

Ahaba Ve Ahva of Ocean Parkway

1801 OCEAN PARKWAY

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11223

January 4, 1995

RABBI

Shimon Hai Alouf

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Clement Soffer
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Honorable President Hosni Moubarak
President of The Arab Republic of Egypt
Cairo, Egypt

Honorable President Moubarak:

Please accept my respectful greetings. I would like to convey our sincere appreciation, on behalf of the Egyptian Jewish Congregation of New York, Ahaba Ve Ahva, for your kindness in granting our wishes to safeguard the resting place of our forefathers, at the Cemetery, El Bassatin. This would not have occurred without your generosity, and we are forever indebted to you.

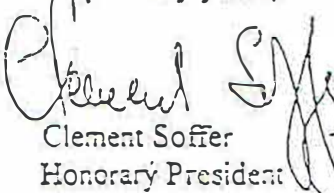
I would like to respectfully bring to your attention another matter, which is of great significance to our Egyptian Jewish Community. There are Holy religious articles such as Torahs, Prayer Books, and Memorial Lanterns that remained in Egypt after our unfortunate exit. These are tools that we use during our services, as the Koran is used in the Mosques. Our Torahs are read daily, our Prayer Books are utilized during services and some are used to teach us the wisdom and the intellect of our forefathers. Our Memorial Lanterns are lit on specific holidays in memory of our departed ancestors. These Torahs were donated to commemorate the soul of our departed parents. The return of these Torahs, Prayer Books, and Memorial Lanterns to the Egyptian Jewish Community of New York, for their intended purposes, will bring great joy, happiness and blessings to our community and the Egyptian people.

Your generosity and your wisdom, gives us great hope that your kindness and your feeling of compassion will permit for these items to enrich our services. Always in our daily prayers, we will remember our thanks and our debt to your kindness. Please grant us this request and may the Almighty ALLAH give you long life, and blessing to Egypt and it's people.

We are available to help or assist in anyway, in order to facilitate the accomplishment of this sacred mission. I pray and hope that the Almighty ALLAH, our common God, will return the same kindness and generosity to you, your children and the compassionate people of Egypt.

Please contact me at:
Work 212-997-0230
Home 516-883-8246

Respectfully yours,


Clement Soffer
Honorary President



Embassy of Egypt

Ahmed Maher El Sayed
Ambassador

February 1, 1995

Dear Mr. Soffer:

Thank you for your letter dated January 5, 1995 and your kind wishes for me and my colleagues, as well as your warm feelings towards Egypt.

I have forwarded your letter addressed to President Mubarak. While hoping to see you at an early date, I remain,

Sincerely,

With my best wishes

Ahmed Maher El Sayed

Mr. Clement Soffer
525 Seventh Avenue - 6th floor
New York, New York 10018



הרבנות הראשית לישראל

Office of The Chief Rabbi of Israel
RABBI ISRAEL MEIR LAU

לשכת הרב הראשי לישראל
הרב ישראל מאיר לאו

March 26, 1997
Eng-b-74

Ms. Carmen Weinstein
Secretary of the Jewish Community in Cairo
c/o Impremerie Weinstein
28 Rue Chrit Pacha
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Ms. Weinstein,

I am aware that there are a number of Sifrei Torah in Egypt, which are needed by Mr. Clemens Sofer of Congregation Ahava VeAchva, Brooklyn N.Y., and by other various communities in Brooklyn.

Mr. Clemens Sofer, works endlessly on the behalf of his congregation, and the Jewish nation. After viewing the letters of Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi Doron, and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, I, as Chief Rabbi of Israel join in the quest, and ask of you to exert your maximum for the release of the Sifrei Torah.

Through this gracious act, may you be blessed with long life and much happiness.



