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7th Adar 5766

L'chvod haRosh HaYeshiva, shlita,

Shalom aleichem. Along with many hundreds of people, I was shocked and distressed to read the Rosh Yeshivah's letter of condemnation of my works, which I wrote *l'shem Shamayim* and under the guidance of my rabbonim. In keeping with the spirit of the halachah that entitles someone to ask a *dayan*, "On what basis did you judge me?" I would like to respectfully ask the Rosh Yeshivah to explain the severe charges leveled against my works.

The Rosh Yeshivah wrote that "the publication of these books has caused serious damage to the sacred *mesorah* – and *emunah*." *Baruch Hashem*, many, many people have written to me to tell me how my books have strengthened their respect for Torah and have aided their *emunah*. In particular, the approach of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch to difficult statements of Chazal is surely an important part of the Hirschian legacy that many people appreciate my having shown to them. How have my books damaged *mesorah* and *emunah*? Is there anything wrong with including Rav Hirsch in the *mesorah*?

More significantly, the Rosh Yeshivah wrote that my works "distort and undermine the Torah's clear truths." I would like to ask the Rosh Yeshivah to elaborate on exactly which clear truths of the Torah are undermined and distorted in my books. As far as I am aware, there is not a single significant novel point in any of my books – they are merely collections and explanations of earlier sources, albeit some of which are obscure.

I know that Rav Elyashiv *shlita* was opposed to my works because I cited the approach of Rambam and Rav Hirsch that Chazal relied upon the science of their era, which was occasionally flawed. But I am doubtful if this was the Rosh Yeshivah's reason, since the Rosh Yeshivah, along with Rav Dovid Cohen, Rav Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg and Rav Yehoshua Neuwirth, wrote a *haskamah* to Prof. Leo Levi's book *The Science In Torah*, which uses this same approach. I have heard a rumor that the Rosh Yeshivah retracted his *haskamah* to that book, but I am reluctant to accept such gossip on the basis of hearsay alone.

Someone who spoke with the Rosh Yeshivah told me that the particular point in my books to which the Rosh Yeshivah objected was my stating that the six days of

Bereishis do not follow a chronological sequence. Although when I wrote the book, this was an extrapolation of mine from Rav Dessler, I subsequently discovered it be explicitly stated in *Michtav Me-Eliyahu* vol. 5 p. 348, where Rav Dessler writes that “the ten utterances with which the world was created are the ten *sefiros* whose order is the order of distinguishing revelations. The Torah instructed us according to this order in *Maase Bereishis*, not according to the order of physical time.” In vol. II he explains that the *sefiros* are correlated with the days; thus the order of days/*sefiros* is a conceptual order, not a chronological order. Furthermore, Ralbag in *Milchemes Hashem* 6:8 states that the six days are written in conceptual rather than chronological order, and *Akeidas Yitzchak*, Shem Tov and Abarbanel understand Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim* to be stating the same. In light of all this, I was wondering if the Rosh Yeshivah would reconsider his denunciation of my works.

I look forward to the Rosh Yeshivah’s response.

Respectfully,

Nosson Slifkin