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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In response to numerous requests, the secretariat of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, world leader of the Lubavitcher movement, has released a letter in which the Rebbe expresses his views on the subject of "interfaith dialogue".

The text of the letter is enclosed herewith.

3/12/65

כ"ק אדמו"ר מנחם מענדל שליט"א שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

SECRETARIAT of RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
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Excerpt from a letter by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson - written in response to an inquiry by the head of a group of Jewish spiritual leaders - on the subject of "interfaith dialogue".

By the Grace of G-d

In reply to your question as to what should be the Jewish attitude toward the matter of "religious dialogue" which has been advocated in Jewish and non-Jewish circles.

It reassures me that you should have any doubt in this matter. For, with some knowledge of Jewish history knows with what reluctance we have engaged in religious debates with non-Jews. There were many good reasons for this attitude, in addition to the basic reason that Jews consider it their mission to convert gentiles to their faith, and do not wish to expose themselves to the missionary zeal of other religions.

Every generation has its own characteristics which have a bearing on contemporary problems. One of the peculiarities of our own generation - a circumstance which makes such "dialogue" even more difficult - is the confusion and perplexity which are so widespread among the younger generation. Symptomatic of this is the lowering, or even toppling, of the once well-defined boundaries in various areas of the daily life. This process, which involves the lowering, or abolishing altogether, of the Mechitzah (separation), has extended itself also to the abolishing of boundaries of ethics, morality, and even common decency. In some cases this has even led to a perversion of values, reminiscent of the prophet: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).