

Carmel College

June 18, 1974

Mr. Michael Tabor
Carmel College
Junior School
Wallingford
Oxfordshire, ENGLAND

Dear Michael:

'Twas a delight hearing from you, although I am not quite sure as to all the references in your letter. Of course, that is an obvious and self-evident sign of your profundity...

I have not heard of that beautiful "vort" of the Alte Rebbe about *עניינות ודבוקה*. It is truly beautiful. I enjoyed it -- but I failed to see its relevance to the problems you are encountering in Carmel College. But relevant or not, it was worth reading.

I am not answering all the points in your letter because I do want to react positively to your request that I write to you before leaving for our "long" summer vacation. It's not really much of a vacation, but it does give me the opportunity to do my own literary work, and that is the greatest "holiday" in the world.

Let me tell you what I am working on, and perhaps you can participate in some measure, large or small, by any suggestions you may have.

As you know, the United States is and has been experiencing an interest in Hasidism for some time now. Most of the writings on the subject are either anecdotal in nature (Buber etc.) literary-fictional, folkloristic, or an offshoot of the interest in Kaballah a'la Scholem. There is nothing at all available in English that will give the serious student some idea of the profound thinking of the hasidic masters.

Hence, what I am working on is a book on the religious philosophy on Hasidism, offering text and commentary. In addition to an introduction to the whole field, I hope to choose brief selections (by that I mean, from a paragraph to several pages) from the writings of the first three or four generations of the hasidic giants, arranged into fifteen or twenty topics. This will include such *themes* as: the existence of God (His unity, immanence etc.); faith, doubt, philosophical inquiry; love of God and fear of God; devekut and the religious experience; the ways of divine service and prayer; the zaddik; the study of Torah; happiness and sadness; repentance; man -- his soul and instincts; love of humanity and the ways of peace; the raising of the sparks and Avodah Bigashmiut; providence, nature, miracle; evil and suffering; exile and redemption; life and death; eschatology.

My plan is to gather the sources, select, then translate and annotate.

I know that you are probably much too busy, but if you have any helpful comments or suggestions, I will be indebted to you. I know that your special field of interest is HaBaD Hasidism, and of course you may be sure that I will be quoting from the However, I am not acquainted with the writings of the other "stars" in the HaBaD constellation. If you have any choice, favorite selections, from other writings, that fit into the rubric mentioned above, those you feel are worthy of translation and presentation to a contemporary audience, please do be kind enough to inform me of them, so that I may possibly make use of them.

Should you want to reach me during July and August, you may write to me at the following address: Camp Morasha, Lake Como, Penn. 18437.

Meanwhile, I hope that all goes well with you and your wonderful family. My wife joins me in sending to you and to Naomi

Cordially,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

NL:cw