

יהודה משה ונחמה דינה שיחי סימפסאן

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By the Grace of G-d
10th of Iyar, 5746
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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Greeting and Blessing:

It is a long time - several years - since I heard from you. Usually I interpret the absence of correspondence as "no news is good news." Regrettably, however, rumors have reached me that, insofar as Yiddishkeit is concerned, there is much to be desired. While I hope that they are exaggerated, it is too serious a matter to ignore, especially as it concerns a thinking person, married, and the head of a family.

In view of our past relationship, even though our correspondence has been interrupted, and on the basis of the generally accepted principle of chazoko (the presumption that the previous status is still in effect), I take the liberty, though it is really my duty as a friend, to express my hope, and if necessary, also my urgent appeal to you to reaffirm your adherence to the Torah way in the everyday life and conduct. And even if there is some basis to the said rumors - surely you know that every person has the ability of "turning over a new leaf," and the Torah gives the assurance that "nothing stands in the way of Teshuvah."

It is possible - if, indeed, there is some basis to the said rumors - that it is due to being distracted by some questions or doubts regarding some Mitzvos. But this should be no reason to weaken one's adherence to the Torah way. For, as it has often been pointed out, it is not surprising that a created human being, whose faculties are necessarily limited by virtue of being a created finite being, does not fully understand the infinite wisdom of the Creator. In due course, as one gains more knowledge and insight in Torah, one finds that earlier doubts and questions fall by the wayside. It thus becomes a matter of deciding now whether it is prudent to give up the way of the Torah, pending ultimate clarification of those troublesome doubts, or rather go on to perform Mitzvos on the authority of those who have long clarified them through lifelong dedication to Torah study and Torah observance.

On weighing the pros and cons of the above, plain reason surely dictates the sensible choice. For, if the worst comes to the worst, and one does not resolves one's doubts - not because they are insoluble, but because the particular individual has, for one reason or another, failed to discover the answers - one will have subjected himself to some minor inconveniences (such as putting on Tefillin on weekday mornings, and the like), or deprived himself of certain indulgences. However, should he eventually discover (as he is very likely to) that his questions and doubts were without real foundation, he will not forgive himself for having so recklessly deprived himself of the inestimable eternal values during each and every day when he allowed himself to be distracted from the Truth.

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Of course, some people might still argue that there are many Jews who have neglected adherence to the Torah and Mitzvos for the same or similar reasons. But here again common sense dictates that this argument has no validity, especially in this day and age, when, sad to say, many people conduct themselves in a manner that is contrary not only to the Torah, but contrary also to all basic human principles; or, to put it more bluntly - contrary not only to the first part of the Ten Commandments, but also to all the "thou shalt not"s of the latter part. Obviously, the claim that "others do it" is no justification whatever.

Finally, a further point. From personal knowledge and contact with persons in similar situations, I can assure you that when a Jew makes a firm resolve to do the right thing, he or she finds it much easier to carry out than at first imagined. Especially since there is the assurance of Torah that "whoever is determined to purify himself, receives aid from On High." Particularly in your case, having the Zechus of Torah and Mitzvos in the past, as I knew you during the period when we maintained a personal relationship.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlocho and good tidings in all above,

With blessing

My. Schneerson