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By the Grace of G-d
Zos Chanukah, 5734
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Greeting and Blessing:

This is in reply to your inquiry about my opinion in regard to the idea of your joining a Kolel.

It is, of course, well known that **והלמוד תורה כנגד כולם** which is said every morning, even before the regular prayer. Nevertheless, there can be a situation where other things take precedence over it. I have in mind, particularly, the situation of our present-day Jewish youth, a situation which is that of Pikuach Nefesh.

To be sure, when a person considers what his special duty is, there are, generally, ~~three~~ ^{all} options, depending on the category he may belong to. ~~For~~ There are Jews whose main task is to study Torah, and those whose main task is to engage in Mitzvoth and communal activities, and those whose task is to engage in Chinuch and work with our Jewish youth to bring them to a life of Torah and Mitzvoth ~~etc.~~

The said options, however, can be considered only when one is at the beginning of the road and is to make a choice. In your case, however, since you have already been active in youth work for a number of years and have seen that you have had Hatzlocho in your work, and Hatzlocho in an area where it is doubtful that anyone else could have had such Hatzlocho; namely the area of academic youth, and, moreover, in an area where the time element is ^{very} important, since the sooner a Jewish boy or girl begins to observe the Mitzvoth the more certain it is that they will be saved -- your option has already been decided by Hashgocho Protis. Consequently, I can see no justification for you to abandon this sacred work, G-d forbid.

Yet, if as you write, you have a strong desire to learn Torah and increase your knowledge, etc., you can do so by taking time off matters of Reshus, but not at the expense of the time which you have to devote to the Chinuch of G-d's children, so to speak. Be it remembered that we are speaking not of a Chinuch which aims at making a small Lamdan into a

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big Lamdan, which is also a great thing, but of the kind of Chinuch which must be done to preserve young people within the fold of our Jewish people, save them from assimilation, etc., all of which need not further be elaborated to you.

To summarize: It is plain and clear that you should continue your Chinuch activity without detracting from it, though you may explore the possibility about using your other available time for learning Torah. If this spare time is not sufficient, there is another option, and that is to find a part-time substitute for some of your activities which you can safely transfer to such a substitute, under your supervision and responsibility.

If you may still be apprehensive as to how much you can accomplish in your Torah studies under such limited conditions, I would like to remind you that the beginning of the Alter Rebbe's Sefer Torah Or, which follows the Sedras of the Torah (the Likutei Torah, though named differently, is the second part of Torah Or, as is well known), i.e., the first Drush and on the first page, contains the quotation, "דקה חרומם גני" שע"י נחינה צדקה "נעשה מוחו ולבו זכים אלף פעמים ככה". And although in the plain sense of it it deals with ordinary Tzedoko, it is clear that the Posuk, hence the Drush, encompasses also spiritual Tzedoko, such as Chinuch activity in which you are privileged to engage. In other words, the great Zechus of your continuing in this area will bring you extraordinary Hatzlocho in your own Torah studies in your spare time - "a thousandfold." According to the Tzemach Tzedek in his commentaries on this Drush, the said phrase is not just a manner of speaking, but actually means what it says, without exaggeration.

With blessing *M. Schneerson*