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כנסית הרבנים באמריקה

# THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET  
NEW YORK 27. N. Y.

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RABBI WOLFE KELMAN, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

March 17, 1953

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

Dear Colleague:

I would like to correct an error in the stencil of my March letter. Commenting on the Law Conference, I emphasized the two promises of constructive activity which most influenced me to give my support to the Conference and resolution which emerged from it. The first of these was omitted from the stencil. The paragraphs should read:

"The first is clause No. I following Paragraph VIII: 'it being understood that the takkanah-making function etc.' Of course, the details of operation will have to be worked out; but we are on the road if we think in terms of takkanot.

The second is the project envisioned in Paragraph No. IV: '...establish a system of marriage counseling...' I truly believe that we, as rabbis, can perform a singular function in the preventive end of the problem. It is we who participate in the great moments of people's lives, at birth, marriage, bar mitzvah, death; it is we to whom people are likely to come when their marriage threatens to disintegrate. Here is where we should be most thoroughly prepared to come to the aid of distressed couples. I should like very much to see that aspect of the resolution given the prominence it deserves. At the Conference itself not a word was said about it; it was lost in the heated, and, I fear, sometimes acrimonious debate, on the halakic phases of the issue."

With every good wish.

Sincerely,



Ira Eisenstein



כנסית הרבנים באמריקה

## THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

3080 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

February 28, 1961

Dear Colleague:

At the 1960 Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards was instructed to re-open the question of travel on the Sabbath as dealt with in the two responsa submitted by the Committee in 1950, and as later interpreted by the Committee in a statement issued on February 17, 1960. Some of our colleagues were of the opinion that the interpretive statement of 1960 was not in consonance with the general spirit and intention of the responsum which permitted travel to the synagogue on the Sabbath, especially that portion of it which states: "This does not include travel for other ends. It does not include travel for social purposes; nor does it include travel to the synagogue in order to attend a Bar Mitzvah ceremony or reception..."

In re-opening this question, we asked Rabbi Eli Bohmen to make a study of the matter and to report to the Law Committee. On the basis of his study, Rabbi Bohmen came to the following conclusion:

A reading of these responsa indicates very clearly that most of the men who discuss the "Heter" of 1950 today take it out of its context. The men who wrote the responsa made it very clear...that the so-called "Heter" was to be considered only as part of a project to revitalize Sabbath observance..... As I see it, there have been no new developments in Jewish life in America which would warrant any changes or modifications in the responsa of 1950.... I recommend that the Law Committee report to the Convention of 1961 that, after study and discussion, the Committee saw no need to make any new recommendations to the members of the Rabbinical Assembly.

Following this, we wrote to the three colleagues who were the authors of the responsum signed by the majority of the Law Committee, asking them to state whether they believed that any changes or modifications were now in order and whether the spirit of their responsum was correctly interpreted in the 1960 statement. These are the relevant excerpts from their replies:

Rabbi Morris Adler:... Our 'heter' had as its chief objective not the stimulation of Synagogue attendance, but the strengthening of the Sabbath. It therefore seems to me that the 'heter' should be interpreted in the more restricted way.....I do not believe that the 'heter' should be extended to embrace more than attendance at Sabbath services in one's Synagogue, even when the use of transportation becomes inescapable.

Rabbi Jacob Agus: In regard to attendance at Bar Mitzvah services... I fail to see any reason why it should be exempted from the general takkanah, permitting riding to the Synagogue. The fact of a social obligation being involved is merely another mitzvah that is performed, in addition to the act of worship. If, except at rare instances, the Talmud permits interruption of prayer for the greeting of a friend, should we now disdain social courtesies as things unholy? When people come to a Synagogue, they take part in a mitzvah gedolah without reference to their motivations...



Rabbi Theodore Friedman: ...A careful reading of the Responsum must lead to the conclusion that it did not envision riding on the Sabbath for such purpose (attending a Bar Mitzvah). On the contrary, the responsum deliberately limited the permissibility of riding on the Sabbath to a specific, concrete situation, that in which a person 'lives beyond a reasonable distance from the Synagogue which he normally attends.' ...It is my judgment that an extension of this permission, as now proposed, would be inconsistent with both the purport and spirit of the original responsum. The authors of the Responsum, if I may speak for them, agreed that there is high value to the traditional prohibition against riding on the Sabbath. Only an extraordinary situation, one which involves what might be considered the performance of a mitzvah gedolah could warrant lifting this ban.

At a special conference of the Law Committee held in Lakewood, N. J., on January 31 - February 1, a full-scale discussion was held by the sixteen members who were present. It was the consensus of the group that the interpretive statement of the Committee in 1960 correctly expressed the spirit and intention of the original responsa. It was, however, felt that it would be consistent with the spirit of the 'heter' to permit travel within one's own community to attend a synagogue other than one's own, provided that it is beyond reasonable walking distance. The revised statement is herein enclosed. It should be further stated that some members of the Committee are of the opinion that the original 'heter' was a serious mistake and that it should be revoked; that instead of strengthening the Sabbath it weakened it and that its only effect was to increase the number of rabbis who ride on the Sabbath.

It is the opinion of the Committee that the members of the Rabbinical Assembly should, in their common devotion to the Sabbath, engage in a concerted effort to make observance of the Sabbath a meaningful reality in Jewish life. To this end, the following steps are urged:

1. Interpret properly the decisions of the Committee with regard to the 'heter'. Indicate the specific limits of the permission to travel, with special emphasis on the values of Sabbath observance. It makes little sense - and does not reflect the true intention of the responsa - simply to tell people that we now permit riding on the Sabbath. Take the occasion to read to your people - or publish in your bulletin - the revised statement which we regard as the correct interpretation of the responsa.
2. Engage in a vital, organized program, together with your colleagues wherever possible, in a campaign for Sabbath observance. Do not limit it to attendance at synagogue worship. Extend it to a total program of Jewish living.
3. It goes without saying that the rabbi himself must set the example to his people by maintaining the highest personal standards of Sabbath observance. When the rabbi relinquishes certain observances, the standards of the people sink even lower. When the rabbi makes sacrifices for the Sabbath, he is able to summon his people to loftier levels of Sabbath observance.

We shall include the substance of this letter in our report to the forthcoming convention and time will be provided for full discussion of our findings and recommendations. The enclosed revised statements on Passover Food and Utensils and on Birth Control were adopted at the conference.

Sincerely yours,

*Max J. Rottenberg*

Max J. Rottenberg, Chairman  
Committee on Jewish Law and Standards



## CREMATION

### The leading cases:

1. "The Law Committee has crystallized an attitude of antagonism to cremation, but permits the ashes to be buried in a Jewish cemetery". (Louis M. Epstein 1939 (R.A. Proceedings 1939 P. 156))
2. In cases of cremation, the body should be dressed in a shroud in spite of objection to cremation. If there is later burial in Jewish cemetery, the urn should have an opening (Higger 1935 (R.A.L.A. Vol. A. P. 417; Vol. D. P. 146))
3. A rabbi may officiate at services before body is taken to crematorium, but not at the cremation or at the crematory. (Higger 1935 (R.A.L.A. Vol. A, P. 417; Vol. F, P. 39))

### Addenda:

4. Although ashes may be buried in Jewish cemetery, no services should be held (1949 (R.A.L.A. Vol. J, P. 212))
5. A monument may be erected over the grave of ashes
6. If ashes are placed in a mausoleum, no religious services should be held (R.A. Proceedings 1954, PP. 52-53; R.A.L.A. Vol. J. P. 258)
7. Cremation is disapproved, but ashes may be buried "in the brink of the cemetery". (R.A. Proceedings 1947, P. 62)
8. The ashes of a cremated body may be placed in a crypt. (R.A.L.A. Vol. H. P. 58)

(This summary as of December 31, 1956)  
Compiled by Rabbi Max D. Davidson

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS ON KASHRUTH

(as of December 31, 1955)

