be my own reaction to such a request. If I feel that it would be positive, then I go ahead with it. This is also what happened when I wrote my last special delivery letter to you.

A further point, which is not intended in the way of putting pressure on you, but only to further clarify my position — all the more so, since

¹⁵ Eiruvin 63a; see Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, 257:9.

I do not think that pressure is necessary in your case, for as soon as you will recognize the merit of the case you will do what you can even without external pressure. I refer to a principle in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov which was further expanded by his follower and successor, the Old Rebbe, and which is in fact a basic principle of our Faith, except that Chasidus has given it especial emphasis. It is that everything happens by Divine Providence which extends to everyone and everything to the minutest detail. Certainly when the matter concerns a Jew, and when the matter is directly related to any part of the Torah and Mitzvoth, which are the ultimate purpose of the creation of Man. In view of the above, whenever anyone approaches me for any kind of help, I try my best, regardless of the strained resources, both personal as well as of any fund at my disposal, to respond with some help; if the request is for financial help; or to give any other personal assistance if the request is in some other area, if it is at all kosher from the Torah viewpoint. For inasmuch as the request came to me, I consider it Providential and feel that I must respond in some positive way, however limited it may be, because of circumstances. This is what happened also in the case of the Mikvah of East Flatbush when the delegation came to me for advice and help. Needless to say, I am fully aware, as are also the members of the delegation, that in East Flatbush there are a number of well-to-do Balei-batim. I am also fully aware of the position of my personal and public resources, as well as the position of your Foundation. Nevertheless, in the light of what I have said earlier, I felt that I dare not ignore the request of the East Flatbush delegation who came to me. This is why I turned to you and, as above, I leave it to you to decide in the matter as you may deem fit.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

Schreiber subsequently sent the Rebbe a \$500 check for the Mikvah. In a letter addressed to him dated 21 Adar I 5722, the Rebbe wrote:

“Thank you very much for your letter of February the 13th with the enclosure, which was turned over to its destination, namely the Committee of Rabbis working for the East Flatbush Mikvah. No doubt you will receive an acknowledgment direct from them.

“May G-d grant that for many years to come, and with peace of mind and through joy, you will continue your good work to strengthen Yiddishkeit in general and Taharas Hamishpocho especially, in a growing measure.

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
NY 24250

חנות מנוול שווארטמאן
ליובאוויטש
אדערסון 770
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
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"I think you will be glad to know that I have a prospect to receive an additional donation from another source for the same cause, and that it is in some way related to your effort, so that the merit of it will also stand you in good stead.

In Kislev of 5723 the Mikvah was near completion (see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 22, letter 8550).

Dedicated
in honor of the wedding of

Moshe & Manya Sheinberger

1 Cheshvan, 5787

יה"ר שיבנו בית בישראל בנין עדי עד
על יסודי התורה והמצוה כפי שהם מוארים
במאור שבתורה זוהי תורת החסידות

Dedicated in merit of
the complete and speedy recovery of

Sarah Bracha bas **Chaya Mushka**

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אימתי קאתי מר לכשיפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה

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Editor@RebbeResponsa.com | +1 (347) 788 1304