

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213

493-9250

חנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי

ברוקלין, נ. י.

B. H.

28 Tishrei, 5737

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rabbi B. H. Charnow, Ph. D.
LT CHC USNR
Office of the Staff Chaplain
Marine Corps Base
Camp Butler, Okinawa
FPO Seattle 98773

Sholom UBrocho:

I am in receipt of your letter of 20 Tishrei.

To begin with the good news towards the end of your letter, may G-d grant that your wife should have a normal and complete pregnancy and an easy delivery of a healthy offspring, and, in accordance with the traditional blessing, you and your wife should bring up each and all of your children to a life of Torah, Chuppah and Good Deeds.

With regard to the general topic of your letter, namely, that you are a Chaplain and endeavoring to fulfil your duties to the best of your abilities, but you now find that it would be difficult to carry out the task of a Jewish Chaplain as you now conceive of its responsibility in light of your greater commitment to Yiddishkeit than before. You ask therefore whether you ought to relinquish your post: -

Perhaps you have heard of my general view in similar situations, but I will outline it briefly.

Every Jew is always a "soldier" in the service of G-d, including the duty of spreading G-dliness among fellow-Jews, with emphasis on the actual deed, namely, fulfilment of G-d's commands, the Mitzvos, in the daily life.

Certainly, in our age of confusion and perplexity, the call to duty is more urgent than ever. On the other hand there is also a very favorable circumstance in the widespread search for truth and real values on the part of the new generation, even among young people whose parents and grandparents had placed a priority on the pursuit of material wellbeing, through professions and careers, almost to the exclusion of Yiddishkeit in their personal lives.

If every Jew is in the service of G-d, as noted above, how much more so one whom the Supreme Hashgocho Protis has placed in the Chaplaincy, and has, moreover, given him the Zechus of gaining deeper insights into Yiddishkeit to the extent of reassessing his position. It is clear what the response

to the said call of duty should be, especially of one who is not just a "private" but a ranking officer.

Of course, the new assessment presents new challenges. But, as in the case of a military outpost facing increased pressure, the answer is not to abandon the front, but to call out reserves and reinforcements, so also in the case of facing a personal challenge. It is certain that the inner forces are there, for G-d would not give one a task which is beyond one's capacity to carry out. In the case of the military, there can sometimes be a miscalculation; but not so with Hashgocho Protis. Thus it is only necessary to bring out these forces from the potential to actuality. Even if the ultimate success is in some doubt, the Torah, Toras Chayim, does not permit one to abandon his responsible position; how much more so when there is the assurance of yogaato umotzoso.

Add to this several encouraging aspects, which I have often emphasized in similar situations:

The whole military establishment is based on discipline and obedience to orders. A soldier receiving an order from his commanding officer, must carry it out promptly, even if it may seem irrational to him. No soldier can claim that his conduct is his personal affair, and he is prepared to take the consequences, for the consequences would not be confined to him, but to the entire sector, with far-reaching consequences in a time of emergency for the entire front and the country. A further point is that it is quite irrelevant if in civilian life the private was superior to his commanding officer in other areas, in physics, astronomy, and the like; in the military, he must bow to the superiority of his commander, who is the expert.

All these points and the whole military training and environment make the Jewish serviceman particularly responsive to Yiddishkeit, which is based on the principle of naaseh before v'nishma and to the influence of his Jewish chaplain who is permeated with true spirit of the Torah and presents a living example of it to his charges. There is surely no need to elaborate to you on all above.

To conclude me'inyono d'yoma, now that we are coming from the Festival of Simchas Torah, which is the conclusion and culmination of all the festival and religious experiences of the month of Tishrei that ushered in the new year, may G-d grant you and all yours, in the midst of all our people, true rejoicing throughout the year in all respects, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

Y. Schwartz