

February 9, 1959

Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld
Cultural Program Chairman
Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni
Amsterdam Avenue and 186th Street
New York 33, New York

Dear Rabbi Schonfeld:

I have before me your announcement concerning the interesting program scheduled for February 19. Unfortunately, it is impossible for me to come to New York again before the end of March. I am especially unhappy, however, over the prospect of missing this session since Rabbi Lamm's topic is of the greatest pertinence to my own situation. As you know, I am in Wichita with a "heter" from Rabbi Soloveitchik giving me a reasonable time to correct the seating arrangement in our synagogue. I have heard many favorable comments on Norman Lamm's treatment of this touchy topic, and, for all that I have written and spoken and read on this subject to date, I still feel that I would benefit from his presentation. I daresay, there are probably far more rabbis in outlying areas, unable to attend this session, who are in need of this discussion than there are in the metropolitan area.

This gives a pressing immediacy to the step I urged Rabbi Miller to take at our Mid-Winter Conference last month. At that time, I expressed similar sentiments about even less outstanding programs, and suggested that the Rabbinic Alumni adopt as one of its important services the responsibility of making copies of the tapes or mimeographed transcripts available to men in the field. Since the values of a convention extend further than just the papers presented, I don't think this policy will cause a drop in attendance. Moreover, I believe that such transcripts or tapes would be equally welcomed by those who do attend the sessions. There are many details, references, etc. that may slip by the listener, who would be grateful for the opportunity to review the material back home.

This is not really a difficult project. The technical end could be easily arranged, especially if the services of the Audio-Visual Department were engaged. I am sure that our colleagues would be happy to pay for these transcripts or tapes and help to defray the costs of the program.

There is in addition the aspect of *דפוס ופירוש*.
When one of our men works on a paper, pouring the best of his
experience, knowledge, and ability into the task, the result-
ing presentation should be given the widest possible publication.

Not the least of the considerations involved would be the
tremendous amount of good will and appreciation this would
arouse among our membership. Here would be a real, positive,
worthwhile service by the organization to its members. Such
a move is sure to result in heightened interest and morale---
and, probably, in heightened contributions, too.

I sincerely urge your serious consideration of this suggestion
in terms of general policy, and specifically in regard to
Rabbi Lamm's talk on February 19. I am sending copies of this
letter to the gentlemen listed below in the hope that between
you something positive will be worked out.

Yours truly,

Norman M. Bernhard, Rabbi

NMB:ef

cc: Rabbi Abraham Avrech
Rabbi Morris Finer
Rabbi Milton Furst
Mr. Victor B. Geller
Rabbi Norman Lamm
Rabbi Israel Miller
Rabbi Solomon J. Spiro
Rabbi Stitskind
Rabbi Harry Wohlberg