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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5745
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To All Participants in the Annual Banquet
of the Lubavitch Yeshiva "Achei Tmimim"
Brookline, Ma.

Greeting and Blessing:

This year's Annual Banquet is taking place on the day after Shabbos Parshas Ki Tisso, which begins with the law of the Half Shekel contribution, "To make atonement for your souls" -
לכפר על נפשותיכם.

The Midrash relates that Moshe Rabbeinu wondered how a silver coin could be a "ransom for a soul." So HaShem showed him a Matbe'a shel Aish, "a fiery coin," saying, "This is what they shall give."

It is explained in the teachings of Chasidus and other sources that when a Jew gives of his money for the support of a Yeshiva and similar holy institution, which is called Mikdash Ma'at (a "small Beis Hamikdash"), especially when he gives it with enthusiasm and with all his heart and soul - it illuminates his soul, which is called Ner HaShem, "HaShem's Lamp," while lighting many such "soul candles" of the students themselves, as well as of those which the students will eventually light up in their surroundings, with the light of the Torah and Mitzvoth, Ner Mitzvo v'Torah Or.

I trust that the inspiration of the Sedra, particularly the portion of the Half Shekel, will be reflected in everyone's response to the needs of the Yeshiva, that it will be a Matbe'a shel Aish - both in terms of generosity and enthusiasm.

Especially as also the inspiration of Purim, which just preceded the Dinner, will surely be fresh and deep in the minds of all present, since it is in connection with Purim that we now observe the meaningful symbolic custom of the Half Shekel contribution, which in days of old, used to go for the support and needs of the Beis Hamikdash.

I reiterate my prayerful wishes to each and all of you that the Zechus of your Matbe'a shel Aish should bring you and all yours an increased and steadily growing measure of - in the words of the Megillah - "Light, Joy, Gladness and Honor," both in the plain sense of these words, as well as in their deeper meaning of "Light - this is Torah," etc.

With esteem and blessing
for good tidings in all
above,

M. Schneerson