

February 14, 1974

Mrs. Joseph Kaplan
144 West 86th Street
New York, N.Y. 10024

Dear Lilly:

I am writing to you about a rather delicate matter. It is so delicate, that I must ask you in advance not to refuse me until you have thought about the issue carefully, and given me an opportunity to discuss it with you.

One of the most significant features of a truly Jewish community is that it does not relegate the care of the deceased to some impersonal agency, but assigns such service to the most distinguished members of its community, who are expected to do it with tenderness and sympathy. That is why the Hebra Kadisha has always been an Honor Society in the Jewish communities, and its presence or absence is often the best criterion of how authentically Jewish a community or synagogue is.

At The Center, we are proud that some of our very finest people have been elected to membership in the Hebra Kadisha, and have accepted graciously and have performed their work loyally.

While we presently have enough members in our Men's Hebra Kadisha, that is not true for our Ladies group. It is for this reason that I am turning to you, and several other young women of our congregation, and asking you to meet with Rabbi Jung and me briefly in order to discuss the matter with us.

In order to make it possible for those of you who work to be able to participate, I am calling it for Sunday morning,

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March 3, at 10:00 A.M. It will be a brief meeting, since I must begin my Jewish philosophy class at 11:00 A.M.

It is quite possible that your first reaction will be negative; that is not unusual, and we have had the same experience with previous members of the ladies group, as well as with the men.

However, I implore you not to act on that basis, but to suspend your decision until you join us in exploring the situation on the date mentioned above.

Please do be kind enough to notify my office that we may expect you.

Cordially,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

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