A. FOODS

1. Capons are kosher - Rabbinical Assembly Law Archives (hereafter denoted RALA) Vol. J, p. 44.
2. Vitamin A, since it is used for medicinal purposes, may be regarded as kosher, no matter what its ingredients - RALA Vol. H, p. 153 - approved unanimously; also Vol. H, p. 239 and Vol. J, p. 212.
3. Canned Chow Mein, though it contains only vegetable ingredients, should not be used unless manufactured under rabbinic supervision - RALA Vol. K, p. 5.
4. Sturgeon is kosher - T'shuvah to be published in the near future. Editor's Note: in the past, the Committee's reply was "there are two kinds of sturgeon (a) with scales - permitted and (b) without scales - forbidden; consequently all caviar is forbidden, since it is impossible to determine whether it comes from (a) or (b)." RALA Vol. F, p. 23. The Committee, having first ascertained from scientists that this distinction is not based upon fact, determined that all sturgeon be declared kosher.
5. Champagne is not kosher, unless it is manufactured under rabbinic supervision - RALA Vol. D, P. 65.
6. Gelatin is kosher - RALA Vol. H, p. 153, Vol. J, p. 212. Editor's Note: contra opinions were registered previously - "it is not permitted, unless its ingredients are only vegetables" - Rabbinical Assembly Proceedings (hereafter denoted RAP) 1933-38, p. 331; "absolutely T'refah" - RALA Vol. F, p. 44; "Jell-O gelatin may not be used" - RALA Vol. E, p. 125.
7. Swordfish is not kosher - RALA Vol. C, p. 5; Vol. E, p. 89; Vol J, p. 80.
8. Mackerel is kosher - RALA Vol. C, p. 5.
9. Steaks and chops do not have to be koshered before broiling - RALA Vol. H, p. 189.
10. Liver may be broiled on an electric broiler or in an electric stove, provided that the liver keeps on rotating during the process of broiling - RALA Vol. E, p. 171. Editor's Note: contra opinion registered in RAP 1941-43, p. 142 - "liver may not be broiled on an electric broiler; since no flame is produced, the liver is cooked."
11. Meat to be broiled on an electric broiler does not require kashering - RALA Vol. H, p. 399; Vol. J, p. 211.
12. Meat may be soaked in water before the end of the 6th day, if it was previously soaked at the end of the 3rd day - RAP 1946, p. 46.



13. Bread may contain non-kosher ingredients or milk, according to New York State Law, even though these are not listed on the label. RALA Vol. H, p. 160-161.

14. Canning of meat can be done only after proper soaking and salting thereof; the meat should be cut into 1 lb. pieces; non-Jewish help may be used, if properly supervised - RALA Vol. C, p. 29-32. Editor's Note: since there is no stipulation in Jewish Law that meat cuts are limited in size for purposes of kashering, the above requirement to cut up the meat into 1 lb. pieces may be disregarded.

15. For cold storage and freezing, meat must be properly kashered first - RALA Vol. C, pp. 29-32; Vol. D, p. 75; Vol. E, p. 234; Vol. F, p. 60, p. 154; Vol. J, p. 150. Editor's Note: the Committee recently modified its position to the effect that, in cases of hardship, we may follow the policy of the Israeli Rabbinat permitting deep freezing of meats for a longer period of time prior to salting thereof, it being understood that such meats would be properly soaked and salted immediately upon their defrosting.

#### 16. INGREDIENTS OF CANNED FOODS:

According to an official communication from the National Canners Association, 1739 H Street, Washington, D. C., CANNED FRUITS are prepared with a syrup of sugar and water; CANNED VEGETABLES use water and salt - in case of corn and peas, sugar is also added; FRUIT JUICES are prepared without preservatives or flavors derived from the fermentation of cereals; SPECIALTY PRODUCTS (such as ketchup, chili-sauce, etc.) also contain only permissible ingredients - RALA Vol D, pp, 204-205. Editor's Note: this opinion should not be construed as a blank Heter by the Law Committee to use all types of canned goods indiscriminately. Compare #3 "Canned Chow Mein" and #13 "Bread may contain non-kosher ingredients..." in this summary.

17. Plucking feathers of slaughtered chicken may be done by machine only after the chicken expired - RALA Vol. B, p. 319.

#### B - UTENSILS:

1. An electric dishwasher may be used for both meat and dairy utensils, providing separate trays are used, one for meat and another one for dairy utensils. The inside of the washer should be scoured with boiling water between washing the two types of utensils - RAP 1954, p. 52; RALA Vol. J, p. 201, p. 258; Vol. H, p. 153, p. 27. Editor's note: earlier decisions on this question stipulated additional provisions such as (a) meat and dairy dishes should not be washed on the same day - RALA Vol. D, p. 13; (b) machine would need a removable four wall metal holder to be placed inside thereof, either for meat, or for dairy - RALA Vol. E, p. 224; (c) may be used by Orthodox Jews if it had two compartments - RAP 1946, p. 47; RALA Vol. C, p. 249

2. Plastic dishes may be used in kosher households, but two sets, one



for meat and one for dairy, are required - RALA Vol. C, p. 98; "are to be considered like porcelain" - RALA Vol. K, p. 206.

3. Plastic dishes may be used for meat and dairy simultaneously only if cold food is placed on them and after proper rinsing; hot food may not be placed on them interchangeably - RALA Vol. E, p. 114; Vol. F, p. 115.

4. Pyrex utensils can be kashered the same way as glassware - RALA Vol. D, p. 179.

5. Porcelain dishes can not be kashered - RALA Vol. E, p. 238.

6. Porcelain dishes which cannot be kashered may be used again after they were not used for some time - RALA Vol. E, p. 3. Editor's Note: the term "some time" implies a period of, at least, one year.

7. Silverware and other metal utensils can be kashered in the following manner: they should be thoroughly cleansed first and then dipped in hot running water - RALA Vol. E, p. 238.

8. An electric broiler may not be simultaneously used for meat and dairy foods - RAP 1946, p. 47; RAP 1953, pp. 40-41; RALA Vol. H, p. 189. "May not be used for meat and dairy since the cover absorbs vapors of the food beneath it" - RALA Vol. A, p. 300. "After the broiler has been used for meat and dairy (simultaneously) it could be burned out - the heat will kasher it". - RALA Vol. A, p. 300.

9. Dishes used for meat and dairy may be put away for a year and then declared kosher - RALA Vol. A, p. 300.

10. Glass dishes should not be used simultaneously for meat and dairy in the synagogue kitchen; "such practices could only lead to an eventual abolition of any distinction between meat and dairy" - RAP 1933-38, p. 30; RAP 1940, p. 30; RALA Vol. D, p. 261; RALA Vol. G, pp. 35-40; pp. 41-45; Vol. H, p. 90.

#### C - DETERGENTS AND PLATING:

1. Only detergents with a "U" label are kosher - RALA Vol. E, p. 310. Editor's Note: the incidental reference to "U" labels does not imply that the Law Committee would not recognize as valid kashruth endorsements by other competent supervisory agencies.

2. JNT APP-L-COTER may be used for silver plating - RALA Vol. E, p. 60.

#### D - STANDARDS:

1. Meals in non-kosher restaurants, consisting of cooked vegetables and/or broiled fish, are permissible in communities where comparable kosher facilities are not available. Care should be exercised not to use non-kosher ingredients in such foods. Where attractive and



January 10, 1957

Dear Colleague:

At the last convention of the Rabbinical Assembly the Committee on Law and Standards was requested to make available, if possible, a summary of the decisions of the Committee.

We are pleased to enclose the first of these summaries. We call your attention to the following:

1. These summaries are intended for the use of members of the Rabbinical Assembly and not for public use.
2. They are printed on loose leaf paper so that you may keep a special notebook in alphabetical form as additional subjects are summarized.
3. Each summary bears a date which is the last date included in that summary.
4. These summaries will be brought up to date annually and new decisions, if any, may be added by pasting the addition to the subject.
5. All the opinions and decisions in these summaries are the opinions and decisions of the Committee on Law and Standards and of its predecessor Law Committees. Where names of individuals are given as source or reference, those individuals were, at different times, speaking for or on behalf of the Law Committee. Minority opinions are not given except when denoted as such.
6. These first summaries are frankly experimental in nature, and the Committee would be helped by comment from members on their usefulness, form, scope, etc., for the future guidance of the Committee.
7. Abbreviations:  

RALA: The Rabbinical Assembly Law Archives, the volumes of assembled letters of inquiry, replies, responsa, etc., in the office of the Rabbinical Assembly. A full index of all subjects in the Archives is available at the R. A. office.

Proc.: Annual Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly.

Contra: Decisions or opinions at variance with the general trend of R. A. opinion. These in most cases represent opinions given at different times and by different Law Committees.
8. No attempt has been made in these summaries to interpret, reinterpret, or comment on the opinions as given in our files. Out of the publication of these summaries may develop rethinking or revision of our point of view.

*Arthur H. Neulander*  
Arthur H. Neulander, Chairman  
Committee on Law and Standards

## DISINTERMENT

### The leading cases:

1. Disinterment is prohibited except where the original burial was made on condition that it be made elsewhere later.
2. It is not permitted to disinter a body and bury it in another cemetery in a recently acquired plot. Disinterment is permitted only when the family plot had been in existence, and already contained bodies of members of the family at the time of burial of the deceased in question. (Julius Greenstone 1938 (RA Proceedings 1933-38, P 433))
3. Disinterment is permitted only where the original burial took place with a proviso, or where the present burial does not fulfill the requirement of proper respect for the dead. (Theodore Friedman 1951 (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 94))

### Addenda:

4. Disinterment is not permitted in family plot, if original burial was not conditional, even though other members are now buried in the family plot. (Higger 1950 (R.A.L.A. Vol. D, P. 50) also (R.A.L.A. Vol. E. P. 128) (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 39))
5. If family plot was acquired after the burial in question, the body may not be disinterred (Higger 1945 (R.A.L.A. Vol. A, P 322))
6. Body may not be disinterred for convenience of the living. (Higger 1950 (R.A.L.A. Vol. D, P. 29))
7. Removal of body from Jewish cemetery to Masonic cemetery to please children is prohibited. (Higger 1952 (R.A.L.A. Vol. E, P. 90))
8. Though a widow on way home from cemetery expresses dissatisfaction with burial plot of husband, this is not conditional burial, and body may not be disinterred.
9. A body placed temporarily in a receiving vault may be transferred. (1954 (R.A.L.A. Vol. J, PP. 259, 247))
10. If bodies transferred from temporary receiving vault, to mausoleum, no religious service should be held at mausoleum. (Carmel 1954 (R.A.L.A. Vol. J, P. 122))
11. Use of mausoleum to receive body placed temporarily in vault is disapproved on ground of general disapproval of mausoleums. (1954 R.A.L.A. Vol. J, P. 172)

### Contra:

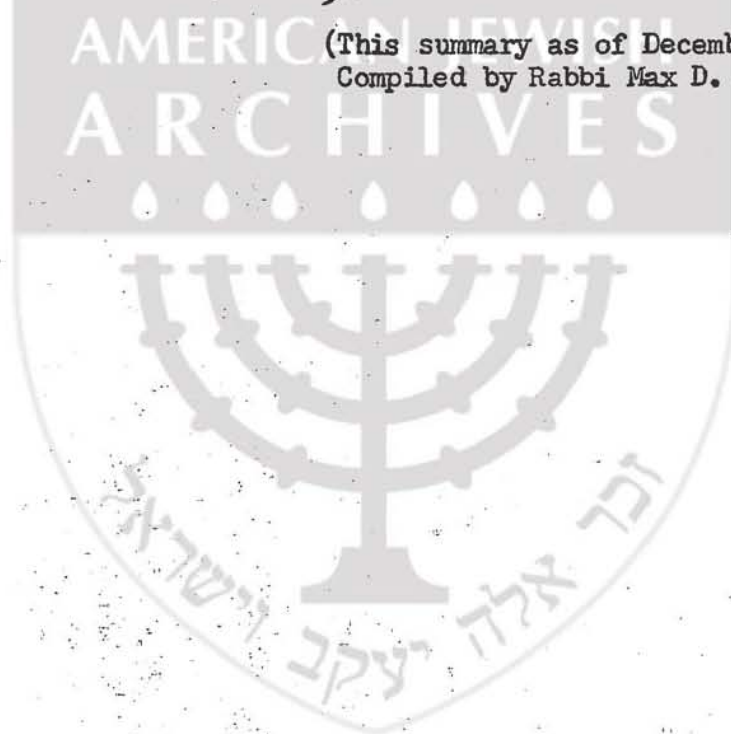
12. Disinterment of U.S. soldiers abroad, and burial in U.S. sanctioned. (L.C. Minutes 1946 (R.A.L.A. Vol. A, P. 287))
13. If, after burial of a Jew, a non-Jew was buried on same plot, the the Jewish body may be disinterred, but no use may be made of the first grave. (Higger 1950 (R.A.L.A. Vol. D, P. 4))
14. Where family later claimed that burial, on last remaining plot of cemetery, was conditional, since it had contemplated purchase of new family plot, and family was corroborated by witnesses, disinterment permitted, some members of Law Committee disagreeing (Boaz Cohen 1942 (RA Proceedings 1941-44, P. 111))
15. A body may be disinterred if the cemetery of the original burial has been abandoned. (Higger 1951 (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 5))



16. Removal of a body from a cemetery condemned by city authorities is permitted, but removal because of neglect by heirs or failure to pay assessments or rentals imposed by cemetery, is not permitted. (Greenstone 1939 (R.A. Proceedings 1939, P. 331))
17. A cemetery overrun with weeds, but protected by a fence and title to which is held by an organization, is not an abandoned cemetery, and disinterments on this ground are prohibited. (Boaz Cohen 1941 (R.A. Proc. 1941-44 P. 37))
18. If a small Jewish community has no cemetery, and bodies are buried in another city, and the community later acquires a cemetery, bodies may be disinterred if it was the original intention to acquire a Jewish cemetery sometime later (Higger 1951 (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 70))

(This summary as of December 31, 1955)

Compiled by Rabbi Max D. Davidson



MEMBERSHIP, CONGREGATIONAL, BY INTERMARRIED JEW

A. The leading case:

a. If a Jew intermarries (the other party not converting) after becoming a member of the congregation

1. he may retain membership in the congregation,
2. the members of his family who are not converted may not be buried in a Jewish cemetery.
3. he should be discouraged from holding office in the congregation or be singled out for honors in the congregation.

b. If a Jew intermarries (the other party not converting) and then or thereafter applies for membership

4. he should not be admitted to membership,
5. but he is permitted to worship with the congregation.

c. Children of such intermarriages (a or b above)

6. who are not Jewish (if the mother remains a non-Jew) may be admitted to instruction in the congregational school, with the understanding that they will undergo the ceremony of conversion later.
7. Such children, before conversion, may not be admitted to Bar Mitzvah, or Bas Mitzvah or confirmation.
8. Such children, before conversion, may participate in other religious functions and ceremonies, with the understanding that they will undergo the ceremony of conversion later.
9. Such children may not be married in the Jewish faith without formal conversion to Judaism.  
(R.A. Proceedings, hereinafter denoted as R.A.P., 1947, P. 62; 1946, P. 46; Rabbinical Assembly Law Archives, hereinafter denoted as R.A.L.A., Vol. C. PP. 2, 43, 45; Vol. D, PP. 87, 115, 145, 225; Vol. H. PP. 19, 76a, 110, 181; Vol. J. PP. 30, 209)

B. Addenda:

10. An intermarried Jew, as defined above, may be counted to a minyan (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 142)
11. He may recite Kaddish, attend synagogue and maintain his identity with the Jewish people and religion (R.A.L.A. Vol. B, P 29)
12. If married by a minister or priest, and agrees to have his children brought up as Jews, he may still not be admitted to membership, b above being applicable. (R.A.L.A. Vol. F, P. 142)
13. Admission of a non-Jewish spouse to membership, or any non-Jew, is disapproved as contrary to public policy, although such person may be, and may continue to be a contributor. R.A.L.A., Vol. E, P. 8; Vol. J, P. 209.



14. A Jew, though married outside the faith, may be interred in a Jewish cemetery. His non-Jewish wife, and/or non-Jewish children, however, may not be interred in a Jewish cemetery. R.A.L.A. Vol. H, P. 181.
15. While a member of the congregation, though married outside the faith, may not be deprived the opportunity of fulfilling Mitzvoth or any religious obligation, he is not entitled to hold a position of leadership in a congregation. It is the duty of all concerned to withhold positions of leadership and honor from those who have married outside the faith. R.A.L.A. Vol. H, P. 162.
16. It would be a mistake to permit the unconverted non-Jewish wife to be a member of the women's organization of the congregation. R.A.L.A., Vol. C, P.45

C. Contra:

17. Rabbi Boaz Cohen advised the revocation of the membership of a member who marries outside the faith (1944) R.A.L.A., Vol. B, P. 27.
18. Rabbi Albert Gordon (1949), Rabbi Simon Greenberg (1951) and Rabbi Michael Higger (1951) sanctioned the acceptance into membership of intermarried Jews, R.A.L.A., Vol. C, P. 45; Vol. E, P. 264; Vol F, PP 14, 65
19. The question was reopened (1954) and placed on the agenda for future consideration. R.A.L.A., Vol. J, P. 210.

(This summary as of December 31, 1955)  
Compiled by Rabbi Max D. Davidson

כנסת הרבנים באמריקה

## THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET  
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

February 13, 1959

Dear Friends:

Like Satan למה I say to you that I come now בה but unlike Satan, I bring good tidings. I have just returned from a convention of our colleagues on the West Coast and I feel like saying שם ד' מהולל which I paraphrase from Sunrise Highway into Sunset Boulevard the name of the Lord is praised. (Be sure the spelling is מהולל and not מחולל) The convention was a most stimulating and illuminating one. Our colleagues on the West Coast face the same problems as the rest of us do סדנא דארעא חד הוא. Of course, each area and each congregation has its own fillip (קנייטש בלע"ז) Underlying, however, runs the same garment of problems, anxieties, difficulties, and also triumphs.

On the program of the conference were such items as the problems of rabbinic leadership, how the layman looks at the rabbi, מצוח מעשיות, the philosophy of Conservative Judaism (they too worry about it) and a host of practical problems we face as rabbis. The discussions were handled competently. Yours truly reported on the state of the movement and received the usual grilling. (I had to assure the colleagues that they would have to wait משי a bit longer.)

I was very much impressed with the report of Rabbi Kalman Friedman on the activities of the Beth Din and particularly some of the difficult cases that it has handled. I was also impressed with the report of Rabbi Marvin Bornstein on conversion. Instead of each rabbi taking care of his cases of conversion individually, the Rabbinical Assembly of the West Coast has a class for these at the University of Judaism with Rabbi Bornstein as the instructor. This is in the experimental stage. I presume that soon a syllabus of the course will be available.

The program was rich in ideologic discussions as well as with practical questions. Nathan Glazer gave a stimulating but disturbing talk about areas of rabbinic leadership. There was a panel about what the laymen expect of the rabbi. It was most revealing. Amazingly, it was the unanimous opinion that the lay people do not want the rabbi to be the "regular fellow" whom everyone calls by the first name. A discussion on Rabbi Greenberg's pamphlet was heated and revealed the old cleavage between the naturalists and the "mystics".

The common denominator was that the entire program was on a high level. The presence of our colleagues Simon Greenberg and David Aronson contributed much to the maintenance of this level. The conference also bore witness to the fact that our movement is growing tremendously on the West Coast.



And now to travel all the way to the East, to Israel. At our last convention one of our colleagues complained that even Yeshivas that call themselves "progressive" refuse to admit students of the Seminary who come to Israel to study. We are happy to announce that this has been corrected. We refer particularly to Yeshivat Merkaz HaRaav Kook in Jerusalem which has always had warm relations with our men, particularly since some members of our faculty are its alumni. This Yeshivah welcomes any of our students who wish to improve their knowledge of the Talmud while they are in Israel. This would mean that we put the emissaries of this institution on our preferred list.

There are two complaints that are lodged perennially against the Law Committee. One is that the findings and the decisions of the Law Committee are kept within the confines of the Committee and seldom reach the members of the Rabbinical Assembly. The second is that there is too much repetition in the work of the Law Committee. When a question comes in it is treated de novo; that is that the questioner has no way of knowing whether we already had a ruling on the problem and the replier would have to go to too much trouble to look through the files to find out whether the question had already been treated before.

We are now on the way of eliminating both difficulties. Rabbi Marshall Meyer is now employed by the Law Committee. His task is to search through the files of the Law Committee when a question comes in, in order to check whether such a question had come in previously and to see whether a ruling had been rendered. If so he is authorized to answer the inquiry himself on the basis of the previously rendered decision. If there has been no previous ruling it is handed over to the Committee.

The Law Committee has also recommended to the Executive Council that we engage a person full time to study the material accumulated in the files of the Law Committee, classify it, and prepare a compendium of decisions rendered. This may result, we hope, in the publication of a guide for Conservative practice that we shall be able to place in the hands of our men. This may take sometime not only because of the work involved, but also because of the difficulty of engaging the proper person for this task.

The Membership Committee is actively considering the applications of the following rabbis for membership in the Rabbinical Assembly.

Ordained

Rabbi Abraham B. Eckstein  
Chisuk Emunah  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Yeshiva - 1957

Rabbi Moshe Cahana  
Bnai Jacob  
Avenel, New Jersey

Yeshiva Riduz, Jerusalem (1949)

Rabbi Meyer Passow  
Beth Sholom  
Memphis, Tenn.

Jewish Institute of Religion, (1940)

Rabbi Paul Rosenfeld  
Beth El  
Lancaster, Pa.

Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, (1946)

If you have any information which you think our Membership Committee ought to have about these rabbis, please do not hesitate to communicate with the Rabbinical Assembly office. All such communications will be considered confidential.

To enable the Resolutions Committee to give proper study and consideration to the Resolutions which will be brought to the Rabbinical Assembly at the forthcoming convention, Rabbi Saul I. Teplitz, chairman of the Resolution Committee invites members to submit all Resolutions to him no later than May 1st. He requests that you submit the Resolution itself or make recommendation on which you would like a Resolution to be presented at the Convention.

Enclosed is a reservation form for the forthcoming Rabbinical Assembly Convention. Please fill it out immediately and send it on directly to the Concord Hotel.

Enclosed also is a discussion guide prepared by Rabbi Jacob B. Agus for the two sections of "Guiding Principles in Jewish Life Today". I am sure it will be of great usefulness to our colleagues.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Isaac Klein*  
Isaac Klein

P.S. Rabbi Saul I. Teplitz' address is: Laurelton Jewish Center  
229th Street & 137th Avenue  
Laurelton 13, L.I.



February 13, 1959

P E R S O N A L S

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Rabbi and Mrs. Marc Tannenbaum on the birth of a daughter, Adina Vicki

Rabbi and Mrs. Bernard Stolper on the birth of their grandchild, Michal Hadassah, a daughter to Rabbi and Mrs. Pinchas Stolper.

Rabbi and Mrs. Samuel Geffen on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Peter Alan

Rabbi and Mrs. Jonathan Goldstein on their marriage, and best wishes to his parents, Rabbi and Mrs. David A. Goldstein

Rabbi Aaron Weinberg on his election the pulpit of Congregation Ahavath Achim, Brooklyn, New York

Rabbi Moses Lehrman who will be honored on the occasion of his tenth anniversary as spiritual leader of Congregation Bnai Moshe, Detroit, Michigan

Rabbi Harry Nelson who will be honored on the occasion of his twenty-fifth anniversary as spiritual leader of Rodeph Sholom, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

We wish to correct an error which we made in the last newsletter.

Rabbi and Mrs. Zev Nelson celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Yonah and not the Bar Mitzvah of their son as was incorrectly stated. Congratulations to their daughter.

CONDOLANCES:

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the rabbis who each recently suffered the loss of his mother: to Rabbis Benjamin Kreitman, Marshall Meyer and Sigmund Szobel.

Our deepest sympathy to Rabbi and Mrs. Frank Zimmerman on the untimely loss of their beloved son David.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rabbi Jesse J. Finkle of Rodef Sholom Temple, Newport News, Virginia, received the Silver Beaver Award from the Virginia Peninsula Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Rabbi Shalom Segal of Hillel Foundation at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., received an award of a round trip to Israel sponsored by the Philadelphia Zionist Organization under its newly instituted Myer Marcus-William West Interfaith Project.

Rabbi Morris Silverman of Emanuel Synagogue, Hartford, Connecticut, has been invited to deliver the opening prayer at the United States Senate session of Wednesday, February 18. He is also representing the State Commission Against Discrimination at a meeting of the President's committee of Government contracts.

October 1949

COMMITTEE ON JEWISH LAW AND STANDARDS  
OF THE  
RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

Report on Marriages during Sefirah

The following report was unanimously adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards:

According to Geonic tradition, marriages in the Sefirah days were forbidden only from the second day of Passover until Lag B'Omer, and not from Lag B'Omer on.

This tradition was also practiced in the Medieval period in the Jewish communities of France.

The prohibition against marriages during these thirty-three days applied only to wedding ceremonies accompanied by dancing, singing and music.

We therefore recommend that the Geonic tradition concerning marriages during Sefirah be followed, and that the prohibition be observed from the second day of Passover until Lag B'Omer. During this period, marriages not accompanied by dancing, singing and music may be performed.

On these days, during the thirty-three day period, when Tahanun is not recited in the Synagogue, as well as on the 5th day of Iyar (day of Israel independence), marriages of a public and festive nature may be solemnized.



כנסית הרבנים באמריקה

## THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET  
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

March 12, 1953

Dear Colleague:

We had a large turn-out for our Law Conference. Let me give you first the tachlis: the following resolution was adopted for recommendation to the forthcoming convention:

In order to preserve the integrity and advance the welfare of the Jewish family in accordance with Jewish law and tradition and further the dynamic process inherent in the Jewish tradition,

BE IT RESOLVED:

I. That a Conference of the Faculty of the Seminary and the Rabbinical Assembly be established by both parties as the official instrument within the Conservative Jewish Movement for dealing with all matters concerning the Jewish laws of marriage (Hilkot Ishut), and that both the Seminary and the Rabbinical Assembly be asked to delegate whatever authority they may have had in these matters to this joint body;

II. That the affairs of the Joint Conference be governed by a Steering Committee of ten members, five representing the Faculty and five representing the Rabbinical Assembly;

III. That the Steering Committee appoint its own Chairmen who will consist of a representative of the Faculty and a representative of the Rabbinical Assembly, and that these men may serve also as Chairmen of the meetings of the Conference;

IV. That the Steering Committee establish a system of marriage counseling and other media for the preservation of Jewish family life;

V. That the Conference authorize the Steering Committee to create a National Beth Din for Hilkot Ishut (A Court of Domestic Relations) consisting of persons appointed by and responsible to it;

VI. That the National Beth Din be asked to deal with questions which come before it in the field of Jewish Marriage Law and Family Relations, and publish its responsa and conclusions;

VII. That the Steering Committee be authorized to appoint local Bete Din to work under the direction of the National Beth Din and be responsible to it;

VIII. That the status of existing Bete Din remain unaltered until such time as these resolutions have been put into effect;

It being understood that the takkanah-making function shall be reserved to the Joint Conference, the executive authority to the Steering Committee, and judicial function to the National Beth Din;

It being further understood that among the problems for which solutions will be sought and explored is that of hardships arising in cases where a civil divorce has been granted and no get has been issued;

It being further understood that the Joint Conference and the instruments to be set up by it shall continue for a period of three years from the date of the first session of the Conference and shall at that time be subject to review and revision by either or both the Faculty of the Seminary and the Rabbinical Assembly.

#### BY-LAWS

1. All proposals regarding the Jewish Marriage Law and Family Relations shall be submitted by members of the Rabbinical Assembly and Seminary Faculty to the Steering Committee no less than (90) days prior to a Conference Meeting.

I am sure that most of you know how I feel personally about the real possibilities of meeting the problem of law, how convinced I am that we must summon all our courage and actually legislate in the light of the unprecedented situation of a democratically-oriented Jewry. Nevertheless, I gave my wholehearted support to both the conference and the resolution that emerged from it, for I found two vital elements in it which give promise of constructive activity.

The first is clause No. I following Paragraph VIII: "...establish a system of marriage counseling..." I truly believe that we, as rabbis, can perform a singular function in the preventive end of the problem. It is we who participate in the great moments of people's lives, at birth, marriage, bar mitzvah, death; it is we to whom people are likely to come when their marriage threatens to disintegrate. Here is where we should be most thoroughly prepared to come to the aid of distressed couples. I should like very much to see that aspect of the resolution given the prominence it deserves. At the Conference itself not a word was said about it; it was lost in the heated, and, I fear, sometimes acrimonious debate on the halakic phases of the issue.

This is now your job: to study the resolution carefully; discuss it with your colleagues; and come to the convention prepared to make an important decision.

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And now a word from our guest, Rabbi Jacob Agus, who is "sponsoring" the Sabbath Revitalization Effort:

"Morai V'rabotai,

May I call your attention to the following facts in regard to the Sabbath Revitalization Effort.



First, the initiative must come from the local congregation, or metropolitan group of congregations. Hence, it is the rabbi who must provide the initial impulse for such an undertaking. While this project is sponsored by the United Synagogue, there are no national funds to finance any projects outside the central office. Thus, if you get your laymen to call a meeting for this purpose, the national office will secure a speaker for you, but your congregation will have to pay for the expenses of the speaker.

Second, the chief value of this effort is that it shifts responsibility for the observance of Judaism from the rabbi to the individual congregant. We have to combat the tendency to regard the battle for Judaism as the exclusive province of the rabbi, and to confront our laymen with a personal challenge, dealing with their own lives. Such a turning of the tables may be difficult for the rabbi to effect in the case of his own congregation. This is why the project is best launched by a visiting rabbi, who comes as a representative of the national movement.

Third, I beg you to study carefully the kits that have been prepared under the direction of Dr. Emil Lehman. There is a wealth of thought and experience in those kits. If you think of other ideas or improvements on his suggestions, please write to him directly. Let us not be guilty of "al timna tov mib'olov."

Fourth, Rabbi Herbert Parzen of the United Synagogue office is prepared to help you secure an effective speaker who will present the national program to your people. In a previous communication, I pointed out that a Panel of Speakers for the Sabbath has been set up, consisting of leading men in our movement. Please address all your requests to Rabbi Parzen, and cooperate with him.

Fifth, the change of attitude implied in a congregation joining the Sabbath Revitalization effort is very subtle, but also very important. Let us not be discouraged by the seeming failure of any one project in this category. The stakes here are so high, that we should be properly suspicious of any apparent, immediate success.

Sixth, all the suggestions which have been proposed and worked out thus far do not exhaust this field. Here is a challenge to the imagination of every one of us. And if the good Lord blesses you with a clever idea, share it with the hard working men in the national office of the United Synagogue, and with your colleagues.

Seventh, any time is a good time for this effort. If you plan to launch a pledge-campaign on the High Holidays, this is the time to begin the educational and moral buildup for it."

#### THE TEPLITZ REPORT:

Saul Teplitz has been making some inquiries about the way our colleagues observe consecration day in their schools. Twelve



answers have been copied for your benefit. They are attached to this letter. I am sure you will all be interested in hearing what your colleagues are doing; and we thank Rabbi Teplitz for his initiative and efficiency in gathering the data.

OUR REGIONS:

One good sign of our growing-up is the development of the R.A. regions. Word reached us of our mid-west friends who arranged a Kallah, from which emanated some excellent ideas. Among them is one which calls for servicing small communities where no rabbi is located. Our executive discussed the plan, and recommended that action be taken in cooperation with the United Synagogue Committee on Small Communities.

Incidentally, Rabbi Aaron Blumenthal was good enough to accept the chairmanship of the R.A. Committee on Regions, which will attempt to keep the regions in touch with one another, (and keep us in touch with all of them), in addition to encouraging the organization of regions where none exist at present.

(Just to save a few three-cent stamps: Attention: Secretaries of all regions, will you please send me the minutes of your meetings and copies to Rabbi Blumenthal? Thank you.)

May I say that I spent an extremely pleasant day with the New England region recently? I discussed with the men some of our problems and our projects--and the lunch which some of the ladies of Albert Gordon's congregation served was delicious. I hope that I shall be able to visit, at least once this year, each of the regions. I certainly helps me to carry on better when I have had a chance to meet the members of the R.A., many of whom (due to my advanced age) I have never really met.

THE R.A. FUND FOR THE CAMPAIGN:

A letter has gone out to you from Dr. Levinthal and Dr. Klein reminding you of our obligations to the Campaign. I have been asked several questions about this, and here are the answers as I know them:

a) The funds we raised two years ago, in response to the "emergency", have been placed in the general fund. While the Executive Council was overwhelmingly in favor of setting these funds aside for a special project with which we would be identified, we were informed that Dr. Finkelstein believes it better for the J.T.S., if these monies were placed in the general treasury. The Executive Council accepted this report (brought to us by Rabbi Harry Halpern.)

b) The suggested amounts are not assessments; these are entirely for your own guidance, based on the suggestions of the Committee. The question always comes up; how much shall I give? This should help you to figure it out.

c) When there is a drive in your own community, please do not hesitate to announce your gift then, because the contribution of the rabbi (if it is a decent one) serves as a stimulus to the laymen.



However, we want to have the credit; so make out the check to the J.T.S., and send it to us, at the R.A.

Any more questions?

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING: Wednesday, April 15th at 10 o'clock. I wish to remind everyone that everyone is welcome to the Executive Council meetings. We are glad to hear your voice, though we regret we cannot have your vote. (This goes for non-members, and ex-presidents.)

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COMMENDATION:

When our dear friend, Isidore Signer died, the congregation found itself in a very difficult situation. The work had to go on. Word went out to our colleagues in the area, and everyone who could pitched in--officiating at services, at weddings, funerals, and delivering lectures etc.

A demonstration such as this, of warm and friendly help, should not be passed in silence. Thank you, in the name of the R.A. and in my own, to all who rose to this occasion.

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BOOKS FOR ISRAEL:

This is a natural for rabbis. We need books (not money). The Jewish Agency, and 35 national organizations, have joined in an emergency effort to provide scientific books and technical manuals, published after 1940, for the libraries of Israel.

Please: check your personal library; visit your local professionals, and schools; ship (and please pay the postage) to BOOKS FOR ISRAEL, 115 KING ST., NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

We have shipping labels, lists of subjects and other information...write to us for them.

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ABOUT OUR YOUTH IN THE Y.P.L.:

(Rabbi Jack Cohen reporting)--

The Rabbinical Assembly Y.P.L. Committee met on March 3rd. At this meeting we were shocked to learn that the youth groups of the majority of Conservative Congregations are not affiliated with Y.P.L. We appeal to all of our colleagues to make a determined effort to involve their youth groups in Y.P.L. activities. We urge you to cooperate with the leaders of Y.P.L. who are eager to plan programs of

Jewish content, and need your assistance. The May Convention of the Y.P.L. in Chicago will bring together Y.P.L. representatives and members of the local rabbinate for discussion of some of the problems of the League and its relationship to the R.A. On the basis of that meeting we may have some further suggestions to make to you. In the meantime, would you try to keep in touch with the Y.P.L. office and address any questions you may have to it. We will also be delighted if any of you want to serve on the Y.P.L. Committee of the R.A. Please let me know.

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And, for our vital statistics:

On behalf of my colleagues in the Rabbinical Assembly, I want to congratulate Rabbi and Mrs. Pincus Goodblatt on the birth of their son, Abraham Zvi; Rabbi and Mrs. Yaakov G. Rosenberg on the birth of Peninah's sister, Shirah Sarah; and last but not least (7 pounds and 6 ounces) Seth Schulweis upon the acquisition of his parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Harold M. Schulweis. Abraham Zvi and Shirah Sarah are, of course, equally to be congratulated on this score.

I want to express on behalf of his colleagues and myself our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Rabbi Julius Berger whose loss is shared by all of us.

I know that all of you will want to join me in offering condolences to Rabbi Sidney Bogner on the loss of his father, Rabbi Ralph Simon on the loss of his mother, and Rabbi Harry Schwartz on the loss of his brother Samuel.

I want to congratulate Rabbi and Mrs. Samuel Schwartz on the occasion of Naomi Esther's Bas Mitzvah which took place on March 7th.

The alumni of Gratz College, in Philadelphia, will hold a testimonial dinner for Rabbi Julius Greenstone, Principal Emeritus, on the occasion of his Eightieth birthday.

The following members of the R.A. will serve this year as leaders of The National Association of Hillel Directors: Rabbi Samuel Cass has been elected to the Executive Committee; Rabbi Henry Fischel (as we have previously announced) will also serve as a member of the Executive Committee; Rabbi Kahn will act as President of the Association; and Rabbi Saul Kraft will act as an alternate member of the Executive Committee.

Rabbi Hugo Mentel received a Doctor's Degree from Harvard University last June.

Rabbi and Mrs. Paul Reich will visit Israel this June.



Congregation Beth El in Norfolk Virginia are thus honoring Rabbi Reich for his nineteen years of service in its pulpit.

Rabbi and Mrs. Harry Schwartz will also visit Israel this June. Congregation Beth Israel is making Rabbi Schwartz' Twentieth Anniversary memorable and delightful by the gift of this trip.

Rabbi Morris Silverman has received for the second consecutive year an award and honor medal of the Freedoms Foundation for his guest editorial "The Greatness of America," published in the Hartford Times. Rabbi Silverman's editorial took second place in the editorial category.

XXXXX

Please don't forget to fill out the enclosed card and return it to me.

With every good wish,

Cordially,

*Ira Eisenstein*  
Ira Eisenstein



כנסית הרבנים באמריקה

# THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET  
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

January 26, 1954

Dear Colleague:

**PROFESSOR MARX** One day after my last letter to you our dear Professor Alexander Marx passed away peacefully. He is mourned by young and old alike, by scholars and by those who knew only enough to know what Professor Marx meant to the world of learning. His sweetness, his gentleness, his humor and his humility were extraordinary; and his romantic relationship to Mrs. Marx was heart-warming to all of us.

We pray that Mrs. Marx and her family will find consolation in the many years of happy life with the Professor which they were granted by the Almighty.

**MRS. ISRAEL DAVIDSON** Most of us older-timers were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mrs. Israel Davidson, widow of our own Professor. We shall always remember the hospitality of the Davidsons to their students, the warmth and friendliness of that home. Mrs. Davidson has left us a touching memorial biography of her distinguished husband; in remembering him we shall always be aware of the signal place she occupied in his life.

\* \* \*

Before I turn over this letter to two guest conductors, Rabbis Aaron Blumenthal (Committee on Regions) and Nathan Gaynor (Committee on Social Action), I want to report on a few items and get them out of the way:

a) The Steering Committee has called a meeting for February 3rd. We shall soon see whether we shall get action.

b) The Committee on the American Jewish Community had a very interesting meeting on the 5th of January; it was attended by a number of non-R.A. friends (among whom were Dr. S. Niger, Dr. David Petegorsky, Rabbi Jacob Rudin and Mr. Bezalel Sherman) as well as by several of our own. It is hoped that the Committee will continue to draw from all serious minded groups concerned with the future structure of Jewish life and will devote itself to fostering and disseminating the idea of Community.

Now, may I present Rabbi Blumenthal:



Dear Ira:

When you asked me to assume the chairmanship of an R.A. Committee on Regions, I promised to do two things, (1) to gather information about the existing regions, and (2) to offer some practical suggestions about our regional activity. This letter is a report to you and to our colleagues, and the beginning of what I hope will become an awareness of the important contributions which the regions can make to our movement.

With our new Up-state New York Region (mazzal tov to Irwin Hyman, its first president) we now have a full minyan. The other nine are in (1) New England, (2) Connecticut, (3) Metropolitan New York City, (4) Eastern Canada, (5) Philadelphia, (6) Ohio, (7) Chicago, (8) Minneapolis, and (9) Los Angeles. This report is not as complete as it might be only because I have not received full reports from all of them.

Of course, there are wide differences and varying degrees of effectiveness among the regions. The most active ones meet monthly and follow a well-planned program. Others meet only sporadically, often under the stress of local problems. Some have numerous committees (Chicago has eight, plus an advisory committee), others have none. All of them, in my opinion, have proven their worth-whileness: e.g. distance makes it impossible for the Eastern Canada Region to meet regularly, yet, as Reuben Slonim, its president reports, the Region was responsible for the introduction of the Eternal Light Program in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.

What purposes do the regions serve? (The following are not intended to be in order of their importance:)

- (1) FELLOWSHIP--not only for the men but for their wives as well. Al Gordon, President of the New England Region, reports that all the men and their wives attended a Chanukah party at the Gordon home. Albert Troy is chairman of Connecticut's Purim party for our colleagues and their wives on March 13th.
- (2) EXCHANGE OF IDEAS--Sam Penner's Jewish Culture Foundation and Max Forman's Men's Sunday Morning Programs, were discussed at length by the Philadelphia Region. The last meeting of the New England Region invited a number of youth advisors to discuss techniques in youth work.
- (3) STANDARDIZATION--All of our regions, sooner or later concern themselves with ritual standards, weddings, funerals, caterers, etc., but some of the regions, especially Chicago, Philadelphia, Ohio, and now the Up-state New York Region have established Bate Din. Connecticut has tried to



establish standards for Rabbi-Cantor relationships. Philadelphia has set high standards of Religious School education.

- (4) TORAH--Men sometimes have the opportunity to present the results of studies in their particular fields of interest to their colleagues. More frequently, guest speakers are invited to address regional meetings. Officers of the R.A. (especially the president), faculty members and other colleagues have addressed regions. Eddie Sandrow has just accepted my invitation to address the Up-state New York Region (thanks, Eddie!) and if the Ohio men can get together before the end of January, Sam Ruderman will address their meeting in Cleveland. The Metropolitan New York City Region has arranged for a series at the Seminary under Professor Kaplan.
- (5) KINUSIM--Something new has been added to our programs - all-day or week-end Kinusim for rabbis, rabbis and presidents, or laymen bichlal. My best reports come from Philadelphia (Eddie Tenenbaum reporting) and Connecticut (first Marshall Maltzman and now Joe Spevak reporting. My thanks to all three of you.) Both of these regions have sponsored all-day kinusim away from home which have been highly successful. Connecticut also sponsored a Laymen's Summer Institute last August.
- (6) LEADERSHIP--Youth activities have blossomed in many areas only because of the devoted leadership of our colleagues. Regional L.T.F. and U.S.Y. activities are discussed, planned and evaluated at regional meetings. One hundred and forty young people from Philadelphia attended an Atlantic Seaboard L.T.F. conference only because the rabbis of Philadelphia had discussed the program prior to the conference. The Connecticut Region, last year, "got behind" the U.S.Y. Spring Kinus and its Conclave in the Fall. The Ohio Region sponsors an annual Confirmands Conclave for Conservative Congregations. Sol Faber writes that some 150 to 200 boys and girls from all over the state meet at a synagogue for a week-end of religious and social activity.

This applies to other areas of our movement. The Ohio Region co-sponsors the annual conference of United Synagogue congregations. Educational standards in all Conservative Schools in Philadelphia are maintained by the Region. Recently when a school wished to lower its standards to meet the competition of a Reform synagogue the Region persuaded the congregation to adhere to the code. All three Ramah camps were discussed fully at regional meetings, and in part the program was made possible because our men were informed about and therefore became devoted to the project.



I could add other examples, but the conclusion ought to be obvious--WHENEVER A PROJECT IN OUR MOVEMENT IS DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN THE REGION, ADEQUATE ENTHUSIASM AND LEADERSHIP EMERGES TO CARRY IT THROUGH TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION. The region is the dynamo which generates the energy for the entire movement.

- (7) COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS--The New England Region is working on a plan of assistance to small communities. Connecticut has devised a procedure for pastoral visitations to state institutions. Problems involving relationships between our men and their Orthodox and Reform colleagues, the various bureaus of education, community councils, A.D.L., etc., are discussed frequently and fruitfully, and where necessary, common action is taken.

The preceding is not a complete enumeration of the activities of the region - after all, you don't want a whole megillah - but I want to make some suggestions:

- (a) Where travel does not present too much of a problem, our men ought to organize regions. Though a minimum of ten members seems necessary for adequate programming, local conditions may enable a smaller number to establish a successful region. Every rabbi represents the strength inherent in his congregation. Don't worry about programs - you will find plenty to do, and you will enjoy doing it.
- (b) The Committee on Regions should be expanded to include a few more men, plus a corresponding member from each region. The corresponding member should both send and receive reports and correspondence to and from the Committee.
- (c) Please, PLEASE, PLEASE, Regional Secretaries, send me copies of your minutes, pronouncements on standards, etc. Anything that might help to educate the Committee concerning regions.
- (d) Members of the Rabbinic Cabinet of the Seminary who are travelling for the Seminary probably can arrange to take an extra day to visit a region. I have established an arrangement with Joel Geffen whereby the schedules of the Cabinet members will be sent to me. Officials of the R.A., the Seminary, and the United Synagogue also travel. If you want them to speak at your regional meetings, drop me a note, but give me plenty of time. No miracles of planning.

Lastly: This is a new Committee. What we do is as much a challenge to our colleagues as to the members of the Committee. Your suggestions and requests will help us to grow into a better understanding of our function. Let's have 'em.

Cordially yours,

Rabbi Aaron H. Blumenthal

Personals:

I want to extend our heartiest congratulations to Rabbi and Mrs. Samuel Scolnic upon the birth of their son, Ben Eddin.

Our very best wishes to Rabbi and Mrs. Max D. Davidson, Judith Davidson, and Lieutenant Norman Chasek, upon the occasion of Judith's marriage to Norman; and to Rabbi Bernard Lipnick upon the occasion of his marriage to Stephanie Friedman.

Temple Adath Israel held a dinner installation ceremony for Rabbi Benjamin L. Teller and its newly elected officers on Sunday, January 24th. Rabbi Elvin Kose and the congregation of Temple Beth Shalom dedicated their new synagogue building on the same day.

The Board of Rabbis of Northern California elected Rabbi Elliot M. Burstein, President; Rabbi H. David Teitelbaum, Secretary-Treasurer; and Rabbi Harold Schulweis to its Executive Committee for the year 1953-54.

Rabbi Mordecai H. Lewittes has recently published the second volumes of "Heroes of Jewish History" and the "Student Bible".

Placements:

Rabbi Amos Miller  
East End Temple  
East Park Avenue  
Long Beach, L.I., N.Y.

FORMERLY

789 St. Marks Avenue  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rabbi Ephraim Prombaum  
Cong. Bnai Bezalel  
7549 Phillips Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Agudas Israel Synagogue  
Hazleton, Pennsylvania

Rabbi Max J. Routenberg  
Temple Bnai Sholom  
100 Hempstead Avenue  
Rockville Centre, L.I., N.Y.

Jewish Theological Seminary  
New York, N.Y.



Rabbi Norman Siegel  
Hyde Park Hebrew Center  
5227 Blackstone Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Shomray Hadath  
Elmira, New York

Rabbi Bernard Cohen  
Sun Valley Jewish  
Community Center  
11050 Lorne Street  
Sun Valley, California

Bnai Israel  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Rabbi Gaynor's "Social Actions Bulletin" is appended.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

  
Ira Eisenstein



RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY

SOCIAL ACTION BULLETIN

Nathan Gaynor, Editor

January, 1954

(This bulletin, which we hope to put out from time to time, is prepared by your Social Action Committee for the purpose of focusing the attention of our rabbis on current legislation in the field of civil rights as well as other areas of related interest. As an educational aspect of the work of the Committee it makes no pretensions to novelty. It merely presents information which we hope will be useful to you.)

A. CHURCH AND STATE

1. The principle of separation of church and state was recently reaffirmed in the New Jersey courts where it was ruled that it was illegal for the local school boards of that state to cooperate with the Gideon society in its bible distribution program in the public schools. This decision is of national importance as other states are being confronted with a similar problem.

2. For several years public buildings in Washington, D.C. have been lit up in the form of a cross during the nights of the Easter season. Representations are being made locally to the proper authorities in an effort to eliminate this practice. Preliminary indications are that the effort will be successful.

3. It was announced recently that Senator Hill of Alabama proposes to reintroduce his amendment to the Tidelands Oil bill to have monies raised from that source used for the aid of education. The details of that amendment should be interesting. Heretofore all legislation to have the Federal government aid public education has been stymied because of the pressures of some religious groups who wished their schools to be included among the beneficiaries of such funds.

B. IMMIGRATION

It may be assumed that no action on our immigration policy as delineated in the McCarran-Walter Act will be undertaken by the administration, although this was a campaign promise.



The President is apparently satisfied with the emergency legislation enacted in the first session of this Congress, which allows for the admission of between 105,000 and 122,000 immigrants. (To date because of technical delays none have as yet been admitted). The President made no mention of immigration in the State of the Union message. Senator Lehman has introduced a bill which would do away with the undemocratic features of our present immigration policy. Suggested reading on this subject is Milton R. Konvitz's "Civil Rights in Immigration" published by Cornell.

### C. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

A bill to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry was introduced last year by Senator Ives and several other Senators. This is an FEPC bill. Only the name has been changed. It's called the "Federal Equality of Opportunity in Employment Act". Hearings on this bill will begin on February 23rd. The Rabbinical Assembly, through its Social Action Committee, will either testify or submit a statement in support of the measure. Our statement, however, will indicate that genuine friends of equality of opportunity must first be prepared to eliminate the filibuster in the Senate and the life and death power of the House Rules Committee. To be for equality of opportunity and the filibuster at the same time is to be like the Soviet Union, which claims to be in favor of atomic energy control but against inspection.

### D. THE BRICKER AMENDMENT

This proposal has less than 125 words, yet it has precipitated one of the serious controversies of our time. It is an enigma that the amendment has been able to gain so many supporters. The Eisenhower administration is arrayed against it as are all internationally-minded citizens. The heart of the amendment is section two which reads: "A treaty shall become effective as internal law in the United States only through legislation which would be valid in the absence of a treaty". This clause would hamper the treaty-making powers of the United States. In this fast-moving world our treaty procedure would become so cumbersome as to limit our effectiveness at the international round table. The President would be hamstrung and his words to the rest of the world could be only tentative. What is behind this Amendment?

