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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Shevat,
5748. Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the
26th Annual Mid-Winter
Neshei u'Bnos Chabad Convention
Miami Beach, Fla.

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to be informed of your forthcoming Convention during 17-20 of the current auspicious month. May HaShem grant that it be with a full measure of Hatzlocho in all respects.

Much has been said about the significance of the current year as a Year of Hakhel on various aspects of this rare (once-in-seven years) occurrence. Yet it is certainly timely and appropriate to add a word on the special relevance of Hakhel to Jewish womanhood in general, and to this year's Convention in particular

Hakhel, as especially underscored by Rambam, is an event the experience of which is akin to that of Maamad Har Sinai, when G-d gave the Torah to our Jewish people to keep and live by, at all times and in all places.

Therefore, the commemoration of Hakhel calls for a renewal and reinforcement of the total commitment with which all of us Jews, men, women, and children accepted the Torah and Mitzvos. At the same time, Hakhel brings to mind the special role which has been bestowed on Jewish women, at Mattan Torah and ever since, in light of HaShem's instruction to Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to the women first, before speaking to the men, and in the appropriate manner in each case, to ensure the enthusiastic response of both.

Our Sages declare that the women have received from HaShem a greater "promise" than was given to the men, and they ask, "What is the special Z'chus of the women?" (considering that their obligation to occupy themselves with the study of Torah and certain other areas is more limited than that of the men). In reply (and in paraphrase) the Sages point to the women's merits in connection with the Torah education of the little children, encouraging their men to study Torah, and fostering the proper atmosphere of the home.

Since the invitation to the Convention is "in the spirit of Shnas Hakhel," I am confident that the Convention will focus on the above and other aspects of Hakhel pertaining to the Jewish women, particularly Chabad women, and on carrying out the good resolutions with even greater determination and enthusiasm.

With esteem and blessing for Hatzlocho in all above

M. Schneerson