

January 20, 1971

Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon, President  
Rabbinical Council of America, Inc.  
84 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10011

Dear Bernard:

Since I have just recently returned from a three months long stay in Israel, let this letter serve as my *gift* to you -- and to Rabbi Klavan as well.

Please do me the favor of reading this letter carefully, for I shall be very brief. If you want me to supplement it with any more information, you know that you are free to call on me.

During the months I spent in Israel, there occurred the unhappy Ashkelon affair. The problem set me thinking as to how we could creatively solve the problem of protecting the integrity of Shabbat while at the same time being considerate of the dilemma of the non-observant Jew who, because of a six day work week, feels hemmed in and curbed by Sabbath restrictions. I devised an idea which I imparted to Zevulun Hammer, who is the leader of the younger group of the N.R.P. I formulated it for him, gave him the background and rationale, and he proposed it as an amendment to one of the labor laws in the Knesset. Almogi, the Minister of Labor, was adamant in his opposition to it, and insisted that it be removed from the agenda of the Knesset. However, Hammer and Menachem Porush were able to round up enough MK's to defeat Almogi and get the amendment through the Knesset by 24 - 22. As of now, then, my Rosh Chodesh plan is in committee in the Knesset, which committee is expected to invite public testimony and discussion.

I have refrained from elaborating on the nature of the plan, and refer you instead to the enclosed article in the Jerusalem Post which explains it at least in rudimentary fashion. It will also be published in Hebrew in the next edition of Hadoar, and possibly has already appeared in Haaretz. The religious newspapers, of course, have given it prominent display in their news items in Israel.

Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon

-2-

January 20, 1971

I think that representations by the R.C.A. to the Prime Minister, and to the Israeli Ambassador to Washington, telling them that the Council heartily endorses the plan which can help solve part of the religious problems in Israel would be most helpful for its prospects. We have an opportunity here to sponsor something creative that will contribute to the inner peace and harmony of the state, and I would be most grateful to you for pushing it as aggressively as you can.

I look forward to seeing you and discussing it at your convenience.

Cordially,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

NL/hh

Enclosure

cc: Rabbi Klavan