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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

B.H.
5th of Elul, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Elazar Kalmen Tiefenbrun
23B Springfield
London, E. 5.

Sholom uBrocho:

I am in receipt of your letter of 24th of Av, with the enclosures. I was especially pleased to note the progress of your daughter Ronchy, and may G-d grant you and your wife true Yiddish Nachas from her and from all your children, continuously and at all times.

Needless to say, I was painfully surprised to read about the criticism leveled against you for your participation in the Lubavitch work. Surely one would have expected the opposite attitude on the part of Jewish circles who value Torah and Mitzvoth, who should help and not hinder, seeing that a group of dedicated Jews are doing such good work to spread and strengthen Yiddishkeit. What better proof is needed than that of the matter of hasogas gvul, which is one of the severest injunctions, so much so that it is included among the "accursed" sins (in Parshas Ki sovei). Yet while any manner of encroachment in the material aspects of life is so severely condemned, it not only has no place in the area of spreading Yiddishkeit, but, on the contrary, it is even encouraged. It is a well known Psak in the Gemoro, Rambam, and Shulchan Aruch, that the principle of hasogas gvul is of no consideration; rather the opposite, for here the principle of kinas sofrim takes precedence and competition is encouraged. So much so, that according to our staddard version in the Gemoro Bobo Basro, it was none other than Ezra haSofer who ordained and practised it. 21/6

It is indeed hard to understand how people, who should know better, can place stumbling blocks in the path of young men who had given up an easier and better life (from the point of view of material and economic security) in the USA, in order to work for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit in a community which is not their own, knowing full well the difficulties facing them. Such young men should have been received with gratitude and encouragement.

However, we are taught al todin es chavercho, and certainly the month of Elul is no time for judging others. So let bygones be bygones, and from now on may better judgment prevail, in accordance with the words of the prophet Malachi (3:16), "Then they that feared G-d spoke with one another, and G-d hearkened and heard," etc.

With the blessing of kesivo vachasimo toivo

M. Schneerson