Sincerely Yours,
Israel Meir Lau
Israel Meir Lau
Chief Rabbi of Israel

SYLVIA YOSSEF

ALMA MATER

AMERICAN PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

עבודת יום

התורה

התורה והמצוות

Carmen Weinstein
% Imprimerie Weinstein
28 Rue Chif Pacha
Cairo, Egypt

לכבוד הגברת היקרה מרת כרמן ויינשטיין ה' יספריה ריחיייה.
גברת נכבדה,

אני מקווה שמכתבי זה ימצא אותך בבריאות טובה, והנני מכרך את אמן שתחיה לרגל הבחירה לגשיאת שארית הקהילה היהודית בקאהיר ועל משרחך החדשה כמזכירת הקהילה, שתזכו להצלחה מרובה.

בחור סגן הרב הראשי לשעבר לקהלת מצרים, ובחור הראשון לציון והמנהיג הרוחני של היהדות העולמית הספרדית, אני מבקש ממך את שיחוף הפעולה לשחרר את ספרי התורה ואת ספרי הקודש הנמצאים כעת ברשות הקהלה היהודית בקאהיר.

לצערנו הרב, נצטמצמה קהלתכם מאד, עד שאין בה מספיק אפילו לכדי בנין לקיום הפילות סדירות בבית הכנסת, ואין אנד רואים בעתיד הקרוב תקנה לגידול היים יהודיים בקאהיר ולהרחבת קהילתכם הקטנה.

ובכן, הגיעה תשעה למצוא את השימש המתאים לספרי התורה ולספרי הקודש שבדשותכם, ולהעבירם לידיים באמנות של צאאי קהילתכם אשר היגרו לארצות הברית, אתם יכולים להשאיר ברשותכם שלשה או ארבעה ספרי תורה, לקיום התפלות שאהם מקיימים בהדדמוניות שוננת, וכל שאר יישלחו לקהלת היהודים יוצאי מצרים שבברוקלין ובפרש לקהלת "אהבה ואחזה", אשר גדלה מאד - גן פורת יוסף, ויש בה באמשת אלפים משפחות, עם ילדים פנכדים, והיא הולכת וגדלה מיום ליום כן ירבו, ובבקורי שם נודע לי שיש להם כעשרה ספרי תורה במקומם, וזקוקים הם מאד לעוד ספרי תורה רבים שישתמשו בהם יום יום, וגם לחנך בספרי הקודש את הדור החדש על ברכי המסורת המפוארת של יהדות מצרים, ולהשתמש בספרי הקודש כשם שהשתמשו בהם אבותיהם בעודם חושבי מצרים.

לידיעתך, זהו מומנט גדול וחשוב מאד ליהודים יוצאי מצרים, אשר הודות לאדיבותה של ממשלת מצרים והנשיא מובארק, ניהנה רשות להוציא את ספרי התורה וספרי הקודש אשר במצרים, - כפי שנסדר לי אישית מפי שגריר מצרים בישראל מר בסיוני בניקרונו אותם בביתי בירושלים - ולהעבירם לקהלת "אהבה ואחזה" אשר בברוקלין, כדי שיוכלו להשתמש בהם כפי שנועדו סלכתחילה על ידי היהודים שחרמו אותם למטרה קדושה להשתמש בהם יום יום בהפלות ובלימוד בקהילות מצרים. ועתה יש לכם הזדמנות חד-פעמית, ולמצוה גדולה החשב לכם, להציל את ספרי התורה

CVANTA YOSSEF

AND PRESIDENT OF ISRAELI COMMUNITY

Joseph Harary
Comunita Israelite
61 Rue Nabi Daniel
Alexandria, Egypt

עבודת זמנה

התורה
בשנת ה'תש"ו

לכבוד האדון הנכבד והנעלה מר יוסף הררי חי"ו, נשיא הקהלה היהודית באלכסנדריה.
שלום וברכה וישע רב.
מר הררי הנכבד,

אני מקווה שמכתבי זה ימצא אותך בבריאות טובה, והבני מברך אותך על פעולותיך בתור נשיא הקהילה היהודית באלכסנדריה, לשמור מכל משמר על השרידים של קהילת קודש זו וברכות לראש מסביר על שיפולך המסור בנחקקים שבין חברי הקהילה, לשוב לך ושכרך כפול מן השמים.

