

February 21, 1961

Mr. A. D. Jhirad
U.O.J.C.I.
c/o Magen Hasidim Synagogue
8 Morland Road
Jacob Circle
Bombay 11, India

My dear Abraham:

It was indeed a pleasure to receive your letter in Israel. I want to assure you that my friendship for you will extend over the oceans for many many years to come, please G-d.

There is yet very much to do in order to complete my mission to India. The following represents only the very beginning of our work here subsequent to my trip.

- (1) I have sent the copies of the Gittin to Haham Gaon in London. He will write to you directly. I most strongly recommend that his guidance be completely accepted. He is a wonderful individual who has very warm feelings especially for the Bene Israel. Frankly, I was not too happy with the copies of the Gittin you sent me. However, we shall leave that to Dr. Gaon and his Beth Din.
- (2) It will take a short while yet until we can begin to fill all the requirements for various books. I have just been informed of the unfortunate news of the passing of Dr. Weiss' mother, of blessed memory. It will, therefore, take some time until he is able to supervise the entire matter.
- (3) Similarly, while I would advise continuing the work for the formation of a lay Beth Din, or Religious Committee, this should be done behind the scenes and quietly until such time as we can advise you of the proper procedure to follow. I suspect you shall be hearing directly from Dr. Weiss about this.
- (4) The Tefillin. I suggest you immediately cancel all further orders of Tefillin from Cochin. I have arranged for the UOJCI to receive Tefillin of far better quality from Israel. The Jewish Agency will be prepared to make up the remainder of the cost, over and above the Union's payment. However, before this

is done, you must make sure that customs in India will allow the Israeli product to come through. For this, as well as for all other matters concerning Israel, you should be in direct contact with Rabbi Zev Gotthold, Ministry of Religions, Jerusalem. He will coordinate all our work in Israel for us.

- (5) If you recall, the day I left India a young couple came to see me regarding conversion. I forgot her name. The non Jewish man was Conrad Lord. You may inform them of the following. If they emigrate to Israel he must first acquire resident status - no tourist will ever be recognized as a suitable candidate for conversion. As soon as he becomes a resident he must apply to the Beth Din which will not consider his application actively for twelve months. During that time he must study intensively. When the twelve month period is up, he then will be examined by the Beth Din and, if found suitable, accepted as a Jew. He should contact Rabbi Itamar, Secretary of the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem, or Rabbi Unterman, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv.
- (6) Scholarships. I have arranged for the four boys I interviewed to receive their education, three in Israel and one in America. Before they are accepted, however, I would like the UOJCI to obtain from them written statements of their promise binding them to serve in India, or any other community chosen by the UOJCA Overseas Commission, for a minimum period of five years after their graduation. You may obtain legal help in drawing up these papers from whomever you choose in Bombay.

Jonathan Joseph Moses will be trained at the Yeshiva Porat Yosef in Jerusalem. This is a Sephardi school which will provide him with private instruction and then train him as a teacher, Hazzan, Mohel, Sopher and possibly Shohet. Rubin Solomon Shellim and Samuel Aaron Nagavker will be accepted in Yeshiva Kol Torah in Jerusalem. In the beginning the school will provide for private instruction in order to prepare them for regular courses. We feel it should take no more than three to four years until they are ordained rabbis. In addition, they will be trained in Hazanut according to your custom. The Yeshiva will provide them with all their necessities during their stay in Israel. The UOJCA will take care of their passage money.

A great deal of intensive and consistently high level work will be expected of these boys. They must report every month to Rabbi Gotthold. If any laxity in their work is noticed they will be sent home immediately. Of course, considering the reputation they have and the impression they made on me I do not in the least expect any trouble with them. On the contrary, I hope they shall prove to be superlative students.

Mr. Zev Lang, the Director of the Yeshiva Kol Torah, informs me that the new term begins on Rosh Hodesh Iyar - April 17, 1961. They should be in Jerusalem before that date. Rabbi Gotthold has suggested they come even before Passover and he will arrange for them to spend the holiday in the proper kind of environment.

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Once again, please contact Rabbi Gotthold immediately. Copies of all correspondence with him should be sent to Dr. Weiss at the UOJCA.

The last of the four boys, Solomon Aaron Awasker, we shall try to educate at Yeshiva University. Since the new year begins in September we still have some time with him. There shall be the question of transferring his credits, etc. etc. I shall leave that to Dr. Weiss when he returns to his office.

- (7) We are currently searching for an appropriate candidate to be rabbi in Bombay. You shall, of course, hear from us in detail about this as soon as there is any news.
- (8) May I remind you that you had promised to send me the list of addresses of the various people whom I had mentioned to you. Also, I am most interested in receiving the tape and the palm prints from Wakroli.

Please give my very best wishes to the Penkars, to Mr. Benjamin, Mr. Manasseh, Mr. Ezra and all our other friends.

Good luck to you in all your undertakings.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Norman Lamm

P.S. Please notify Dr. Weiss as soon as you begin actively on behalf of UOJCA