

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos Mevorchim
Chodesh Adar I, 5741
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To All Participants in the 19th Annual
Mid-Winter Convention of N'shei uBnos Chabad
Chicago, Ill.

Blessing and Greeting:

The theme of this year's Convention is very appropriately dedicated to the Year of Hakhel and its timeless message to everyone of us, "the men, and the women, and the very young children."

Taking place immediately after Purim Kotton, the Convention will surely also be inspired by the message of this day in general, and of Purim Kotton, 5687 (1927) in particular. For on that day, fifty-four years ago, the Rebbe, my saintly father-in-law, delivered his history-making public address that openly defied and challenged the ruthless regime which was determined to completely suppress Yiddishkeit in that country.

The theme of his discourse was: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You established strength .. to still the enemy and the avenger" (Ps. 8:3). He explained that "enemy" (ovev) refers to an overt enemy, and "avenger" (misnakem) refers to a hidden enemy, and that the way to vanquish both is through the G-d-given strength of the Torah that is inculcated in our children from their earliest infancy. This was, of course, what he had been doing over the years, with complete Mesiras-nefesh, and with the help of G-d came out victorious.

By the grace of G-d we live in a country where no peril threatens any Jew practising Yiddishkeit, working for Torah-Chinuch and spreading Torah and Mitzvos. Yet the message of that historic Purim Kotton is just as relevant here and now. For there is that ever-present enemy - the "alien god within" - whose job is to distract a Jew from the Torah way, either openly - by undermining one's trust in G-d and one's commitment to the Torah and Mitzvos, or in a more subtle way - through distortion and compromise.

The way to combat the enemy and the avenger "within our gates" is through the uncompromising Torah-Chinuch of every Jewish child, boy and girl, from infancy to maturity, and onward. Which is also the basic message of Hakhel: "Assemble the people, the men, ^{and} the women, and the very young infants (taf), that they hear and learn, and fear G-d your G-d, and observe to do all the words of this Torah."

The above further emphasizes the vital role of the Jewish Mother, the Akeres Habayis, and the role of the daughters preparing themselves for the

same vital responsibilities and extraordinary privileges.

May G-d grant that the Convention should achieve all its goals in the fullest measure, which, of course, depends on the concerted efforts of each and all of the participants and members; and may G-d bless each and all of you and yours to carry on your vital work with joy and gladness of heart.

With blessing for Hatzlocho
and good tidings in all above

M. Schneerson