בתור סגן הרב הראשי לשעבר לקהלת מצרים קהיר והראשון לציון ומנהיג רוחני של היהדות העולמית הספרדית, אני מבקש סמך את שיחוף הפעולה לשחרר את ספרי התורה ואת ספרי הקודש הנמצאים בעת ברשות הקהלה היהודית באלכסנדריה מצרים. לצערנו הרב, נצטמצמה קהילתנו מאד ואין בה מספיק אפילו לכדי מניין לקיום תפילות מסודרות בבית הכנסת, ולפי הנראה אין בעתיד הקרוב שום תקווה לגדולת חיים יהודיים באלכסנדריה. והגיעה השעה למצוא את השימוש המתאים לספרי הקודש שברשותכם, ולהעבירם לידים נאמנות של צאצאי קהילתכם אשר היגרו לארצות הברית.

אתם יכולים להשאיר ברשותכם שלשה או ארבעה ספרי תורה, לצורך התפלות שאתם מקיימים בהזדמנויות שונות, וכל השאר ישלחו לקהלת היהודים יוצאי מצרים בברוקלין, ובפרט לקהלת "אהבה ואחווה", אשר עיני ראו ולא זר, שבדלה מאד, עד שיש בה כחמשה אלפים משפחות, עם בניו ונכדיו, והקהלה הולכת וגדלה מיום ליום, ומנהיגים אותם רבנים חשובים, ואין בידם אלא כעשרה ספרי תורה וזקוקים הם מאד לתרבות ספרי תורה שיחמסו בהם יום יום, ולתנך בספרי הקודש את הדור החדש על ברכי המסורת העשירה של יהדות מצרים ולהשחמם בספרי הקודש כאשר השחמם בהם אבותיהם כשהיו תושבי מצרים.

לידיעת כבודו, זהו סומנם גדול וחשוב מאד ליהודים יוצאי מצרים, אשר הודות לאדיבותה של מפלגת מצרים והנשיא מובארק, ניהנה רשות להוציא את ספרי התורה וספרי הקודש אשר במצרים, ובהם יוכלו להשחמם כפי הצורך מלכתחילה על ידי החידים שתרמו אותם למסרת קודש להשחמם בהם יום יום בתפלות ובליסוד בקהילות מצרים. רעתה יש לכם הזדמנות ומצוה גדולה שאה לידכם, לכבד את ספרי הקודש האלה ולהצילם על ידי השכרתם לבתי הכנסת הקיימים באמריקה ובערם בברוקלין.

אני דורש מכבודו לשחרר ברחימות את ספרי החורה וספרי הקודש, שיועברו לקהלה הקדושה "אהבה ואהבה" של יוצאי מצרים בברוקלין, ולשתף פעולה עם מר קלמונט סופר הי"ו בנוגע הקהלה הזאת. וזוהי הזדמנות של מצוה חד-פעמית שלא ניתן להחמיצה, ושכרכם ישגה מאד אצל השם יתברך. אני מברך את כבודו באורך ימים ושנות חיים כרוב טובה עושר ואושר ושובע שמחות וכל טוב.

אברהם יוסף
הרב אברהם יוסף
עובדיה יוסף

הראשון לציון וראש מועצת חכמי החורה

AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

505 Seventh Avenue
Suite 1101
New York, NY 10001
Tel: 212-366-7223
Fax: 212-366-7283

February 28, 1997

Ms. Carmen Weinstein
Secretary of the Jewish Community in Cairo
c/o Impremerie Weinstein
28 rue Chrif Pacha
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Ms. Weinstein:

The American Sephardi Federation represents the interests of Jewish communities numbering almost 500,000 people in the USA including the Egyptian community.

