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REPORT

submitted to the

UOJCA JOINT OVERSEAS COMMISSION

on

MISSION TO INDIA

(JANUARY 15 - FEBRUARY 15, 1961)

by

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

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I. INTRODUCTION

(1) The communities visited in the course of this mission were: London, both going to and coming from India; in India: Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, Poona, Ahmedabad and the towns and villages north of Bombay; and in Israel: Jerusalem, Bnei Brak and Tel Aviv.

(2) The reception given to me as an emissary of the Union and of RCA was most enthusiastic. People are immensely flattered and encouraged by our interest in them. The crowds at my talks - and they numbered over thirty in the three weeks I was there, were large and receptive, both in Bombay and elsewhere.

(3) Population Figures

It is difficult to give exact figures. The new national census in India will take place this year, and then we shall be in a position to obtain more precise information. We can approximate that there are about 22,000 Jews in all of India, of whom 18,000 reside in and around Bombay (including Thana), about 1,000 in Calcutta and the rest dispersed in Poona, Ahmedabad and smaller centers. Of these probably 19,000 are Bene Israels and 3,000 of Sephardi origin, mostly Baghdadi, with some from Syria, Egypt, Yemen, etc. The Iraqi community is quickly disintegrating due to emigration to England, Australia, Canada and Israel. Some Bene Israels are leaving but not in large numbers.

(4) Division in the Community

The antagonism between Bene Israels and Baghdadis is perhaps not as sharp as it used to be but is still a force that must be reckoned with. In the UOJCI it is true, we have merged both groups. Nevertheless, this is mostly a formal arrangement and there is yet place for improvement.

The Indian Jews, in general, have a tendency to argumentation ad hominem. Perhaps the lack of organized entertainment, such as we know it in the West, causes them to seek an outlet in this manner. Thus, in addition to the ancient rivalry between both communities, the Jewish community now suffers two more splits: one the Orthodox-Conservative-Liberal division, and an ugly battle over the control of the Sassoon trusts.

The Liberals have attracted the wealthiest Jews of the community, mostly Bene Israels and are under the guidance of an Israeli spiritual leader, Dr. Nativ, an Indianized Jew who is not very aggressive. The Liberals have infiltrated many of the key community organizations, both those in existence and those now forming. The Conservatives are small in number. Their main strength lies in the three or four key people who are their leaders - the intelligentsia of the Bene Israel community. At every step they loudly proclaim their undiminished orthodoxy. The orthodox group consists of the majority of Indian Jewry.



Most of the orthodox congregations are affiliated with the UOJCI, founded by Rabbi Charles Weinberg during his visit last summer. His work was of major significance in advancing our cause in India.

The battle over the trusts has religious significance in addition to the highly emotional personality conflicts involved. Mr. Albert Manasseh, the President of the UOJCI, and one of the authentically orthodox Jews in India, is also President of the Sassoon trusts which sponsor several synagogues, one large school, and a number of religious service organizations. Since the devaluation of the rupee, the worth of the funds has diminished considerably, and the varied organizations supported by them are suffering as a result. A number of individuals, most of the decidedly non-religious, have attempted to wrest control from Mr. Manasseh, the chairman. There is no question but that if they should succeed, the cause of orthodoxy would be seriously compromised. The polemics have degenerated into public riots necessitating the intervention of the police.

#### (5) Educational Level

I found the level of Jewish education dishearteningly low in all of the communities I visited. The Indian Jews seem to lack an educational tradition. Nevertheless, I found a great desire for Torah and therefore the wish for a rabbi to serve them. The Jewish Agency in Bombay, while devoting most of its time and energy to aliyah has done considerable work in helping raise the level of Jewish education by training a number of young - sters in Machon Gold in Jerusalem and organizing two excellent Bene Akiva groups. I shall return to education in greater detail shortly.

(6) The major emphasis of my work in India was to tone down the polemics, eliminate in so far as possible all mud-slinging and other irrelevant animosities, and to stress primarily education on all levels and the building up of the whole structure of the community in positive terms. Thus, despite the effrontery of the Conservative deception in organizing an "orthodox" congregational group and affiliating it with the World Conservative Organization, I conscientiously omitted any references to them or to the Liberals by name. When questioned directly about them I answered as factually as I could without injecting any emotional diatribe. I feel that the only way to build up UOJCI and the cause of Torah in India is to show the Indian Jews that people of Torah act with a kind of dignity generally unknown to others.

### II. ORGANIZATION

#### (1) UOJCI

The UOJCI now has as its constituents five out of the seven synagogues in Bombay and Thana. Of the three prayer halls, the managing committee of one has resolved to join the Orthodox Union. The Thana synagogue, representing five hundred to six hundred people, is preparing to withdraw from the United Synagogues of India. Of the 18,000 Jews in Bombay, probably 16,000 now belong to the synagogue affiliated with UOJCI. In Poona one synagogue belongs to UOJCI and the other will probably stay neutral. The one synagogue in Ahmedabad, which counts about 500 people, is shortly to

join the UOJCI. The synagogue in Pen, so far unaffiliated, should join the UOJCI shortly, so that all three towns - Pen, Panvel and Alibag - of the Konkan District should now be part of the Union. In addition, I expect to hear shortly from Calcutta that all of its five synagogues have decided to join the UOJCI, constituting a separate region within the national organization. In general, therefore, I can report that the UOJCI is gaining in strength.

(2) I wish to report that the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Max Stern and family to Bombay had a wonderful tonic effect on the Executive Committee of the UOJCI. The presence of Mr. Stern, Chairman of our Overseas Commission, was deeply appreciated by them.

(3) Administration and Liaison

I found after a while, as a result of my work in India and the expanding scope of the UOJCI, that it was becoming administratively difficult to proceed in a systematic order. Furthermore, I began to feel that, once I left India and until a permanent rabbi went there, the enthusiasm might die down and all plans be lost in a morass of disconnected details.

Therefore, after consultation with Mr. Max Stern, I decided to invite Mr. A. D. Jhirad, Hon. Jt. Secy. of UOJCI, to request a leave of absence from his government job and for a period of six months to one year to assume the task of Executive Director of the UOJCI at a salary of \$50.00 per month. Mr. Jhirad is a most competent, courteous and level-headed young man who will, beginning about March 15, undertake to coordinate all the activities of the UOJCI about which this report is concerned. Thus, we shall have one man in India with whom we can transact all business for the entire West Coast of the country.

Similarly, I found that the various problems with which we will have to deal in Israel were such that it was advisable to have one man coordinate these matters for us in Israel. Rabbi Zev Gotthold, of the Ministry of Religions, who extended every assistance to me during my week in the Holy Land, has volunteered to do this for us. He is an unusually dedicated individual, a musmach of Yeshiva University, and I feel confident that we may place our trust in him.

III. EDUCATION

As previously mentioned, the state of Jewish education in India is deplorably, almost incredibly low. The Indian Jews cannot be blamed completely. The Indian government's requirements are very strict and very confusing and are of such nature that even a minimal Jewish education is most difficult. No religion may be taught during school hours. Furthermore, every child must learn three languages well during his elementary school career; the local language (Marathi, in this case), Hindi (the national language), and English. A fourth language, Hebrew, is certainly difficult for any person. Nevertheless, some synagogues have classes of varying nature. The synagogue officials seem mostly interested in teaching the children how to read, and that is all. There is one



"school", called "Beth Talmud Torah", organized by an Iraqi Jew called Mr. Shemtob. This is a heroic endeavor, for it is an independent group catering to the poorest classes and attempting to exist by private solicitations from people many of whom are themselves unemployed. They meet with the children for the study of the weekly Bible portion on Saturday afternoons, pray with them Mincha through Havdalah, and hold classes at night during the week.

My own efforts consisted of insisting that every synagogue set up classes on Saturdays, Sundays and weekday nights both for children and for adults. Mr. Jhirad will coordinate these activities. The UOJCI responsibility will be to organize the classes and encourage regular attendance. We will pay part of the teachers' salaries and provide the books, either free or at a very low cost. Each synagogue or, alternatively, the students affiliated with the synagogue enrolled in the course, will pay a small sum. The rest of the cost will be borne by the Jewish Agency. The teachers are those trained in Israel by the Agency. These arrangements were worked out by myself with Mr. Israel Kelman, the Agency representative in Bombay. He has himself volunteered to teach a weekly class for adults gratis. We were in the process of organizing this central class when I left. What we are aiming for here is not just a few more classes, but a whole network of them. The teachers incidentally are also leaders in the Bene Akiva which is the equal, in spirit and enthusiasm, of any similar group in America. Unfortunately, the Agency is working under a handicap because of the fact that they have not been able to replace the educational officer previously in India, Mr. Shashar. They have been pleading with the Indian government to arrange for a visa for Mr. and Mrs. Grossman from Israel. The government's attitude to Israel is known to be unfriendly.

Nevertheless, I made several contacts with persons close to the Prime Minister, both in Bombay and New Delhi, and I hope that the matter will now be expedited. Further conferences in Israel with Mr. Shragai and Mr. Bet Aryeh of the Jewish Agency were helpful, I hope, in smoothing out certain "rough spots" in the relations between the Agency and the orthodox community in India.

The existing schools are the Sir Ellie Kadoorie School and the Sassoon School. The former is run mostly by Bene Israels. The children are poor and the level of Hebrew education equally poor. The school has now been opened up to non-Jews so as to obtain government assistance. The proportion is about 600 Jews to 300 non-Jews. I examined the classes and made a series of recommendations to Mrs. Samuel, the principal, and several Board members as to how to increase the Hebrew and religious education within the framework provided. There is a terrible shortage of trained personnel. In addition, non-orthodox elements are now firmly entrenched in the leadership of this school and I do not know how sympathetic they are to any expansion of the religious program. The Sassoon School is no better, possibly worse. Mr. Manasseh is trying to keep the school completely Jewish, thereby forfeiting government subsidies in order to prevent the possibility of an increase in the rate of intermarriage with non-Jews. I met twice with the principal and assistant principal and left with them a detailed program for increasing the religious program. I am confident that they will do all that is possible to put this into effect.

There is a shortage of books. In addition to the request for prayer books and Humashim which I shall mention in the section on requisitions, we did decide to open up a central lending library in Bombay. I left it to the people of the UOJCI to determine where it will be placed and the mechanics of its operation. But the UOJCA ought to supply them with English material of all kinds, both for youths and adults. Once the books are received, Mr. Kelman will be able to recommend readings for those in the adult classes. Similarly, there is a great need for children's books of all kinds, both in the schools and in a central library.

Of special importance is the matter of scholarships. After reviewing the situation, I felt that it was impossible to send anyone to Morocco because of the need of learning yet a fifth language - French. Under the best circumstances a scholarship is a gamble for we must expect some who will not want to return to India. I therefore chose one young man to go to Israel to train for a two year period as a teacher, Mohel, Sopher, Hazzan and Shohet. The authorities at Yeshiva Porat Yosef have promised to offer him private instructions in these matters. Two other youngsters will be sent to Yeshiva Kol Torah. After conversations with Rabbi Kunstat, Mr. Lang and Mr. Max Stern, it was decided that the two young men, one a Bene Israel and the other an Iraqi, would receive preliminary private tutoring, then a rigorous and intensive three to four year course leading to ordination and rounded out with training in the Sephardi Hazanut. Kol Torah will take care of providing the youngsters with food, board, clothing and pocket money. In all cases, we shall pay passage. The youngsters were told that a report will be given every month to Rabbi Gotthold and that in case they do not measure up to our standards they will be shipped home immediately. Rabbi Gotthold promised to pay close attention to them. They begin their studies on Rosh Hodesh Iyar for the new semester. Rabbi Gotthold recommended that they come before Passover. A fourth youngster, a Bene Israel, will go to Yeshiva University. He is a sixteen year old who graduated at the top of his class in all subjects. He, too, will train for the rabbinate. In all cases this will have to be expedited by the UOJCA office in conjunction with Mr. Jhirad and Rabbi Gotthold. Publicity in the proper manner should be provided for the United States, India and Israel.

#### IV. RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE

##### (1) Beth Din

At present, all religious work - such as marriages, divorces and conversions, is completely decentralized in India. Each synagogue committee acts as final arbiter on religious matters. The problem of conversion is especially painful and the problem of divorces not much less so. I, therefore, proposed to the UOJCI leaders that the work be centralized so that no violations of the Halacha occur and that no unauthorized person arrogate to themselves the prerogative of deciding questions of Jewish law by themselves. We decided to form a Lay-Beth Din or Central Religious Committee of the UOJCI. All conversion and divorce questions will be forwarded by the synagogues to the Beth Din. Since there exist certain differences between the Bene Israels and Iraqis, it was therefore decided that the Beth Din will decide whether to consent to or deny a conversion or divorce and then authorize the local Hazan to proceed in the proper manner. This will eliminate any free lancing. The Lay-Beth Din will be in a position to recognize those questions which must be submitted to rabbinic authorities



and they will consult with Haham Gaon and his Beth Din in London. The problem arose as to who should be chosen to serve. I suggested that Iraqis and Bene Israels both be members. Those who will pass on religious questions should be Sabbath observers. (This poses a problem for the Bene Israels. They want one of their number, who works on the Sabbath but who, when he returns to his home, scrupulously observes every "din", to be a member of that sub-committee). The other members of the Lay-Beth Din will be prominent people in both communities and will be called upon to counsel individual families in their domestic problems without passing upon any religious questions. In other words, the Beth Din will not be a Halachic body but simply administrative. Subsequent to my proposals, which were made only on condition that Haham Gaon agrees to them, I visited Calcutta and found that such an organization had been in existence for some time there, but that it had recently broken down because of certain conflicts, especially regarding conversion. I used the formula I had prepared to resolve the conflict in Bombay for Calcutta as well. My proposals on policy of the Beth Din for conversion were approved in principle by Rabbis Gaon and Sassoon and the others in London with one minor change which I gladly accepted. However, an additional problem arose. I had the Indians mail to me in Israel some sample copies of the Gittin that they write. I was most unhappy with what I saw. I forwarded these to Haham Gaon suggesting that he recommend to the Indian Jews that they cease writing Gittin altogether and that instead some system be devised whereby they will write out a "Harshaah" authorizing the London Beth Din to write the Get and mail it to the wife in India. Whatever the decision of the London people is, I feel that the Lay-Beth Din is of central importance. I also believe that any decisions in this regard should be left to London.

## (2) Religious Needs

At my first public lecture, I officially gave the first pair of Tefillin to an Indian youngster on behalf of the UOJCA. These Tefillin came from Cochin. We had given them \$500 for 200 pairs. However, I was not happy with the quality of the Tefillin. They were small, weak and, in the climate of Bombay, would probably not last more than a year or two. Tefillin from Israel are of much better quality but cost twice as much. I, therefore, asked Mr. Jhirad to cancel all further orders for Cochini Tefillin and to wait further word from Dr. Weiss and Rabbi Gotthold on what to do. In Israel I convinced Mr. Bet Aryeh of the Jewish Agency, to pay for the remainder of the cost for Israeli Tefillin. I suggested that the national office of the UOJCA inquire about the customs regulations in India for Israeli Tefillin and then notify Rabbi Gotthold and Mr. Jhirad of further procedure.

## (3) A Rabbi

The greatest and most important need of all Indian Jewry is an orthodox rabbi. He must be an English speaking, hard working person and also, in the words of one highly intelligent Bene Israel, primarily an anthropologist by nature. I looked far and wide in Israel for someone who could fill even minimal standards. The one candidate I interviewed was over sixty, tired, and weak on his English. I do not think he is the man we want. I might add that we will not be able to get anyone, even from Israel, for less than five or six thousand a year. If we cannot get

someone from Yeshiva University or the other Yeshivoth in the States, I recommend that we try to obtain a suitable candidate from the Lubavitcher Yeshiva. Meanwhile, Mr. Rabia, Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and prominent leader of the Sephardi community is continuing his efforts to find someone suitable for us. I believe that if we delay much longer and allow a Conservative man to come in first, all our investment in time and money will have been in vain. This is the overriding need of Indian Jewry. Further visits by American rabbis are insignificant compared to this.

## V. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### (1) Bulletin

They have been doing a fine job of publishing the "Mebasser", their quarterly publication. However, I have pleaded with them to omit the shrill and hysterical polemics against the Conservatives and to concentrate on educational material. I hope I have been successful. I edited a good part of the material for the forthcoming issue while I was in India.

### (2) Women's Groups

It is premature to think of organizing sisterhoods on the American pattern. The social and economic matrix of India is such that women generally stay at home to tend to their large families or else go to work. Nevertheless, there is one organization called "Stri Mandal" which does meet on Saturday afternoons and once during the week. I addressed them during the Sabbath I stayed in Byculla, one of the poorest and most populated Jewish neighborhoods in Bombay. They should, however, receive all publications and material from our Women's Branch. They also need a good deal of story book material of Jewish nature. If Mrs. Edles does visit Bombay she may be able to organize some kind of women's group, but it will have to be in conformity with Indian taste and style.

### (3) Youth

The youth group was organized during Rabbi Weinberg's visit, but remained dormant until I came, when it suddenly burst into feverish activity. However, I was amazed to discover that the "youth group" had an average age of about 30 years. What I did was to organize the older members as the Committee on Youth responsible to the Executive Committee of the UOJCI and the younger members as leaders of the youth group itself. I drew up a constitution with them, advised them on their committee structure and on the nature of their activities. I most strongly recommend that Rabbi Stolper, the Youth Director of the UOJCA, be in direct contact with them and advise them from afar in consultation with me. I shall be glad to make available to them all correspondence and records. If some generous individual can be found who is willing to help Indian Jewish youth, he might want to sponsor the construction of a small hall or a room adjoining one of the synagogues presently existing and to use it as a library and study hall. Indians live in terribly cramped conditions - usually an entire family of six and seven in one room. Under such conditions, it is impossible for them to study and to concentrate on their



reading. A reading room, library and youth lounge, all combined in one room would be a great blessing to them.

## VI. COMMUNITIES OTHER THAN BOMBAY

### (1) Calcutta

A detailed report on Calcutta has been mailed to Mr. Feuerstein after my weekend there. The Jewish community is one quarter of the size it originally was due to emigration. Of the 900 souls now in Calcutta, some 200 will be leaving by Passover. Nevertheless, there is much to be said for the Jewish community of Calcutta. On the Sabbath I was there over 130 people were in the various synagogues - an enviable proportion. I confined myself to meeting the leaders of the community, rather than public addresses. I was disappointed in the Halachic responsibilities that Rabbi Musleah, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary and member of the Rabbinical Assembly, had assumed upon himself. I made known my dissatisfaction to Haham Gaon who was upset by the violation of his confidence by Musleah. Musleah himself will probably leave Calcutta soon since his contract was terminated by the community as a result of a series of personality clashes. The Beth Din is split apart on the issue of conversion as well as being polarized about the question of the rabbi. I devised for them a formula whereby the Beth Din could continue to function under the sponsorship of UOJCI, which they must first join, instead of the community as such, and which would allow for a relationship with Musleah, since he is not a member of the Beth Din, thereby sparing both himself and us the embarrassment of a Conservative rabbi functioning in an orthodox framework. As mentioned, Haham Gaon and Rabbi Sassoon approved the great majority of my recommendations and I hope that peace will reign in Calcutta instead of chaos. I might add that I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of a most unusual family, that of Mr. Ellis Meyer, one of the most prominent attorneys in the city. He is truly orthodox and most anxious to help us -- and the orthodox cause in India in every way. The relevant correspondence has already been submitted to the UOJCA.

### (2) Poona

In Poona, too, the Iraqis are beginning to emigrate to Israel, England and elsewhere. Nevertheless, they have two excellent synagogues, one Bene Israel, one Baghdadi. I arranged with a Mr. Afif, a young Indian Jew of Egyptian descent, to work as Mr. Jhirad's representative in Poona in expanding the educational setup. He wishes to receive all pamphlets from the UOJCA and all other orthodox organizations in this country. I also arranged that every Shabbat in both synagogues another individual will be responsible for preparing himself on some Jewish matter and speaking briefly about it after the reading of the Torah. In this way our people in Poona will learn something from each other about our faith.

### (3) Towns and Villages on the Konkan Coast

I spent one day visiting the three towns and outlying villages north of Bombay. The people do not, for the most part, speak English. They are

more primitive than the city dwellers, many of them still rice farmers. They are, however, lovely people devoted to Judaism and anxious to continue as Jews. They are terribly poor. Pen and Panvel desperately need a Hazan and teacher. We should find some way of providing them with a salary for such personnel. This will amount to no more than \$250 per year for each community. Perhaps some American synagogue can sponsor them and thereby perform a great and noble Mitzvah.

(4) New Delhi

A small and charming synagogue center organized by "the Jewish Welfare Association" as it is known in New Delhi, is spark-plugged by Mr. Kolet, Deputy Minister of Finance of India and Mr. Jhirad, Judge Advocate of the Indian Navy. The community is so tiny and so diversified -- including Americans and Germans -- that it is irrelevant to speak of their affiliation with anyone. Any affiliation, whatsoever, would mean suicide for the small synagogue. They should be encouraged to continue as they are.

VII. HALACHIC PROBLEMS

- (1) One of the serious problems for the Bene Israels, which they are generally aware of, is the Halachic issue of whether intermarriage with them is permitted in view of their past neglect of Gittin, Halitzah and possibly infraction of marriages prohibited because of consanguinity. I regard this as one of the major reasons for their lack of enthusiasm for aliyah to Israel. Until this problem is solved, the future of the Bene Israels is uncertain. As is known, the Baghdadis have a tradition forbidding them to marry the Bene Israels on the basis of "Safek Mamzerut". I discussed the problem with Haham Gaon and Rabbi Sassoon in London and with the rabbis in Israel. Rabbi Nissim was not altogether cooperative. He expressed lack of enthusiasm for the previous response by Rabbis Uziel and Herzog, of blessed memory. He did refer me to one unpublished response by a rabbi who teaches at the Ponovozher Yeshiva, which if published and accepted by the leading Israeli authorities, he would consent to. I visited this man in Bene Brak and urged him most strongly to publish his material so that the problem can be decided one way or the other. I asked Rabbi Unterman to take action in general on the matter. I hope to continue pressing for a Halachic decision by the Israeli Rabbinate from New York.

VIII. REQUISITION

In general, I would urge that the Indian Jews be asked to pay something, no matter how small a sum, even a few pennies for what is given to them. They have too long suffered from a mendicant psychology which is poisonous to their future development. We ought not to encourage this tendency if we possibly can help it.

I suggest that before any material is sent we consult with Mr. Bertie Meyer, (a brother of Ellis), 67 Park Street, Calcutta, who is a customs consultant and who will be able to advise us on how to proceed with regard to customs regulations.

A detailed list of the books and periodicals requested will be submitted to Dr. Weiss. In addition to the printed material, the Union office



in Bombay needs an English typewriter, later on a Hebrew typewriter, and a duplicating machine. In addition, the youth group requests a 16 millimeter sound projector, record player, any films of Jewish interest and records of Jewish music.

All materials for Bombay and all other communities other than Calcutta should be directed to Mr. Jhirad.

#### IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Indian Jewry now stands at a critical juncture in its history. With the leaving of the Sassoon family and its industries, the Jews have had to begin working on the Sabbath. Unemployment has increased alarmingly. While there is very little Anti-Semitism in the western sense, Jews are discriminated against simply because they are not members of the larger linguistic or religious communities each of which takes care of its own people. Unless some foreign investors build Jewish businesses in Bombay and hire Jews, unemployment is bound to increase. Furthermore, the well-informed opinion in India is that once Nehru resigns as Prime Minister or dies, the country will be faced with one of two alternatives, either military dictatorship, in which case our own future contact with the Indian Jews is questionable, or the splitting up of the country into a number of autonomous provinces. In case of such chaos, the Indian Jews may very well be - heaven forbid - early victims. Our own approach must be to build up their religious life in India at the same time that we encourage them to emigrate to Israel. This last element, however, depends upon the Halachic problem I previously mentioned.

Of the greatest importance, I must repeat, is supplying them with a rabbi. In addition, we should ask all American Jewish tourists to contact them and meet with them. They yearn for any reunion with their western Jewish brethren.

I believe that more short visits by American rabbis, at this point, would not serve a major purpose. The investment is great and the returns, as time goes on, diminish. If we find that we absolutely cannot get a rabbi for them, then a twelve week visit by someone after Passover may be undertaken provided that there is no let-up in our search for a permanent man (i.e. a year or two).

From my experience in India, I would like to make two further recommendations concerning the work of the Overseas Commission in other areas.

First, it is best that the short visits be undertaken by one individual rather than by many. It takes at least a half of a three week visit to become oriented, leaving only ten or twelve days for actual constructive work. Whoever makes the first visit ought to make the second as well.

Second, I believe some way ought to be worked out for us to cooperate with the Jewish Agency Torah and Education Department. They are working on a world-wide scale in many countries of the Diaspora. While we do not want to be involved in any politics, still an unofficial and quiet understanding with Mr. Bet Aryeh and the Agency could produce splendid results for Torah

Judaism everywhere. Bet Aryeh is now on his way to South America. I believe that our work there should not be undertaken without at least discussing with him some modus vivendi with the Agency.

Finally, when in Israel, I was approached by a number of individuals on behalf of the Iggud Battei Knesset Be'Yisroel. While they do not seek affiliation with the UOJCA they strongly desire closer contacts with us. Their major emphasis is a completely unpolitical Union of Congregations in Israel. While I am not sufficiently acquainted with the background of this group, I do recommend that the UOJCA and RCA seriously consider helping them with material and advice if we are sure that they are completely orthodox and non-political.

In conclusion, I feel that the trip, intensive, wearying, and expensive as it was, was certainly worthwhile. These people are our fellow Jews who, for hundreds or even thousands of years, have managed to survive in a pagan society. They appreciate deeply the help we have given them thus far. I believe we ought to continue in the most constructive manner possible. I am glad that I have been able to be of service, no matter how small, in advancing this noble and historic purpose.

NORMAN LAMM

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