

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ליוכאוויוש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
16 Av, 5739
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mrs. H. Linn
8420 E. 12th Ct.
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Blessing and Greeting:

I am in receipt of your letter of July 27, in which you write in regard to conversion in accordance with the Halachah which, of course, is the only valid conversion.

Needless to say it is difficult to deal with such a matter through correspondence. The best thing would be if you could speak personally to a practising orthodox Rabbi, for it is a very important and serious matter. If for some reason this is impossible to do without delay, you ought to write to one of the competent Rabbinic authorities, such as the Union of Orthodox Rabbis (address below), in whose domain it is - not in mine. And since they treat such matters in confidence, you can write to them quite freely in every detail.

Though you write that you have spoken with an orthodox Rabbi, I see from your letter that your ~~status is still quite~~ confused, and the sooner it is rectified the better.

your status

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the USA & Canada
235 East Broadway, New York, N. Y.

(P. T. O.)

P.S. I gather from your letter that you are aware of the general attitude of the Jewish religion not to encourage proselytizing, and, indeed, to discourage would-be converts. A gentile who wishes to embrace the Jewish faith is ^{often} reminded at the outset that gentiles, too, have a Divinely ordained purpose in life to promote the rule of justice and decency and the other basic Seven Divine Precepts, with all their ramifications, which have been given to all mankind (the descendants of Noah, hence the so-called Seven Noahide Laws), thereby attaining spiritual fulfilment.

You should therefore not be surprised that you have not been encouraged in your desire for Geyrus (conversion) according to the Halachah, which is the only kind of valid conversion. For, obviously, any other form of conversion has no validity whatsoever, since it would be a self-contradiction to adopt a new religion in a way which is contrary to that religion. And since Halachic conversion requires a total commitment on the part of the proselyte to strictly adhere to all the laws - the do's and the don'ts - of the Jewish religion, which, in your present place and circumstances is well nigh impossible to fulfil, there is an additional strong reason to discourage you from taking that step. For, with all your best intentions, you would not be able to conduct a full Torah-true life in your present place - the first condition of Halachic conversion, lacking which there can be no conversion.

Since it is a very serious matter, I am reiterating here what has been indicated in the main body of the letter, namely, that before you take up residence in a city and neighborhood where you can be certain of being able to carry out the said unequivocal commitment to conduct the everyday life in accordance with the Jewish Code of Law (Shulchan Aruch), there is no point in talking about Geyrus. Unless after discussing the matter with an orthodox Rabbi, and despite his reasoning and discouragement, ~~you~~ a basis may be found for pursuing the matter.

I trust you will accept the above in the proper spirit, since it is first of all my duty to clarify the true aspects of the situation, and it would also be in your best interests, as well as your family's, to follow the path of truth.