We are writing to you to ask for your full cooperation to the efforts made by the Ahava VeAhavah Congregation and in particular Mr. Clement Soffer to bring the Siffrei Torah currently in Egypt to the United States of America in order to fulfill the wishes and desires of those who donated these Sefarim to the community for the sole purpose of bringing Kedusha and Holiness to the memory of their loved ones. This can only be done when they are actively used for prayers in a congregation.

You and your family have been in Egypt for a very long time and you will be bringing much honor to your family's name as a participant in such a Mitzvah. Any attempt to delay this operation will cause great suffering and hurt to the families who donated the Sefarim for the purpose of them being used in congregations and the many needy communities who are desperate to have one of those holy articles.

Your immediate response is anticipated.

Sincerely,



Edwin Shuker
Executive Director



הרבנות הראשית לישראל

Office of The Chief Rabbi of Israel
RABBI ISRAEL MEIR LAU

לשכת הרב הראשי לישראל
הרב ישראל מאיר לאו

March 26, 1997

Eng-b-74

Josef Harary
Comunite Israelite
61 Rue Nabi Daniel
Alexandria, Egypt

Dear Mr. Harary,

I am aware that there are a number of Sifrei Torah in Egypt, which are needed by Mr. Clemens Sofer of Congregation Ahava VeAchva, Brooklyn N.Y., and by other various communities in Brooklyn.

Mr. Clemens Sofer, works endlessly on the behalf of his congregation, and the Jewish nation. After viewing the letters of Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi Doron, and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, I, as Chief Rabbi of Israel join in the quest, and ask of you to exert your maximum for the release of the Sifrei Torah.

Through this gracious act, may you be blessed with long life and much happiness.



Sincerely Yours,
Israel Meir Lau
Israel Meir Lau
Chief Rabbi of Israel

ELIYAHU BAKSHI-DORON

RISHON LEZION CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL

אליהו בקשי-דורון
ראשון לציון לרוב הרב הראשי לישראל

Shevat 5757

February 6, 1997

Eng-b-47

Ms. Carmen Weinstein
Secretary of the Jewish Community in Cairo
c/o Impremerie Weinstein
28 Rue Chrif Pacha
Cairo, Egypt

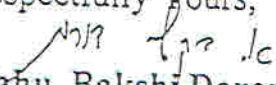
Dear Ms. Weinstein,

I hope that this letter finds you well. As the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel and the guardian of Sephardic communal property worldwide, I am charged with ensuring that these assets are utilized for the good and benefit of the Jewish people as a whole. It is your responsibility and obligation to cooperate and work with me regarding the Sifrei Torah that you have in Egypt, that are needed by Mr. Clemens Sofer of Cibgregatuib Ahava VeAchva Brooklyn N.Y., and by other communities which are in need of Sifrei Torah.

Sifrei Torah must be considered communal property and not private property. While the congregation in Alexandria is now very small and needs only one or two Sifrei Torah, the Egyptian community in Brooklyn now numbers over 5,000 families! With g-ds help, this community will continue to prosper and flourish and needs 10-15 Sifrei Torah. Additionally, there are other communities with no Sifrei Torah at all!

In my capacity as Chief Rabbi I ask that you transfer these Sifrei Torah. By the gracious act of passing on these Sifrei Torah, we will be able to preserve and strengthen the heritage of Egyptian Jewry and bring glory to the Egyptian community.

