

January 29, 1970

Rabbi Israel Klavan  
Rabbinical Council of America  
84 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York

Dear Issy:

I enclose a draft copy of a Proclamation which ought to be circulated, signed, and published as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

I talked with the Rav about it, and he is very much in favor of the idea. Please show him the copy for possible revision. I have no pride of authorship; as long as it is done in time for maximum effect I'll be happy.

Perhaps you can contact a number of people, in different areas in public and academic life and ask them to obtain consent for the use of their names. Dr. Seymour Lachman, of the Board of Education (who first proposed the idea to me) might know of others in his field. In city government you might try Marvin Schick and Daniel Greer. Marvin may have recommendations for other academics too. Milton Furst of Y.U. may have a list of such people. Offhand, I might mention Marvin Fox of Ohio State, Paul Rosenberg of Columbia, and Abraham Tennenbaum of Columbia.

The petition should be sent to Golda Meir and published in the Jerusalem Post, in Haaretz (in Hebrew) -- and how about the New York Times?

My secretary is typing this up while I'm off to California, but you can contact me at any time. I'll be at the Riviera Hotel in Palm Springs -- she has my phone number.

I'm sorry to burden you with this, but if the issue has not been settled by the time you get this letter, it is simply too important to delay.



Best regards to Zev.

Cordially yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

NL/ek  
Enclosure

P.S. I'd like to sign it too - in my academic capacity. All other R.C.A. members who are in universities should do likewise, without referring to their rabbinic credentials.

cc: Lennie Rosenfeld  
Rabbi Jung  
Rabbi J. B. Solovitchik  
Rabbi H. Schachter  
Dr. Samson R. Weiss  
Dr. Seymour Lachman  
Max Stern  
Rabbi D. Jakobovits



## A PLEA FOR JEWISH UNITY

We are Jews active in public and academic life in the United States of America. Most of us have long records of support for and work on behalf of the State of Israel as well as the Jewish community in the United States and elsewhere. Our major concern is the Jewish people throughout the world -- its unity and its continuity.

It is for this reason that we deplore the recent decision of the Israeli Supreme Court in the Shalit case. We consider it calamitous. In authorizing a distinction between Jewish nationality and Jewish religion, it strikes a mortal blow at the fusion of the two concepts which, enshrined in the Halakhah, has guided the destinies of our people throughout its millennial history.

Had this dichotomy been accepted in the past, our people would long have been assimilated through intermarriage and we never would have survived the vicissitudes of exile.

If this cleavage between people and faith takes root, there will be Jewish Catholics and Jewish Protestants and Jewish Moslems. And Jewish Jews too.

Were nationality and religion severed at any point in our past - there would be no State of Israel today. And no Israeli naval officers. And no Israeli Supreme Court.

The Jewish people is too precious for us to remain silent at this cruel blow to its integrity. The Halakhah is too sacred



for us to refrain from expressing our shock and dismay at its official desecration. The State of Israel is too dear to us to accept without protest this grievous decision which can only further exacerbate the divisions within its citizenry, and alienate from it the majority of the Jewish people in the various lands of the Dispersion.

We therefore call upon the Government of Israel and the Knesset to do all within its power to overrule this extremely dangerous and short-sighted decision of the Israeli Supreme Court -- without compromise or equivocation.

Our faith in the Supreme Judge of the world allows us to ask for nothing less.