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Thirty-fifth day of the Omer, 5781,

[Conceptual Translation]

To My Dear Friend...

At this difficult hour, as we count the Omer with joy and awe, we have another number to count, rachmana litzlan. On the day of the celebration of Rashb"i, on which he was particular that one does not recited "Nachem," as is brought from the Ariza"l (see Magen Avraham 493, 3), there are now additional seekers of condolence, lo aleinu.

The question of the merry-makers in Meron, "אנשי עיר פלונית - מה לכם פה ומי לכם פה" - "People of the city... what do you seek here, and who do you have here," has been exchanged for the possuk, (Yishayah 22, 16) "מה לך פה ומי לך פה כי חצבת לך פה קבר" - "What do you seek here, and who do you have here, that you have dug yourself here a grave?"

As it says in the Shir Hayichud of Thursday, "נבוכות כל עשתונות ונבהלות כל החשבונות" - "All thoughts are confused, and all calculations shocked." One does not have the peace of mind to approach the introspection needed in order to make a Cheshbon Hanefesh for the community or for the individual. Even so, when one's emotions are churning it is a time when one's heart may open and they may feel inspiration that, after time, the ebb and flow of life may blur and extinguish. This being so, one must not pass up the moment, and engage in introspection.

Pointing an accusing finger at others may be sufficient to calm one's conscience, but what is truly desired is the search for one's own shortcoming [as only a fool views himself as complete and entirely virtuous]. Our inspiration and spiritual awakening must be poured into the mold of a practical kabbalah, be it an undertaking in the realm of the duties of the heart, or the correction of one's actions, between man and his fellow and between man and ה'. Everyone's heart knows its own bitterness'נפשו מרת נפשו', and in which areas it requires correction, yet the Yetzer Hara tricks us and causes us to forget. In an appropriate time, such as this, one must utilize it.

The course of any major event, and certainly a tragedy of such magnitude, is determined by Divine calculations, which cannot be easily understood, yet nevertheless, the simple conclusions must be reached as well. Although not even the slightest parable can be drawn between us and Chazal, who made the prohibition against wearing spiked sandals (Shabbos 60a), there is still a lesson to be learned on the most basic level, after we have been dealt such a crushing blow. We must accept upon ourselves to be especially vigilant to avoid similar circumstances and dangerous courses of action, even at times when we are under pressure, and there seems to be no other way.

May Hashem balm our wounds with mercy, comfort and console us, completely, with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

Written with an troubled and stormy heart,

Your friend,

Shaul