

file  
General  
July 13, 1966

Mr. Max Naus  
Naus Trimming Company  
1369 Broadway  
New York, New York

Dear Max:

I received your sad letter here in Lake Como, Pa., and I am dictating a response which ~~my~~ secretary is typing up and sending to you together with ~~the~~ enclosed letter which I am returning herewith.

Your letter, quite frankly, made very painful reading. It looks like a classic example of "hillul ha-shem." Anything that diminishes Orthodox Judaism, diminishes each of us at the same time.

However, quite honestly, I would be most reluctant to attempt either to justify the young man or the daughter of this [redacted]. My own experience in counselling married couples has taught me that there are almost always two sides to every story, and that even when you are aware of both it is exceedingly difficult to assign major blame to one side or the other. Your [redacted] quite underatandably blames his son-in-law, and justifies his daughter. Perhaps if you heard the other party speaking, you would get the reverse impression. There is, frankly, very little that you can do to dissuade [redacted] from his generalization that because his son-in-law is Orthodox, and his son-in-law is indecent (according to his interpretation), therefore all Orthodox Jews and Orthodox Judaism is wrong.

What should you do? I would suggest writing to him and telling him the following: first, that you are deeply grieved to hear of the unfortunate situation that developed, and that you hope all will go well. Second, tell him that it was his misfortune to have gotten involved with an Orthodox Jew who is the exception rather than the rule. Inform him of your own wide experience, and of the fact that you have rarely come across such a case among committed Jews, but that no group, nor individual is perfect. I would plead



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with him not to judge all Orthodox Jews on the basis of the misconduct of one such person, even as we rightly appeal to the non-Jewish world not to judge all Jews because of the misdeeds of one or several Jews.

Finally, as to the practical question, I would strongly suggest that he submit the case to the Beth Din of America, 84 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York. This is the special court for domestic affairs set up by the Rabbinical Council of America, to which Rabbi Jung and I both belong. Because of the fact that the father-in-law, [REDACTED], is a professor at Yeshiva University, his chances for getting action are that much greater -- since the sensitivity of the man's family is always an asset to the plaintiff, namely, [REDACTED].

I hope that I have been of some help to you, although, like you, I find the reading of such a letter to be a painful experience.

I hope you and Mrs. Naus will have a marvelous summer and a healthy one. Please give our fondest regards to all our friends of The Center Family. Mindy joins me in these good wishes.

Cordially yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

NL/le

Encs.