

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh, p. Vayechi Yaakov,
5744. Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the Annual Dinner
of the United Lubavitcher Yeshivoth

G-d bless you all

Greeting and Blessing:

I am pleased to extend congratulations and prayerful wishes to the distinguished Chairmen, Honored Guests, and all friends of the Central Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch on the occasion of this annual event.

Our Sages tell us that in creating the world, G-d followed the "blueprint" of the Torah. Thus, in their customary way of expressing sublime concepts in a few chosen words, this aphorism, too, expresses a profound principle, namely, that everything that exists, and everything that takes place, in the world is connected with Torah. The Torah (literally meaning "teaching") contains relevant instructions in regard to any and all events and situations; certainly in regard to events directly connected with Torah itself.

A particular relevance is to be found between the weekly Torah reading (Sedra) and the current events of the week. The Alter Rebbe, author of the Tanya and Shulchan-Aruch, and Founder of Chabad, expressed it in his well-known saying: "A Jew should live with the time." He was referring to the current time of the Jewish Calendar, which is divided into the weekly Sedrahs of the Torah.

In light of the above, and since this year's Annual Dinner is taking place on the first day of the Sedra Shemos, we turn to this Sedra for instruction and inspiration.

The Sedra Shemos begins with the narrative of the first Jewish exile - Golus Mitzrayim, which was the forerunner and prototype for all subsequent exiles in Jewish history, including our present - longest and last - exile.

The Torah relates that as Yaakov Ovinu was about to go down to Egypt, with his entire family of seventy souls, he had a Divine revelation, in which G-d told him to have no fear of the future, because G-d was going down with him; that the exile was not forever, but would end at the proper time; and that the "descent" into Mitzrayim was for the purpose of an "ascent."

The Torah also tells us that our Father Yaakov had made certain preparations for the life in exile that lay ahead, in which a tiny Jewish minority would have to face an otherwise overwhelming environment, in the midst of a society alien to the spirit of the Torah and to the Jewish way of life. These preparations included, first and foremost, the establishment of schools that would provide Torah-true education for the young generation. At the same time he made sure that every Jewish home ("every man and his household") would be thoroughly permeated with their eternal heritage, so that they

would always be conscious that they are Bnai Yisroel, children of Old Israel (Yaakov), who are proud of their Jewishness, proud of being Jewish and different, proud of their total Jewish identity, not even changing their meaningful Hebrew names (Shemos Bnai Yisroel).

These eternal teachings of the eternal Torah are as relevant to Jews now, here, and everywhere, as they were relevant thousands of years ago during the Egyptian exile, and ever since.

In light of these teachings, it can be appreciated more fully why such a Torah institution as the Central Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch is so vitally important.

True to its name, given to it by its great founder 87 years ago, this Torah institution has raised, and continues to raise, generations of Tmimim - whole Jews: whole and wholesome in spirit and soul; in their Jewishness, personality, and world outlook; in their Ahavas Yisroel, Ahavas haShem, and Ahavas haTorah; in their dedication to G-d and to fellow-man. This achievement is all the more gratifying in that the students and graduates of Tomchei Tmimim have remained Tmimim despite the tremendous upheavals in their outside environment.

I am confident that the participants in this annual event will demonstrate - by their generous response - their appreciation of being partners in this vital cause of Torah education, which - in addition to its own merits - will surely be reciprocated by a generous measure of Divine blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

With esteem and with blessing in all above,

/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/