

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of India

C/o Magen Hasidim Synagogue,
8, Moreland Road,

BOMBAY-11, INDIA

Dated August 30, 1963.

Dear Dr. Weiss,

At a meeting of the Executive of the UOJCI held on 7th August 1963 there was general agreement over the views expressed by me and I was further directed to report later (after July 15, 1963) developments on the activities of Rabbi Gotthold.

In my letter of the July 15, I had omitted to bring one important fact to your notice. Rabbi Gotthold met the members and a few others of the Purity Justification Committee at the residence of the Committee's President. What was discussed at this meeting was not communicated to us by either party. However, we understand that the entire discussion has been tape-recorded.

On Sunday July 21, Rabbi Gotthold requested the use of the Mikhve of Magen Hasidim Synagogue for carrying out certain conversions. Should not these ceremonies been performed under the auspices of one of the Synagogues, in the absence of a Beth-Dir? Here again, he has converted, it is understood, a minor girl, born of a Cohen (who was connected with Christian Missionary activities) and a non-Jewish Lady. These were long pending cases and opinion with regards to the conversion of the children was obtained from Haham Gaon by the Local Committee and he had definitely ruled that minor children cannot be converted.

This and such other acts of the Rabbi have caused a great deal of confusion and difference of opinion in the minds of the affiliated Congregations. When he met the officers of the USI for the second time in the morning of Sunday July 21, he is supposed to have stated that he had absolutely no respect for the leaders of the UOJCI. We do not give much credit to such propoganda or rumours but you know that such things can be used to advantage by the opponents. Certain members of the Executive

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feel that Mr. Penkar and I were in the know about Rabbi Gotthold's arrival and the expected arrival of two more Rabbis to India and that, we kept it a secret because of your directives.

Hashemaim

A few members of the Shinar ~~Hasidim~~ Synagogue have requisitioned a special meeting of the General Body to consider the question of withdrawing from the Union. We have confidence in the Trustees and members of the Committee and the majority of the ordinary members, but interested parties can take advantage of the troublesome situation and create a split.

At Ahmedabad, Circumcision of a child born of a Jewish father and Non-Jewish Lady was forced upon the Committee and the lady in question was subsequently converted by the Rabbi. No Certificate of conversion has been issued and the Synagogue Authorities are faced with the problem of marrying the couple.

Two divorce cases were settled by Rabbi Gotthold, without proper certificates. In the case of one, where the man is leaving for Israel, there is no trouble but in the case one who is settled in Ahmedabad and wants to get married, the Committee is again faced with a problem. In the absence of a certificate, the Committee is unable to perform the ceremony. Don't you think this is causing untold harm. Another matter, that was reported is that Rabbi Gotthold is supposed to have smoked in the Synagogue proper whilst preparing the 'Gittin' referred to above.

The Mikveh of all the Synagogues have been disqualified. For the conversion, Rabbi Gotthold had arranged for 1000 Kilos of ice from an ice-factory to which some tap water was added. Does all this mean that our women should not use these Mikveh for the ritual cleansing, too? Is the community to be taught something, corrective changes introduced and proper procedures laid down, or are they to be told, "what you were doing for the last two thousand years was all wrong and what you are doing even now is not in accordance with Halakha"? With the Bene Israel question unsettled and disturbing rumours, floating

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about, all our actions are doped ultravires.

The Executive is, therefore, of the opinion that pending settlement of the problem of the Bene-Israel in Israel, Israeli Rabbis may not be deputed to India.

It is understood that the Livorno Press is being restarted in Israel. We will appreciate it very much if you could kindly institute enquiries in this connection, with the proprietors, with a view to finalising arrangements with them for the purchase of daily and Holy Days Prayer books for our Congregations. If possible we could act as their agents for India.

Can we have by return of Post the New Year's messages from the Presidents UOJCA and RCA, so that they can be got printed in the forthcoming issue of Nebasser.

With kindest personal regards,

I am,
Sincerely yours,

A.D. Jhiradi

(A.D. JHIRADI)
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