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February 2, 1967

Rabbi Norman Lamm  
The Jewish Center  
131 West 86th Street  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

It was a pleasure to have had the opportunity of meeting you the other day together with our good friend Mr. Jakob Michael. I appreciated the great understanding you showed for the work of the Hebrew University. I hope that I will have an opportunity of discussing other aspects of the University's work with you in the not too distant future.

May I repeat what I said to you when we met with reference to the publicity which has been given to the program for Canon Law at the Hebrew University. The first thing I would like to make clear is what the Rector of the Hebrew University stated categorically last week, namely that there will be no chair in Canon Law at the Hebrew University. He further added that all academic programs at the Hebrew University, whether of teaching or research, cannot be decided upon by outside bodies but only by the faculties concerned and subsequently these decisions must be approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors.

All that has been agreed to by the University is that a Visiting Lectureship in Canon Law is to be set up. From time to time, outstanding experts in this field will be invited to deliver lectures in Jerusalem on aspects of this subject. There will be no regular course for students or others. The University has several similar lectureships such as the Samuel Paley Lectures in American Culture and Civilization, and the Lionel Cohen lectureship in Law. These visiting lectureships provide a very useful addition to the regular curricula of the University enabling us to bring outstanding figures to Jerusalem periodically.

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A very important point which seems to have been confused due to some of the statements in various newspapers is on the nature of Canon Law. This is a specifically legal subject and is not concerned with the teaching of Catholicism as such. This is a discipline which belongs within the field of legal studies. It should be borne in mind, incidentally, that marriage, inheritance and other matters of personal law of the Catholic citizens of Israel are officially governed by Canon Law just as Rabbinic law governs the same areas for the Jewish citizens.

I am sure that the knowledge of the above facts will remove the apprehension which I gather has been expressed by certain good friends.

May I add another important thought which I raised with you the other day. I think that it would be a very fine thing if one of our Jewish organizations or a group of friends were to undertake the endowment of one of the chairs at the University in Jewish Law or in Talmud to honor an outstanding rabbinical figure.

Sincerely yours,

  
Bernard Cherrick

BC:B

photo =  
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