Respectfully Yours,


El'iyahu Bakshi Doron
Rishon Lezion Chief Rabbi of Israel



ELIYAHU BAKSHI-DORON
RISHON-LEZION CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL

אליהו בקשי-דורון
הראשון לעיון הרב הראשי לישראל

Shevat 5757
February 6, 1997
Eng-b-47

Joseph Harary
Comunite Israelite
61 Rue Nabi Daniel .
Alexandria, Egypt

Dear Mr. Harary,

I hope that this letter finds you well. As the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel and the guardian of Sephardic communal property worldwide, I am charged with ensuring that these assets are utilized for the good and benefit of the Jewish people as a whole. It is your responsibility and obligation to cooperate and work with me regarding the Sifrei Torah that you have in Egypt, that are needed by Mr. Clemens Sofer of Cibgregatuib Ahava Ve.Achva Brooklyn N.Y., and by other communities which are in need of Sifrei Torah.

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Respectfully Yours,

Eliahu Bakshi Doron
Eliahau Bakshi Doron
Rishon Lezion Chief Rabbi of Israel



LE GRAND RABBIN DE FRANCE

נ"ו

Paris, le 17 mars 1997

Madame Carmen WEINSTEIN
Imprimerie WEINSTEIN
28, Rue Chriï Pacha

LE CAIRE (EGYPTE)

Chère Madame, אל

Je me joins à l'appel des éminents rabbanim qui vous ont écrit et notamment à Rav Ovadia YOSSEF, pour vous remercier de bien vouloir collaborer avec Monsieur Clément SOFER concernant la cinquantaine de Sifrei Torah (et autres objets sacrés) dont vous vous occupez et se trouvant actuellement en Egypte.

Compte tenu que la Communauté juive au Caire est peu nombreuse, peut-être pourriez-vous conserver trois Sifrei Torah et remettre les 47 autres à Monsieur Clément SOFER qui pourraient s'occuper de les faire restaurer, s'il y a lieu.

Ainsi les 5.000 juifs égyptiens de Brooklin pourraient journellement utiliser et faire vivre ces livres sacrés et ainsi éviter qu'ils ne se détériorent et toutes les autres Communautés juives originaires d'Egypte pourraient elles aussi, lorsqu'elles le souhaitent par l'intermédiaire de Monsieur Clément SOFER, utiliser ces Sifrei Torah.

Vous accomplirez ainsi une très grande mitzva pour la sanctification du Nom Divin.

Je serais particulièrement heureux de disposer de deux Sifrei Torah pour la Communauté juive égyptienne de Paris.

Vous en remerciant vivement recevez, Chère Madame, l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Joseph SITRUK

Paris, le 17 mars 1997

Monsieur Joseph HARARY
Communauté Israélite
61, Rue Rabbi Daniel

ALEXANDRIE (EGYPTE)

Cher Monsieur,

Je me joins à l'appel des éminents rabbanim qui vous ont écrit et notamment à Rav Ovadia YOSSEF, pour vous remercier de votre collaboration avec Monsieur Clément SOFER concernant les Sifrei Torah et autres objets sacrés se trouvant actuellement en Egypte.

Permettre à la Communauté originaire d'Egypte de continuer à faire vivre ces livres saints est une très grande mitzva que je vous encourage à accomplir et pour laquelle je vous félicite très vivement.

Croyez, Cher Monsieur, en l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments.


Joseph SITRUK

CLEMENT SOFFER
525 SEVENTH AVENUE - 6TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10018

Hecham El Nakib (First Secretary of the Egyptian Embassy), that the only way which our efforts could practically come to fruition, especially considering that we already have the Blessings of all of the worlds Highest Rabbis, is if an appeal would be made on our behalf directly from either yourself or the President of the United States to the current President of Egypt.

