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בי"ה, ערשייך פ' במדבר, ה'תשמ"ו
ברוקלין, נ.י.

Dr. H. M. Jacobs
National President
National Council of Young Israel
3 West 16th St.
New York, NY 10011

Dear Dr. Jacobs,

Your letter of May 20 reached me with considerable delay. And although it is Erev Shabbos today, I hasten to reply to your letter, especially since it is not a complicated matter.

(1) Knowing you, as I do, it is surprising to me that you refer to such questions as "mixed seating and use of microphone on Shabbos, etc." in terms of "lowering the standards of orthodoxy," whereas in fact these are matters of Halachah which clearly rules that the former is a desecration of the Shul, and the latter is a desecration of Shabbos. Thus, by what stretch of definition can these matters be accepted as orthodox - even for the sake of so-called "unity?"

(2) To argue that a movement which rejects ^{חורו מן השמים} and consequently feels free to introduce reforms or "adjustments" in the spirit of changing times, yet might be accepted as a part of orthodox Judaism or religious Jewry in general, "for the sake of unity" - would be patently a deception and a denial of a clear ruling of the Rambam. Obviously, however appealing the call for unity may be, even if it could be termed "unity," it could not possibly warrant acquiescence or compromise in such a basic matter. ^{אין}

Because all that has been said above is so plain, there is surely no need for me to elaborate. I trust you will find the above fully answering your questions.

At this time with the approach of Shovuos, ^{זמן מתן תורתנו} I extend to you and yours prayeful wishes (using the traditional expression among Chabad Chassidim) - ^{קבלת התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות}

With esteem and blessing

M. Schneerson

P.S. Permit me to address a matter, without being asked for advice, namely the advisability of merging the two prominent orthodox organizations.

In my opinion, especially in this country and in the present day and age, I do not think it desirable at all for two orthodox organizations, each of which has a record of practical achievements in its own realm of activity, to merge into one, even for the sake of unity, as has been suggested. The reasons will become more clearly apparent from an analogy in Halachah. The Halachah rules that where תרומה and קדשים are mixed together, the resulting level has the validity of the lesser one, namely that of תרומה and not of קדשים. Applying this analogy, and in view of the fact that what one of the said orthodox organizations considers as "תרומה," the other would consider as "קדשים," and what the other considers as "קדשים" would be considered by the first as merely "תרומה," and vice versa - in the nature of things, in the present climate in this country, the final net result would be a general loss of ground from קדשים to תרומה.

Secondly, in the case of a merger, the factor of קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה will be eliminated.

Thirdly, again in the present day and age, it is "healthy" to be exposed to constructive criticism from outside, whereas inside criticism is not always effective. A merger would eliminate this factor, too.

With your experience in public affairs and intimate knowledge of the state of affairs of orthodox Jewry in America, there is no need to elaborate further on this matter also.