

Copy for Rabbi Sassoon

UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH
CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA

84 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

OFFICE OF
EXECUTIVE VICE PRES.

ALGONQUIN 5-4100

ה"ב

Shevat 19, 5723
February 13, 1963

Dear Rabbi Gotthold:

Thank you for your letter of February 3rd and the copies of your letters to Mr. Max Stern and Mr. Jhirad.

Yesterday evening, Mr. Max Stern and some members of our Overseas Commission met to discuss your communications. We also had the benefit of the presence of Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon.

Since time is of the essence, as you so correctly point out and as we here are so deeply aware, I am informing you immediately of the decisions reached.

- 1) The Overseas Commission of the Orthodox Union is willing to participate if necessary in the expenditures for the maintenance and any other expenditures for yourself and Rabbi E. Kushelevsky in India with the amount of \$2,000.

The figures quoted by you were not clear to us. Firstly, since we are to pay only for maintenance, the figures given under this item do not amount to \$4,000 but only to \$3,000. Secondly, we find the amount of \$600 per month unreasonably high, even assuming that these amounts are a combination of salaries payable in Israel and actual maintenance of the rabbis in India. We would, of course, assume that your Ministry would continue to pay your salary and that also Rabbi Kushelevsky would continue to receive at least part of his salary. This makes the figure of \$4,000 even more questionable.

If I stated above "if necessary", I did so because Haham Gaon undertook to investigate the possibilities of obtaining Indian funds from the large Jewish trusts allocated for this purpose. We would appreciate it if you would immediately discuss this possibility with Rabbi Sassoon who is presently in Israel. These trust funds are frozen in India and cannot be utilized outside of the country. The Haham will take this matter up upon his return to England at the end of this month

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with some of the trustees. If, therefore, the amounts you listed under maintenance are intended for use in India, the Haham is hopeful that arrangements can be made with the trusts.

Your immediate clarification whether part of the funds requested, and if so what percentage, is intended for use in Israel is therefore hereby urgently requested.

- 2) We do not intend to ask the W.J.C. to share in the expenses. It is our feeling that this is a religious matter and that secular agencies should not be asked to participate.
- 3) As stated above, our financial participation is conditioned on your presence in India for at least four months and the presence of Rabbi Kushelevsky for at least one month. Were this delicate mission to be entrusted to other personalities, our prior agreement must be ascertained.
- 4) As you will see from the enclosed copy of my letter to Mr. Jhirad, we here fully endorse your and Rabbi Kushelevsky's mission which also has the express approval of Haham Gaon. Rabbis backed by your Ministry, the Jewish Agency, the Haham, and the Joint Overseas Commission of the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council; rabbis, both of whom happen to have American backgrounds and neither of whom is personally identified with either the Bene Israel or the Iraqi community, are sure to receive complete cooperation from all parts and segments of Indian Jewry, including the Bene Israel community. We do not feel that any other "neutral" auspices are needed and are, in fact, opposed to any secular sponsorship, as mentioned above.
- 5) The Haham will investigate, upon his return to London, the possibility of sending Rabbi Silas to Bombay for a period of two years. If the arrangements can be made, we will be informed of the salary necessary. In the opinion of the Haham, with which we find ourselves in fullest accord, a permanent rabbi for India will serve the desired purpose only after you and Rabbi Kushelevsky have succeeded in normalizing and stabilizing conditions and creating the harmony necessary for the community-wide acceptance of such a rabbi.

It is our hope that this reply will enable you to proceed immediately with the necessary arrangements for your and Rabbi Kushelevsky's journey to India. All of us are confident that

February 13, 1963

- 3 -

you will succeed, with the help of the Almighty, with this historic mission the importance of which is so evident.

Concerning the Tefillin, may I remind you that you were good enough to make the arrangements with the Jewish Agency Department. We here never contacted them. They shared a third of the cost, your Ministry shared a third of the cost and one-third was supplied by us. We are willing to proceed with this arrangement, as I wrote you on Kislev 30, for another 150-200 pair of Tefillin. It would be wonderful if you and Rabbi Kushelevsky could take along at least 50 pair of Tefillin or have them shipped to coincide with your arrival.

Hoping to receive your confirmation and agreement by return mail or cable, I am with kindest personal regards and all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

DR. SAMSON R. WEISS
Executive Vice President

SRW/sd

cc: Mr. Max Stern

Rabbi Zev Gotthold
Ministry of Religious Affairs
Jerusalem, ISRAEL