

September 19, 1973

Mr. Jacob Michael
211 Central Park West
New York, N.Y. 10024

Dear Mr. Michael:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the spirit in which you responded to my request to cable Mayor Teddy Kolek, and for the cable itself. The problem has developed into a cause celebre, and since I talked with you I have seen photos and articles in the Israeli press about it.

Actually, I am in a way acquainted with the problem first-hand. During the semi-Sabbatical I spent in Jerusalem, we lived in the neighborhood in which the religious parents are now seeking a Mamlakhti-Dati sch~~h~~ool. My own children had to walk long distances to get to school and back. Despite Jerusalem's generally good bus system, there were no connections between Rehavia and the major religious schools closest to us. And the area the children had to traverse was one that was chocked with traffic during the very times the children had to walk to school. Anyone acquainted with Israeli drivers knows what that means!

It is obvious, from all that I have read about the situation and from my personal contacts, that religious education is not favored by the authorities who are themselves not committed to it -- and Kolek belongs in this group. (In the latest issue of Panim-el-Panim, the editor, who has long been antagonistic to the Mizrachi, had a major editorial complaining about the discrimination against religious education in Israel, and the current problem with this school was the major case in point.)

Two of the people who are in the forefront of the struggle to get a religious school in the area are Naomi and Ben Zion Hochstien. They are American Olim, highly cultured, genuine Zionists, non-politival, and people of moderate disposition. He is a businessman, she is a lawyer. I have known them and admired them for years. I enclose the letter I just received from them (please return it after you have read it). As you will see, it is unfortunate that your cable was not able to change the situation, and even more regretful that the Mapai people are able to use the small-mindedness of some of our fellow religious Jews to help them keep religious education to a minimum. Yet, I know the Hochstein's and, although they are not by nature fighters, they are deeply committed Jews and I doubt they will yield so quickly. I rather suspect that they will continue to run a school in tents in the middle of Jerusalem -- while a brand new school remains largely empty nearby!

Forgive me for troubling you with all this, but you were kind enough to do as I asked, and so I thought it no more than right to keep you abreast of developments, no matter how unpleasant.

Once again, my warmest thanks for everything, and all my best wishes for a ketivah vehatimah toveh.

Cordially,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM