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חנוכה מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
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By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh
Mevorchim Adar
Parshas Mishpatim and
Shekalim, 5724.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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

G-d bless you all -

Greeting and Blessing:

I extend greetings and felicitations to the esteemed Chairman, Committee members, and all participants in this annual event. May G-d bestow His blessing upon your efforts to make it an outstanding success in every respect.

One of the teachings of the Alter Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, and Founder of Chabad, is to the effect that "A Jew has to live by the clock" - and the Jewish "time-piece" has a unique movement, which is regulated by the Torah-portion of the week, each of which is further subdivided into seven portions, one for each day. My message is based on this tradition.

The Sidrah Mishpatim directly follows, and is connected with, the portion of Mattan Torah in the previous Sidrah. Our Sages emphasize this by noting the conjunction in the opening words of this Sidrah: "And these are the laws," etc.

It is therefore significant that the Sidrah Mishpatim begins with the laws of a Jewish servant. The Torah takes a dim view of a Jew who sells himself into service to another Jew, and still more so of the Jew who desires to remain in bondage, declaring, "I love my master... I shall not go free." Such a Jew has to have the lobe of his ear pierced for failure to heed the words it heard G-d proclaim at Mount Sinai: "Unto Me shall the children of Israel be servants; they are My servants - not servants to servants."

In the Sidrah Ki Sisso, from which Parshas Shekalim is read, and which is the Sidrah of the week of the Dinner, we read about a "repetition" of Mattan Torah, when the second Tablets with the Ten Commandments were given. The first had been shattered by Moshe Rabbenu when he found the Golden Calf in the Jewish camp. Thereby Moshe Rabbenu showed that Torah and idolatry are not compatible; a Jew cannot serve two masters.

Of this we are also forcefully reminded by the festival of Purim which is also in the same week of the Dinner. As we read in the Megillah, Mordechai refused to bend his knee or bow down to Haman. Mordechai the Jew recognized only one master, the Master of the world. It is this unswerving loyalty to the One and Only Master,

a loyalty which Mordechai instilled into all the Jews, and into the children in particular, that brought about the swift downfall of Haman. It is this unshakable loyalty to G-d - which is expressed in our obedience to the Divine commandments of the Torah - that saves us from the Hamans that rise in every generation and try to enslave us.

We Jews are a "Mordechai-People" (Am Mordechai), and must remain as such by raising our children to be little Mordechais from their earliest youth.

This is what the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch is doing in many parts of this country and the world over. The Jewish community of Detroit is fortunate indeed to have a Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in their midst, and you who share in this work are particularly fortunate.

May you go from strength to strength in helping to spread the light of the Torah and Mitzvoth, and may each and everyone of you, in the midst of all our people, be blessed with a growing measure of "light, joy, gladness, and honor."

With blessing,

M. Schneerson