

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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FREE RENDITION

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי

ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-kodesh mevorchim
Chodesh Sivan, 5740
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
25th Annual Convention of the
National Council of Nshei uBnos Chabad
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

This year's Convention is taking place in the days connected with Shabbos Parshas Beha'alo secho. And, as has been often pointed out, it is possible - hence, required - to derive instructive Torah-lessons (Torah meaning "instruction") from the weekly Sedra that have a special relevance to the events and happenings of the particular week.

In light of the above, it is significant that right in the beginning of the Sedra - Beha'alo secho es haneros - there is a clear instruction that a Jew has to "kindle lights" to illuminate the surroundings. In this, too, a Jew has to emulate, so to speak, the Creator, Who, immediately after creating heaven and earth, gave the order, "Let there be light!"

The essential thing about a candle (in the ordinary sense) is that it should give forth light and illuminate its surroundings. An unlighted, or extinguished, candle brings no benefit and has no meaning in that state per se. Only when it gives light and shines does it fulfill its purpose. And its purpose is to serve man, by enabling him to see by its light what is doing around him, and by illuminating his way, he should not stumble in darkness, and generally to help him to do and accomplish what he must.

The nature of a candle is that when one puts a flame to its wick, even a small flame - so long as he does it effectively, the flame catches on, and then it continues to give off light on its own. This, too, is indicated in the text, as our Sages comment: When you light the lamps (of the Menorah) - "(light them so) that the flame goes up on its own."

The instruction is this:

G-d has endowed the human being with a soul, a Divine "lamp," as it is written, "The soul of man is the lamp of G-d" - to illuminate his (or her) path in life, and to illuminate the world. But this soul-lamp, or candle, has first to be ignited with the flame of Torah in order that it should shine forth with its true light, the light of Ner Mitzva vTorah Or.

And this is the task and purpose of every Jew: To be a brightly shining lamp and to kindle, or add brightness to, every Divine "lamp" - Jewish

soul - with which he or she comes in contact. And one must do this to completeness, in a way that the lamps they light should likewise continue to shine brightly on their own, and should also become "lamp-lighters," kindling other souls, "from candle to candle," in a continuous chain.

Needless to say, though the instruction Beha'alo secho es haneros was given to Aharon haKohen, it includes all Jews, in their spiritual life, since every Jew is a member of Mamleches kohanim ("Kingdom of G-d's servants"). Moreover, there is the exhortation: "Be of the disciples of Aharon... loving the creatures and bringing them closer to Torah." To be a disciple of Aharon one must be permeated with Ahavas Yisroel and spread Yiddishkeit.

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If the above pertains to every Jew and all Jews, it is even more emphatically relevant to the Jewish woman, for she is the actual candle-lighter, who was given the special Divine assignment, extraordinary privilege, and bright Mitzva of lighting the candles for the holy Shabbos and Yom Tov. And in a deeper spiritual sense:

In her role as Akeres Habayis it is her Zechus to light up the Jewish home and everyone in it - also her husband and children, and the friends and visitors who come into the home; and in her role as Eim habonim (Mother of the children) she is the first to light up the young Neshomelach of the infants, until they begin to shine on their own. Thus she has a very important share in making her house, and the House of Israel as a whole - a fitting home for the Divine Shechinah, in accordance with G-d's design and desire - "that I may dwell among (and within) them."

There is no need to emphasize at length that in order to fulfil these most important tasks, Jewish daughters must be thoroughly prepared with a Torah-true education al taharas hakodesh, from the cradle to the Chuppah, and also later, assuming the duties of Akeres Habayis and Eim habonim, they must continue to deepen and advance their chinuch, so that they can illuminate and brighten their Jewish house and the whole House of Israel with the light and vitality of Ner Mitzva vTorah Or in the fullest measure.

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May G-d grant that the Convention of Nshei uBnos Chabad - especially being the 25th וכה יוסף כה יעשה ה' - will inspire even more enthusiasm and more vitality in all abovementioned aspects, stimulated still more by the assurance that G-d acts (יעשה) and increases (יוסף) His help in providing the necessary strength, coupled with His blessings, to be matzliach in all above in the fullest measure, with Chabad-Chassidic light, inspiration and joy.

With blessing for much Hatzlocho and good tidings in all above,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/