Professor Commager says "They are the old isolationist fears of international commitments, particularly in the field of human rights". For that reason believers in human rights must oppose the amendment.

Further reading:

Commager, Henry Steele-The Perilous Folly of Senator Bricker in "The Reporter" of October 13, 1953.

Pearson and Backus-Save the Peace Power: Don't Straitjacket Treaties in the "American Bar Association Journal", Sept. 1953.

AMERICAN  
ARCHIVES  
E. GENOCIDE

Rabbinical Assembly members are urged to continue petitioning the Senate to ratify the Genocide convention, which would outlaw as international crime the mass murder of religious, racial and national groups. The NCRAC recently had to release a criticism of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. which in supporting a resolution urging member nations to ratify the Genocide convention indicated that its action was not to be "construed as a commitment to ratify on the part of the United States, nor as any authorization of propaganda in support of the convention within the United States".

The United States originally took the lead in promoting the Genocide convention in the U.N. The prestige of our country is being dealt a serious blow by our failure to ratify the convention. As the NCRAC resolution puts it "by inconsistently urging ratification upon others while continuing to withhold ratification itself, our government has placed the United States in a position of utmost vulnerability."

F. CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS

The future historian writing of the current Congress and perhaps of some of its predecessors will be struck by the preponderance of investigative activity over legislative activity. The stress on investigation can be gauged by the amount of money appropriated for that purpose. According to Senator Ellender in 1942, the expenditure for committee investigations in the Senate was \$210,574. In 1952 it was \$1,719,000-an increase of nine hundred percent.



It must be obvious to anyone who reads the newspaper that the work of these committees overlaps. The three permanent Congressional Committees headed respectively by Senators Jenner, McCarthy and Representative Velde have shamelessly competed for headlines. According to the Friends Committee on National Legislation, in a recent investigation of teachers in Philadelphia two prospective witnesses who stood on their rights as witnesses and refused to be subjected to any photographing, televising, or broadcasting prior to the completion of their testimony were under these circumstances not even asked to testify. The Friends Committee asked pointedly "Is the Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee more interested in television possibilities than in gathering facts?"

The abuses of these committees are legion. Accusations have preceded investigations. Agnes Meyer, Stephen Wise, John Haynes Holmes, Judah Magnes, James Wechsler, Bishop Oxnham-these are but a few of the many smeared. It is clear that investigation rooms have turned into court rooms without the safeguards of court procedure.

Accordingly three resolutions have been introduced by Senators Kefauver, Morse, and Lehman prescribing new procedural requirements for investigative hearings. These bills would protect witnesses from defamation by giving them rights not granted at present. No action has been taken on these bills or on the House equivalent introduced by Rep. Keating. They have been referred to the respective Rules Committees of the House and Senate where they very likely will remain.

#### G. SECURITY RISKS

According to the White House, 1456 persons were severed from Federal employment under the new loyalty order of President Eisenhower which makes it mandatory for all government employees to pass both loyalty and security tests. The President in his address to the ADL spoke of the frontier code of Wild Bill Hickok which calls for the right to face your accuser. But this code apparently does not apply to Federal employees who seldom have an opportunity to face their accusers, who have no right of appeal to any outside body, who are not permitted to plead their case in person, and many of whom do not even have a chance to learn the full charges against them.

But, what constitutes  $\text{הַיְחָוָה}$  is the release of the figure 1456. This creates the impression that all those dismissed were subversives, when as a matter of fact some were dismissed for drunkenness, others for perversion, etc.

Everyone knows the famous Radulovich case where an effort was made "To visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children". Not so well known is the case of the stenographer in the Department of Justice who had twice faced charges because her father was a Communist and had twice been cleared of personal guilt. She had to resign, however, when it became apparent that she would be investigated for a third time.

There can be no doubt that the government must protect itself against Communists. But to do so in utter disregard of American principles of fair play is to be guilty of the sin denounced by Isaiah "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that change darkness into light and light into darkness; that change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter".

#### H. DO LETTERS TO CONGRESS HELP?

The answer is yes. In a democracy expression of individual viewpoints is essential. Your reaction does matter. WRITE! SPEAK UP ! URGE YOUR CONGREGANTS TO DO LIKEWISE!

1. Write to Senator Russell supporting his proposal for the establishment of one joint committee to investigate subversive activities.
2. Write to Senator Jenner, Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, asking that hearings be held on SCR 10, SCR 11, and S.RES. 83 calling for revisions in committee procedure.
3. Write to your local newspaper expressing your views on civil liberties.
4. Make your congregants aware of their stake in democracy and encourage them to become literate in matters of social importance.

#### I. SOME INTERESTING FIGURES

According to United Nations figures more than half the world's population has only nine percent of the world's total income. The following is the average annual income per capita in various parts of the world:

United States	\$1,453	United Kingdom	\$ 773
Canada	870	China	27
New Zealand	856	Indonesia	25

Ten nations had less than fifty dollars and another seventeen no more than one hundred dollars a head a year. Eight countries have about ten percent of the world population but fifty six percent of the world's income.



### J. A RABBI TAKES A COURAGEOUS STAND

We reprint the following letter by Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal of the Brooklyn Jewish Center. The theme of the letter speaks for itself.

#### A FRANK STATEMENT ON A SENSITIVE ISSUE

By Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal

(Taken from an article in the  
Brooklyn Jewish Center Review)

The following letter was written by me in response to one I received in which the writer expressed indignation because some of our people were moving away from their neighborhood because some Negro families moved in. My reply deals with this vital but sensitive issue:

"My Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

"I have your letter and find it rather difficult to reply. We Jews have been the greatest sufferers of discrimination. I remember when I first came to this section of Brooklyn some 37 years ago and wanted to rent an apartment the entire neighborhood of Union, President and Carroll Streets was inhabited by Christians. When I rang a bell where there was a "To Let" sign, I usually got this answer: "We do not rent to Jews; we do not want to spoil the neighborhood." I mention this fact because we Jews should be the last to complain if those of a different race, or different color of skin, want to become our neighbors. I, too, have noticed an exodus on the part of some of our people, and to be very frank with you, it has pained me greatly. There is of course no question about the need for moving for valid reasons. But when one moves from a street just because a colored person became a resident on that street, then I do feel a sense of indignation, because we then become guilty of that very offense for which we blame others when it affects us.

"You speak of destroying the neighborhood or destroying Jewish Life in this area. I do not believe that any person moving into the neighborhood can destroy Jewish life if we Jews remain true to our ideals. Now I realize that, unfortunately, when a neighborhood changes, the realty value of property is lowered, but that is due solely to a prejudice that many people still have. I should like to judge neighbors by only one standard--are they nice people?

If a person is dirty, slovenly, loud or vulgar, I would not want him for a neighbor even if he were a Jew; and if he is refined, clean, well-mannered and well-behaved, I would not object to him no matter what his religious belief or color or race might be. I think it is essential for Jews to set a higher example of racial tolerance and brotherliness. In that way we would reflect greater honor upon the Jewish name and become finer exponents of genuine Americanism.

"I know I may be told that I am speaking as an idealist and not as a realist, that I am not taking account of the practical issues involved. But it is my conviction that we must learn to live by ideals even if we find them somewhat uncomfortable at first. As a Rabbi, as one who tries to live according to the ideals of my religion, and as an American taking the ideals of American Democracy seriously, I could not do otherwise. I think that upon due reflection you will agree with me in my opinion."

I am confident that in the above letter I have expressed not only my personal sentiments but also the sentiments of the vast majority of our people.







May 18, 1961

To: Rabbi Wolfe Kelman

From: Edward T. Sandrow

The letter you received from Marc Tanenbaum, regarding an article which he is preparing for the London Chronicle opens the door for us to get more details about the R.A. into the best Anglo-Jewish paper published in the world.

It is my hope that you will see that Marc gets as much material as possible. May I also suggest that you write up a few paragraphs indicating the direction in which we are moving with regard to:

1. higher standards for the rabbi himself
2. the more decisive role which the rabbi is playing in youth and adult education
3. the concern we show in Jewish law, particularly in the realm of kashruth, marriage and divorce, Sabbath, etc., etc.
4. the need for recruitment in the Conservative rabbinate in order to supply the tremendous demand.