

March 26, 1976

FROM: RABBI NORMAN LAMM

TO: DR. ELMER OFFENBACHER

RE: GUIDANCE FOR SHOMRIM

1. I do not believe we have to be excessively worried about a shomer who must take time out from his duties for personal needs. I assume, of course, that these absences from his duties do not last more than a very few minutes. Under such circumstances, there is no reason to be stringent.

2. With regard to the conduct of the shomer during his duties, it is traditional that the shomer recite Psalms. At present, I think it would be too radical a departure from custom to allow the shomer to engage in other pursuits, such as secular studies. I would prefer that the yeshiva students whom we are considering as shomrim, be instructed to study *דברים ופרק יג*, preferably those items which are studied during the "nine days," such as *פרק יג דברים*; special chapters of Jeremiah; *פרק יג דברים*, etc. If the student feels that he must devote his time to other areas of *דברים ופרק יג*, then I would not object to it.

3. I am studying the question of a Sefer Torah to be used exclusively for the mourners' homes, and will inform you when I've arrived at a decision.