

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of India

C/o Magen Hsidim Synagogue,

8, Morland Road,

BOMBAY. 11, INDIA

Dated 7th MAY, 1961.

Dear Rabbi,

Thank you very much for yours of the April 30th 1961 and the snapshot enclosed therewith.

It may sound insincere if I am to mention once again that we are all more than grateful for the interest shown, by the UOJCA and particularly to you for reporting favourably on our behalf even though we are full of faults and lack the true spirit of cooperation. Yet one thing is certain and that is we all have a great yearning to know more of our religion and to be as good and Torah true Jews as our counterparts elsewhere, if not better.

It was kind of you to suggest that we could select two students in the place of Shelim and Jonathan. Before we make the selection we shall however try and persuade Shelim and Jonathan to accept the scholarships by informing them of the proposed enhanced salary to be paid on ~~their~~ being ordained as Rabbi and on completion of the Hazanut Course respectively. I have been in touch with the young man, who is offered the New York Yeshiva scholarship. I shall get him to apply for required forms forthwith. I suppose it will be better if I forward these to the University with a covering letter.

With regards to our requirements of books etc., I wonder if Dr Weiss could be requested to forward immediately 20 copies each of Chumash and the Code of Jewish Law in English for the benefit of those congregations which need it most and are not in possession of the same. I may mention here for your information that the United Synagogue of India

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has received a number of copies on Kashruth Laws for free distribution. Our desire, on the contrary, is to secure from you detailed instructions on Kashruth Laws and have them translated in Marathi and published in one of the issues of Mebasser. Incidentally I must remember to submit our request to Dr. Weiss for further funds for the continuation of the publication of Mebasser. As you are aware, Mr. Isaiah helped us in typing and taking extracts from different writings for our paper. This saved us the expenditure on full/part time clerk. We however had to pay the rental for the typewriter at Rs.25/- per month. I wish we could get at least one used Typewriter (English) as soon as possible, *from America.*

I shall be grateful if Dr. Weiss could be informed that the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Lehrfield to Bombay was quite a success, although they were in the city for just 35 hours. Dr. Lehrfield addressed the Israel's Independence Rally, organised by the BZA, which was fortunately advanced to Wednesday April 12th. Earlier in the day the Dr. was taken to Jewish schools and Synagogues by me.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mrs Lamm and the young Lamms on the addition of a bonny girl to the family. We pray that the Almighty give you all long, healthy and prosperous lives to do many more Maasim Tovim.

With best regards.

Most sincerely, yours,

A.D. Jhirad

(A.D. JHIRAD)

Jt. Hon. Secretary.

Rabbi Norman Lamm
The Jewish Center
N E W Y O R K.

P.T.O.

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations
of India

P.S. - I have been transferred to the new place of duty with effect from May 1, 1961. I hope to be able to assume my duties as Executive Director pretty soon.

I have enclosed separately a question which I hope is selfexplanatory about the position of cemeteries in Bombay. If necessary this may be referred to the Rabbinical Council for opinion.

The required copies of Mebasser Vol. I. No. 2 are being separately forwarded by Sea Mail.

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(1) The Bene Israels had their first burial ground somewhere near the Old Mazagaon Power Works. There is, however, no trace of this cemetery today.

(2) The second burial ground is situated near Sir J.J. Hospital. Government acquired it after it was full, and it now forms part of Sir J.J. Hospital Building Extensions.

(3) The third burial ground, situated in Clare Road, was granted by Government on 26th April 1785 in lieu of the burial ground near Sir J.J. Hospital (No. 2 above). When it was full, the land was taken over by the Municipality, and it has now been turned into a Municipal garden.

(4) Govt. granted the fourth burial ground on 18th November 1832 in Kamatipura (in lieu of No. 3 above), and later some additional land on 17th January 1837.

The Trustees of this burial-ground, for reasons known to themselves, handed over this burial ground to a private industrialists who demolished most of the tablets and erected structures thereon. As a result of considerable uproar in the community, who openly accused the Trustees of making profits on the deal, the Trustees have now succeeded in obtaining Court orders for the eviction of the Contractor.

(5) The fifth burial ground is situated in Anjirwadi, Near Mount Road, Mazgaon. This was filled by the end of 1926.

(6) The sixth burial ground at Haines Road is the one at present in use since 1927. This last cemetery is now on the point of being full, and may, at best, last for a couple of years.

It will thus be seen that only the last three burial grounds are in the possession of the community. It is just possible that on account of pressure on land for

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building and industrial purposes in Bombay city and suburbs, Government may give burial ground hereafter somewhere near Bhandup, about 25 miles away from the city. The distance from the city will prove expensive, especially for the majority of the poor, to carry the dead body in a conveyance to such a long distance. Apart from the question of cost, very few friends and relatives would make it convenient to attend a funeral on account of distance from their residence and place of employment. God forbid, but I hope this state of affairs does not induce some to send the dead bodies to the Municipal Crematorium and thus commit offence against Jewish religious laws for circumstances beyond their control.

I am therefore writing to you in the expectation that you will enlighten us whether the burial ground No.4, which is the oldest at present in our possession, could now be reopened for burial. It is felt that, in doing so, the burial ground will be used ~~against~~ for the same purpose for which it was ~~originally~~ originally acquired. As it is, the contractor to whom it was leased, has demolished the tablets, and what we have now is a bare piece of land in our possession.

Our Union would like to be furnished with an authoritative opinion, supported by Talmudic precedents if any, to enable the community to decide whether the burial ground No.4 can now be reopened in view of the difficulties that the community is likely to experience if a burial ground situated about 25 miles away from the city is offered by Government.

a.s. Jurel