

The Rebbe and President Reagan

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The Rebbe and President Ronald Reagan

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory and President Ronald Reagan enjoyed a deep relationship for many years.

Mr. Reagan displayed a profound respect toward the Rebbe and his teachings. The President was an early and enthusiastic adherent of the Rebbe's call to make all people aware of the Seven Universal Laws, based on the belief in a Supreme Being. The Rebbe's call for a moment of silence in the public schools, and his persistent belief that America must export to the world faith-based moral values, were among the themes that found a welcoming ear in President Reagan.

Behind the scenes the President also acted upon the Rebbe's specific requests to help Israel and Soviet Jews in ways that are still coming to light.

Below we bring you little windows into the relationship; we hope that the additional documents, videotapes and anecdotes come to light soon.

Our thanks to Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, national director of American Friends of Lubavitch and the Rebbe's ambassador to the White House, for supplying us with these priceless documents so that we may share them with the public.

A delegation of Chabad Rabbis make a presentation to the President

National Day of Reflection: April 4, 1982

National Day of Reflection

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Amid the distractions and concerns of our daily existence, it is appropriate that Americans pause to reflect upon the ancient ethical principles and moral values which are the foundation of our character as a nation.

We seek, and steadfastly pursue, the benefits of education. But education must be more than factual enlightenment-it must enrich the character as well as the mind.

One shining example for people of all faiths of what education ought to be is that provided by the Lubavitch movement, headed by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, a worldwide spiritual leader who will celebrate his 80th birthday on April 4, 1982. The Lubavitcher Rebbe's work stands as a reminder that knowledge is an unworthy goal unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual wisdom and understanding. He has provided a vivid example of the eternal validity of the Seven Noahide Laws, a moral code for all of us regardless of religious faith. May he go from strength to strength.

In recognition of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's 80th birthday, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled have issued House Joint Resolution 447 to set aside April 4, 1982, as a "National Day of Reflection."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 4, 1982, as National Day of Reflection.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 3rd day

of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

Ronald Reagan

April 2, 1982
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1982

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.

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.

God bless you today and always.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

April 18, 1982

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d

25th of Nissan, 5742

Brooklyn, N. Y.

President Ronald Reagan

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, 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 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

President Ronald Reagan signs the proclamation for "Education Day U.S.A." honoring the Rebbe's birthday

November 23, 1982

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 23, 1982

Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a special pleasure for me to greet you and your distinguished colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitcher and to have our photograph taken together. I want

to thank you for the inscribed copy of Letters by the Lubavitcher Rebbe and assure you of my deep appreciation for the friendship and goodwill that prompted your giving me this handsomely bound collection of the wise counsel of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson. It certainly will be a meaningful addition to my library.

With my best wishes to you and everyone who joined in this kind gesture,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Following the signing of the proclamation of "Education Day U.S.A.," President Ronald Reagan presents the pen he used to sign the proclamation to Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, National Director of American Friends of Lubavitch and the Rebbe's ambassador to the White House.

National Scroll of Honor: Education Day – USA, March 25, 1983
National Scroll of Honor

Presented by the president and the Congress of the United States of America in tribute to the vision and spiritual world leadership provided by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

on the occasion of his reaching the Eightieth Year

Whereas, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, has reached the eightieth year of his life which is devoted to the service of world Jewry and humanity in general; and

Whereas, his venerated vision, wisdom and leadership have contributed greatly to the promotion of education and the betterment of mankind ; and

Whereas, the President and both houses of Congress of the United States of America have accordingly recognized his

accomplishments by proclaiming "Education day- U.S.A." and "National Day of Reflection" on his birthday; and

Whereas, the Lubavitcher movement, through its scores of educational centers in this country and abroad, dedicates itself to preserve, protect and foster universal values that all free men hold dear; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, on the occasion of his birthday, March 25, 1983 corresponding to the 11th of Nissan 5743, we the undersigned do present the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson the National Scroll of Honor recognizing his brilliant achievements and wishing him health, long life and many more years of leadership to crown his celebrated career:

Ronald Reagan

The President of the United States

Above and below: President Ronald Reagan meets with Chabad representatives and signs the National Scroll of Honor on the occasion of the Rebbe's birthday

February 22, 1985

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 12, 1985

Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a pleasure to greet you and your colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitcher when you came to the White House on the eve of Hanukkah 1984. You were most kind to present me with the beautiful silver menorah and I truly appreciate the friendship that prompted your symbolic remembrance. May the light of the menorah always be a source of strength and inspiration to the Jewish people and to all mankind.

With my heartfelt best wishes to you and everyone who joined in this special gesture of friendship,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Federal Register: April 4, 1985
Proclamation 5317 of April 4, 1985

Education Day, U.S.A., 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In order to achieve its highest goals, education must be more than just a training in facts and figures, or even in basic skills, as important as they are. It must also include instruction in the deepest ethical values of our civilization.

Very few Americans have done more to promote these ethical values as the basis of civilization than Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement. The word "Lubavitch" comes from the name of a Russian city and means city of love. That is very appropriate because, of all the ethical values which inform our civilization, none is more important than love-love of wisdom, love of our fellowman, and love of our Creator.

These are the values which Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson exemplifies. And they are the values, with their roots in the Seven Noahide Laws, which have guided the Lubavitch movement throughout its history. They are the essence of education at its best, and we should be certain that we pass on this precious heritage to all young Americans.

In recognition of Rabbi Schneerson's contributions and in honor of his 83rd birthday, which falls this year on April 2, the Congress, by House joint Resolution 186, has designated

April 2, 1985, as "Education Day, U.S.A." and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States, of America, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 2, 1985, as Education Day, U.S.A., and I call upon the people of the United States, and in particular our teachers and other educational leaders, to observe that day with 'appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth. .

