

By the Grace of G-d
Lag B'Omer, 5743
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
Annual Dinner of Oholei Torah

G-d bless you all!

Blessing and Greeting:

By Divine Providence, this year's Annual Dinner will take place on the first day of the Three Days of Preparation which preceded the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

One of the teachings of these special days - which, as all teachings of the Torah, Toras Chayim ("instruction in life"), are eternal like the Torah itself - emphasizes how great and profound have to be the preparations to receive the Torah. Witness the extraordinary measures that our ancestors went through as they prepared themselves to receive the Torah from HaShem at Mount Sinai.

Consider: Our ancestors leave Egypt under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu, and begin counting the days and weeks to the day when they will see the fulfillment of the Divine promise that they would "worship G-d on this mountain" (receive the Torah) - the ultimate purpose of their liberation from Egyptian slavery; each day of Sefirah (Counting) they advance from strength to strength toward moral and spiritual perfection in preparation for receiving the Torah;

Furthermore, for many days, day after day, they had been fortifying themselves with "Bread from Heaven" (manna), and with water from a rock (Miriam's Well), surrounded by the heavenly Clouds of Glory; their path led them through the desert, removed from the distractions of mundane matters ---

Yet, with all these preparations behind them, it was still not enough! As they reached a point in time three days before that longed-for day of the Divine Revelation and the Giving of the Torah, it was necessary to intensify the preparations still further, to elevate themselves to the highest level of holiness and purity, in order to be capable to receive G-d's holy Torah with real joy and inwardness!

In light of the above, it is obvious how much deeper and more intense have to be the preparations in the present day and age.

However, since a Jew is expected to say to himself every day, "When will my actions measure up to the actions of my ancestors," it is certain that potentially every Jew is capable of attaining that level. This means that HaShem - who does not require of a person to do more than the limit of one's capacity - has indeed given every Jew the capacity to live up to G-d's will; it is only necessary to actualize it (realize it in action).

In other words: The preparation for Receiving the Torah begins - not with the Three Days of Preparation, nor with the days of Sefirah, but from the day a Jewish child begins to speak and say, "The Torah Moshe commanded us," etc. Only through a Torah-true education in the fullest measure is it possible to bring out in the fullest measure the Divine capacities and inner feelings which HaShem has implanted in every Jewish child, to enable him (or her) to rise to the level of our ancestors who stood at Mount Sinai and exclaimed Na'aseh v'nishma!

This is also the foundation of the Torah Chinuch which "Oholei Torah" implants in its students. In addition to the students themselves being permeated with the spirit of Ahavas HaShem and Yiras HaShem (love of G-d and fear of G-d) - with emphasis on action, namely, the actual fulfillment of the Mitzvos with Hiddur (excellence), they bring this spirit also into their homes and into the community at large.

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This gives me the confident hope that all participants and friends of this worthy institution of Chinuch will warmly respond to the occasion of the Annual Dinner, to enable "Oholei Torah" to open wide its doors for the admission of a multitude of students. And it will hasten the fulfilment of the prophecy (as explained by our Sages): "And a l l your children shall be learned in the knowledge of G-d. ... For the sake of my brethren and friends... I seek your well-being. HaShem will give strength to His people, HaShem will bless His people with peace."

With esteem and blessing for Hatzlocho and good tidings,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/