

April 13, 1972

Mr. Simon Greenspan, President  
West Side Jewish Center  
347 West 34th Street  
New York, N.Y.

My Dear Mr. Greenspan:

Permit me to bring to your attention a communal problem of the greatest urgency.

You are no doubt cognizant of the crucial importance for Jewish life, of the institution known as Mikvah. Normative Jewish family living and the initiation of proselytes into Judaism are impossible without a functioning Mikvah. Furthermore, in order to make sure that this introduction to Jewish life is appealing rather than repelling, it is of the utmost importance that this facility be as attractive and aesthetic as possible.

The only Mikvah between the lower East Side and Washington Heights is the one on West 78th Street, which goes under the name of the Jewish Women's Club. This facility was built only a few years ago at great expense for Jews of mid-Manhattan.

We now face two critical problems -

1. A good part of the Mikvah is in a state of disrepair and it is necessary for us immediately to invest considerable sums into putting it in order.
2. We must assure community support for the regular maintenance of the Mikvah.

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To that end, the major Orthodox synagogues (and some Conservative synagogues as well) of Manhattan have agreed to provide \$1,000.00 per year, minimum, for maintenance of the Mikvah. It is our hope that this kind of ongoing commitment will solve our major problems, and allow the Mikvah to operate for the benefit of the entire Jewish community, in a manner of which we can all be proud.

I discussed the matter with my dear colleague, and your distinguished rabbi, Rabbi Kahane, and he quite naturally and enthusiastically approves of our activities.

May I therefore, most respectfully, urge you, Mr. Greenspan, as a President of an important Orthodox synagogue on the West Side, to make every effort to prevail upon your congregation to join its sister congregations in our community, in this sacred endeavor.

Do be kind enough to let me hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

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cc: Mr. Charles Bendheim