Ronald Reagan

Education Day, U.S.A., 1986

April 19, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From earliest colonial days, Americans have always known that education is the golden key that opens the door to achievement and progress. This Administration has placed renewed emphasis on excellence in education, and already the results are encouraging. By setting high standards we challenge the young to stretch their mental muscles and strive to achieve the best that is in them. Such an education succeeds because it makes learning an adventure.

Education is like a diamond with many facets: it includes the basic mastery of numbers and letters that give us access to the treasury of human knowledge, accumulated and refined through the ages; it includes technical and vocational training as well as instruction in science, higher

mathematics, and humane letters. But no true education can leave out the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving. Only education that addresses this dimension can lead to that blend of compassion, humility, and understanding that is summed up in one word: wisdom.

“Happy the man,” Scripture tells us, “who finds wisdom. ... Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who come to possess her.”

The Congress has sought to call attention to these durable values by adopting resolutions that pay tribute to the example of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a man who has dedicated his life to the search for wisdom and to guiding others along its pathways. He exemplifies the rich tradition of the Seven Noahide Laws, which have been the lodestar of the Lubavitch movement from its inception.

In recognition of Rabbi Schneerson’s noble achievements and in celebration of his 84th birthday, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 582, has designated April 20 as “Education Day, U.S.A.” and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation in observance of this event.

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, April 20, 1986, as Education Day, U.S.A., and I call upon the people of the United States, and in particular our teachers and other educational leaders, to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan

The President is presented with a silver Menorah in honor of

the holiday of Chanukah

February 3, 1986

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 3, 1986 Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a pleasure greeting you and your fellow rabbis when you came to the White House, prior to the lighting of the National Menorah. I truly valued accepting the menorah from you on the occasion of the observance of Hanukkah, and the support of the Orthodox Jewish community means more than I can say. Your symbolic gift is a treasured remembrance of friendship from the American Friends of Lubavitch.

Nancy joins me in sending you and the members of your organization our warm best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Lag B'Omer, 5747, May 17, 1987

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

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.

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."

With the summer recess approaching, one cannot help wondering how many juveniles could be encouraged to use their free time productively, rather than getting into mischief – if they were mindful of – to quote your words – a Supreme Being and a Law higher than man's.

I take this opportunity of again acknowledging very gratefully your kind sentiments and good wishes.

With utmost esteem and blessing,

Cordially

M Schneerson

August 25, 1987

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Santa Barbara

August 25, 1987

Dear Rabbi Schneerson:

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

I was very 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 debates 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 contributions to these welcome developments and all that the Lubavitch movement has done to foster the inculcation of high moral and ethical standards.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

September 6, 1987

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d

12th of Elul, 5747

Sept. 6, 1987

Brooklyn, N.Y.

His Excellency

President Ronald Reagan

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your very kind letter of August 25, 1987. 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.

I consider it particularly relevant to mention the above at this time, as we approach Rosh Hashanah (lit. the "head" of the year) in our Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah, as you surely know, is the anniversary of the creation of man, and thus also of the "Coronation" of the Creator as "King of the Universe." This Day is, therefore, a most auspicious occasion in Jewish tradition, the day when the Supreme King of Kings bestows His blessings on humankind, nations as well as individuals, graciously and generously.

In light of the above, your lasting contribution, through word and deed, to the advancement of all inhabitants in this blessed land and of humanity at large, will surely stand you in good stead for a goodly measure of Divine blessings.

Including, especially, the blessing of vigorous good health to continue from strength to strength in all your good endeavors.

With esteem and prayerful blessings

M. Schneerson

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, "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

February 18, 1988
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d
30 Shevat, 5748
February 18, 1988
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

Dear Mr. President

I deeply appreciate your kind and warm words of sympathy.

"Words emanating from the heart, enter the heart," the Sages say. I want you and Mrs. Reagan to know that they brought me comfort and solace,

We are, indeed, consoled by the abiding thought that the dear departed has left behind her a legacy of a lifetime spent here on earth in good deeds which live on, and continue to grow; and, of course, growth is a sign of true vitality. And her eternal soul – reflected in the ongoing activities of the institutions – will continue to be a source of inspiration and encouragement, especially to all whose lives were touched by hers.

In the Torah, an expression of sympathy in a time of grief, invoking solace from the One Above who is the true source of Consolation, is termed a "Blessing of Condolence," and is reciprocated with the words, "May you be blessed from Heaven."

I do so reciprocate your blessing. Needless to say, a blessing from Heaven, the Source of All Blessings, is replete and boundless with all good. I only add my prayerful wish that it be "in the kind of good that is revealed and obvious" – not only in Heaven, but also here on earth.

With profound esteem and with blessing

M Schneerson

The President is presented with a silver Menorah in honor of the holiday of Chanukah

December 21, 1988

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 21, 1988

Dear Rabbi Shemtov

As my Administration draws to a close, I want you and those of your fellow rabbis who accompanied you to the White House on December 1 to know that I was delighted to greet you and to accept the thoughtful gifts which you kindly brought for me.

It has been a pleasure each year to welcome you and your colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitch on the occasion of Chanukah and to receive a beautiful menorah as an expression of your friendship. This symbol of your faith is a treasured keepsake of the valued support which I have enjoyed from the Lubavitchers over the years. Be assured that I am truly grateful for your loyalty and goodwill.

Nancy joins me in sending all of you our warm best wishes for a happy and rewarding future.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan