

SECRETARY:  
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# Auckland Hebrew Congregation

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BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

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11th June, 1973.

Dear Rabbi Lamm, א"ל

I was delighted to learn of your plan to visit New Zealand and am looking forward to welcoming you in Auckland on the 9th of August. Please, let me have your flight No. so that I can await you.

Please accept a very sincere invitation to spend your 1st Shabbat with us. Both my Congregation and I would be deeply honoured if you were to occupy my pulpit on *שבת ראשון*.

I booked you in at the Grafton Oaks Motor Lodge, which is about ten minutes walking distance from the Synagogue, for 3-4 days initially, commencing on August 9th. Hopefully, this arrangement will be satisfactory.

For your information I should like to give a brief description of N.Z. Jewry and the circumstances prevailing at present. We have here, in this Dominion, approximately 4000 Jews. About two thousand live in Auckland, slightly less in Wellington cca. 125 souls in Christchurch, 50-60 in Hastings-Napier, about 40 in Dunedin and a few families in Palmerston-North and Hamilton etc. To my knowledge - and I have been here since 31.8.1971 - there is not a single *אומן* that attends my Synagogue and at present I could not partake of a cooked meal in the home of ~~any~~ of my congregants with the possible exception of 2 or 3.

There is a butchery, the premises of which are sublet by the Congregation to a non-Jew. This butchery is subsidized by the Board of the Congregation to the tune of several thousand dollars annually. This butcher sells the meat without supervision. He sells the whole beast including the unporged hind-quarters, and some people are under an illusion that this is *כשר*.

When in Sydney at last year's Ministers' Assoc. Conference I took the opportunity to discuss this and related matters with the Sydney Beth Din, whose ruling was, that until they continue to sell hind-quarters I should under no circumstance buy from that butchery. In consequence I am constrained to buy my meat from the Wellington Kosher-Coop., several hundred miles away, *and the butchery operates in Auckland without my approval.*



Kosher processed food is available but in a rather limited range and quantity.

The Synagogue in Auckland seating 300- males and cca. 380 females, was built in 1968. It has several facilities, a kindergarten with about 43 children of which number only about 23 are Jewish. It has a Day School with about 16 children, of which 3-4 are Jewish. Ten classrooms for the Sunday Hebrew School, a minor Synagogue for youth, three small flatetts for *שרב* and *זיבן* as the homes are too far from the Synagogue, for the ministers to walk. There is a *זיבן* which was hardly used until my arrival, and since then I succeeded in prevailing upon 5 of the dozen or so brides to use it even once.

Observance is very slack, ignorance great and deep, and the desire to learn and improve almost non-existent.

I think you will have received a rather full answer to a perfectly simple enquiry.

Where could I contact you in Sydney, Could you let me know, please.

Trust that this finds you in the best of health and looking forward to welcoming you here, I am,

Yours sincerely,

M. R. Mandel

P.S. The Agriculture Dept. is rather strict but there are plenty or different tinned etc. foods that are allowed, and so is kosher cheese. You may care to bring some along, *for your own purposes.* Wishing you a successful and enjoyable trip and eventually a safe return, I am, with warmest best wishes in which Mrs. Mandel joins me,

*אז אהבה*  
*לזמן קצר מ"מ*