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חברת מענדל שניאורסאהן
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By the Grace of G-d
13th of Kislev, 5723
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Participants in the
Annual Dinner of the
Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch
Detroit, Mich.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive the news of your forthcoming Annual Dinner on the 20th of Kislev, the day after the historic Day of Liberation of the Old Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, and founder of Chabad.

It will be both timely and meaningful to recall the following episode from his life and teachings:

The Old Rebbe shared his house with his oldest married son, Rabbi Dov Ber (who later succeeded him as the Mittlerer Rebbe). Rabbi Dov Ber was known for his unusual power of concentration. Once when Rabbi Dov Ber was engrossed in learning, his baby sleeping in its cradle nearby fell out and began to cry. The infant's father did not hear the baby's cries. However, the infant's grandfather, the Old Rebbe, who was in his study on the upper floor and who was also engrossed in his studies at that time, did hear the baby's cries. He interrupted his studies, went downstairs, picked up the baby, soothed it and replaced it in its cradle. To all this, the infant's father remained quite oblivious.

Subsequently, the Old Rebbe admonished his son: "No matter how engrossed one may be in the most lofty occupation, one must never remain insensitive to the cry of a child."

This story was transmitted to us from generation to generation, as I heard it from my father-in-law of saintly memory. It was done so because of the lasting message which it conveys, and which is particularly pertinent to our time. It characterizes one of the basic tenets of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement - to hearken to the cry of our distressed Jewish children.

The "child" may be an infant in years, a Jewish boy or girl of school age, fallen out of the "cradle" of Torah-true Jewish education. Or it may be an adult in years, yet an "infant" insofar as Jewish life is concerned, an infant in knowledge and experience of the Jewish religion, heritage and way of life.

The souls of these Jewish "children" cry out in anguish, for they live in a spiritual void, whether they are conscious of it or feel it only subconsciously.

The Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in your community, as in many other communities in this country and overseas, hears their cries, and so must every Jew, no matter how preoccupied he may be with any lofty cause. For to help bring back these Jewish children to their Jewish cradle has a priority over all else.

I trust that all of you who will participate in this Annual Dinner will rededicate yourselves to this great cause. Especially as this event is taking place only a few days before Chanukah, the Festival of Dedication. Chanukah reminds us not only of the heroic struggle for the rededication of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem of old, but also for the rededication of the "sanctuary" within the heart of every Jewish child. Chanukah calls for Chinuch: dedication through Torah-education.

I congratulate, and send my prayerful wishes, to the honored guests and all participants and friends. May G-d bless your efforts with success and grant your hearts' desires for good, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson