

used

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
10th of Tammuz, 5726
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Blessing and Greeting:

I am in receipt of your letter, and I was subsequently also informed of the telephone conversation which you had with our office.

Needless to say, I am gratified to note that you are taking such a profound interest in the affairs of the congregation and in the functions of the Rabbi and of spiritual leadership in general. No doubt this interest finds expression in the utmost help towards the strengthening of the congregation, and the elevation of the synagogue in particular, so that it should be imbued with the proper spirit to reflect its essential function that it be a place where everyone would feel its holiness; a synagogue where everyone would be conscious of, "Know before Whom thou art standing." Such a synagogue is truly a source of inspiration and Divine blessings, both spiritually and materially.

You mention some matters which, in your opinion, would enhance the leadership of the Rabbi. In the light of your description of the situation, it is surely unnecessary to emphasize that the ultimate aim of spiritual leadership is to influence the daily conduct of the members, to bring it more fully in accord with the Torah and Mitzvoth. Now, in a situation where the Rabbi is a relatively young man, and he has among his congregants older members, he will often be more successful if he does not impose his leadership too heavily, but rather develop it gradually and steadily, in order to create a situation where the members will themselves come to the decision as to how to conduct themselves, both in matters of the congregation, as well as in the privacy of their homes. Obviously with the cooperation of the members, both men and women, the results of the right policy will be realized all the sooner. The Rabbi himself is, of course, the best judge as to the most effective approach to take in developing his leadership and extending his influence.

You are, of course, quite right that a synagogue should be open whenever possible. As a matter of fact, as my father-in-law of saintly memory expressed himself, a synagogue should be open not only all day, but both day and night. For in a Jewish congregation there should be members who study the Torah also at night, and when the Torah is studied in the synagogue where the prayers are recited, a special significance is added

הרב יצחק

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to this study. On the other hand, in view of what has been said above, the Rabbi has to consider the prevailing circumstances and factors, and he must decide how the interests of the members would be served best, whether by sitting alone in the synagogue, or by spending that time in some other way. He must also consider what impression his lonesome vigil in the synagogue might have on the congregants, if his presence may be needed somewhere else, and in some other activity.

Finally, let me also say that there is no perfection in the world, and that every human being, who takes over a new position, in a new place, under new circumstances, requires a certain period of time to adjust himself and to lay the foundations for a fruitful and growing activity. This applies also to Rabbis. And judging by your letter, it is very possible that the Rabbi is using his discretion to good advantage to ensure successful spiritual leadership.

I am confident that your interest in the affairs of the synagogue and congregation, and your participation in their growth and development, will be a source of Divine blessings to you and yours, and may G-d grant you Hatzlocho.

With blessing,

By *Isaac Nissim*