

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין ג. י.

By the Grace of G-d
24th of Tammuz, 5726
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr.
c/o 1649 President Street
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to confirm receipt of your letter of July 7, with the enclosure which is returned herewith.

In reply to your concrete questions, it would seem logical for you to continue with the type of occupation which you had experience in. No doubt it would also be easier for you to get connections in this line.

You ask whether you should wait until September to resume your job, or should in the meantime seek employment in Atlantic City. You do not mention what prospects there may be for you in Atlantic City, but I do not think there is much of a future for you there, and, at best, there could only be a temporary job there.

With regard to the question about seeking psychiatric advice - judging by the description of your mood, etc., it would seem advisable. However, for reasons which need not be entered into here, most psychiatrists are prejudiced in relation to parents, and in relation to G-d and religion. One should therefore reckon with this, and, more importantly, one should try to find a psychiatrist who is free from such prejudices through the recommendation of a doctor-friend, or by independent inquiry.

(religious people)
Needless to say, it is most advisable for you to keep in contact with the element^v you mention as being new to you, involving also a study of a field of knowledge which is entirely new to you: תורה. For this would obviously broaden your horizons, in addition to the essential aspect - the importance of the subject itself for its own sake. I trust therefore that you will continue along these lines, and, as in all new ventures of this nature, it is necessary to apply yourself with enthusiasm and gladness of heart, which the subject merits, and which also is the way to ensure the utmost success for intensive and extensive comprehension.

I was very much surprised to read in your letter that by becoming religious you would have to seclude yourself from the world. This is diametrically contrary to the concept of the Jewish religion and way of life, wherein, as you surely know, there is no such thing as monasticism, celibacy, and the like. It is even more foreign to spirit and way of the teachings of Chasidus which emphasizes that the purpose of every Jew is not only to make himself personally a "vessel" for the Shechinah (Divine Presence), but also to do his utmost to make his immediate surroundings (his share in the world)

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a fitting abode for holiness. This cannot be accomplished by secluding oneself from the world, or by withdrawal from it, but rather by active participation in, contributing to, it. Of course, before this can be done, it is necessary to have the proper preparation, in order to forestall any possibility of falling under the influence of the material world with all its temptations and passions, and to ensure that one would be master over it.

I would like to make a further observation in regard to the idea (which I believe is not your own, but seems to be the influence of others) that in order to acquire a particular system or discipline it is first necessary to acquaint oneself with all other systems, to be able to judge and verify its truth, to the extent of non-committal to any discipline, pending personal verification. Such an idea is the best rationale and excuse that an individual can find (while he still needs a rationale) to indulge fully in a licentious life, and give free rein to his carnal appetites. As I have often emphasized - if one will not accept the first two Commandments, "I am G-d, thy G-d," and "Thou shalt have no other gods," one will inevitably break all other Commandments, including "Thou shalt not murder," "Thou shalt not steal," not to mention "Thou shalt not covet," however "self-evident" these precepts may seem. This has been amply demonstrated by Hitler and the German nation. All the philosophies which the Germans had invented and expounded were of no avail because they made the human mind the supreme and final judge, creating the concept of a "superman", etc. There is, obviously, quite a difference in a system which leads to human perfection through stressing the Divine qualities in man, which can be developed only through self-discipline and the curbing of the natural desires and propensities. There can be no relationship between the two systems; they are diametrically contradictory.

This brings me to the final remark, which is actually the essential point of this letter. The problem in your case, as with others in similar situations, is the lack of self-discipline, and it is due to the fact that it means curbing one's desires and passions, and this lack of discipline, therefore, extends itself also in other areas, such as regular study and daily routine in an orderly fashion. My practical advice to you is to order your daily life in way that would commit you to a useful routine, so as not have to think and decide each day what to do with it. You should also bear in mind that the Yetzer will try to counteract this effort by causing a depressed mood and planting the thought that by breaking the discipline the mood will improve. The truth however is that even if momentarily there seems to be a relief, it is only a fleeting one attained at the cost of a regulated and orderly life which alone can assure success and contentment of a lasting nature.

Much more could be said in regard to all above, but I trust the above lines will be adequate.

With blessing,
M. Schneerson