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107

24 Av, 5727  
August 30, 1967

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm  
131 West 86th Street  
New York, New York

Dear Rabbi Lamm: J

I trust this note finds all well.

This letter is a solicitation - for advice. If you can give it a little thought, it would be most appreciated.

The past few years, with the immediate past one most especially, have been to me very enlightening in one specific sphere of activity: writing, and all its ramifications. Now that I have baruch haShem reached some plateau of achievement, I look back and say: why was I not aware of it all - our anglo-orthodox publications, the ins and outs of book publishing, etc. - and are others still unaware while they should be aware?

Undoubtedly, writing and publishing are grossly misunderstood by most people, including many potential writers who might have tried, had there been any semblance of guidance. It turns out that in an extremely limited form, there is a "club" of orthodox people involved in this sphere, who undoubtedly rub pencils with each other, and who are informed of the little bit that exists within this limited sphere. But is there no need to project, to stimulate one another in a stronger spirit of kinas sofrim, while at the same time giving some label to their sphere that would identify it to the world for the purpose of attracting others? I am not at all interested in the establishment of another dues-paying, dinner-holding society. It appears that some professionalization for the purposes of advancing the profession is in order.

At one time I mentioned a dream of a writers' bungalow colony. I still dream of it. But this letter is in request for advice on an immediate project in the light of the aforementioned remarks.

I am interested (to the point of bankrolling it) in publishing a pamphlet, 32 pages, 6 x 9, entitled: WRITING: ORTHODOXY'S EMERGING INTELLECTUAL FORCE. An outline of its contents is attached.

Each person would be solicited to write a concise statement (250-300 words) about his sphere of activity, based on two points: first, the present (how much circulation, reactions by the readership, etc.) and second, the future (the obvious need for writers to fill a growing need). The intention is that the complete pamphlet would serve as a document of "citizenship." It would be distributed free of charge, for the purpose of dissemination. It does not appear that too many copies would be needed, but mainly that they reach the right quarters. Nor do I right now have a plan of what should follow, rather to wait and judge reactions. The immediate purpose is to establish a map.

Is the plan too naive? Is this manner of projection unrealistic? Are the categories and people listed out of order?

Your thoughts on these and other considerations would be most appreciated.

May I point out this is a purely personal project, and in no way connected to my position at the Union.

Wishing you all the best, and looking forward to your reply, I remain

Sincerely yours,

*Elkanah*

Elkanah Schwartz

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P.S.- Other than your reactions to the above, is there any possibility and/or benefit of channelling such an activity through the Jewish Academy of Arts and Sciences?