Honorable Vice-President, we, as the largest extant community of Jews of Egyptian descent, are seeking only to preserve and safeguard our religious heritage for our posterity and the posterity of Egyptian Jews world-wide. It is towards this end that I am requesting a meeting with you to discuss the details of this entire situation. Only though such a meeting could I possibly expect to be capable of expressing to you the strength of our position, the urgency of our need and the guilelessness of our cause. I am enclosing, for your personal reference and edification in this matter, a packet containing numerous copies of correspondence from all parties involved in this matter. I have organized within the packet the correspondence so as to follow in sequential order.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing this letter and enclosed materials and I look forward to receiving a positive response from you to my request for a meeting. I promise you that the Jewish World would look very favorably upon any help which you may offer in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Clement Soffer

encl.

cc: Howard Kohr
file

CS/ds

משרד הרבנות

ליהודי סודא ועדות הסודא בארצות הברית

UNITED SEPHARDIC RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA

SERVING THE SYRIAN AND NEAR EASTERN JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA

1815 EAST 3RD STREET

BROOKLYN N.Y. 11223

(718)998-3291 FAX (718)998-4650

February 12, 1997

Mr. Joseph Harary
Comunite Israelite
61 Rue Nabi Daniel
Alexandria, Egypt

703

Dear Mr. Harary,

Since few decades ago, the Jewish People who came from Egypt established a beautiful community, Ahava Veahvah, in Brooklyn, New York, which is growing and prospering in quality and quantity. They are in great need for Sifrei Torah, especially during the High Holidays, when prayers are conducted in various locations, to accommodate the men, women and youth who attend services in great numbers.

The Sifrei Torah that are in Egypt at present are community property owned and not by any individual. It is a holy obligation to release and send immediately the Sifrei Torah to Ahava Veahvah Congregation of Ocean Parkway, and to Mr. Clem Soffer, who has been serving the community for many years.

This holy accomplishment done speedily will cause elevation to the deceased donors and many blessings to the living, who share in this holy mitzvah, so that the Sifrei Torah will be used contineously.

As Chief Rabbi of all Sepharadim in USA, I direct you to release the Sifrei Torah immediately. Any Delay will be a violation of our religious laws. I urge all who are involved to do their utmost effort to bring this to realty.

With Torah Blessings,

Shaul J. Kassir
Rabbi Shaul J. Kassir
CHIEF RABBI

DEAR Mr. Harary



ON BEHALF OF AHAVA VE AHVA CONG.
I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THE RELEASE
OF THE SIFREI TORAH IN YOUR POSSESSION.
ACCORDING TO MR. PICCIOTTO AGREEMENT WITH YOU
MAY YOUR GOOD HIZVAH STAND BEFORE YOU
NOW AND IN OLAM HABAH. *Shaul J. Kassir*

משרד הרבנות

ליהודי סודא וועדת המזרח בארצות הברית
UNITED SEPHARDIC RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA

SERVING THE SYRIAN AND NEAR EASTERN JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA

1815 EAST 3RD STREET

BROOKLYN N.Y. 11223

(718)998-3291 FAX (718)998-4650

February 12, 1997

705

Ms. Carmen Weinstein
Secretary of the Jewish Community in Cairo
C/o Impremaris Weinstein
28 rue Chrif Pacha
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Ms. Weinstein,

Since few decades ago, the Jewish People who came from Egypt established a beautiful community, Ahava Veahvah, in Brooklyn, New York, which is growing and prospering in quality and quantity. They are in great need for Sifrei Torah, especially during the High Holidays, when prayers are conducted in various locations, to accommodate the men, women and youth who attend services in great numbers.

The Sifrei Torah that are in Egypt at present are community property owned and not by any individual. It is a holy obligation to release and send immediately the Sifrei Torah to Ahava Veahvah Congregation of Ocean Parkway, and to Mr. Chaim Soffer, who has been serving the community for many years.

This holy accomplishment done speedily will cause elevation to the deceased donors and many blessings to the living, who share in this holy mitzvah, so that the Sifrei Torah will be used contineously.

As Chief Rabbi of all Sepharadim in USA, I direct you to release the Sifrei Torah immediately. Any Delay will be a violation of our religious laws. I urge all who are involved to do their utmost effort to bring this to realty.

With Torah Blessings,


Rabbi Shaul J. Kassin
CHIEF RABBI





Embassy of The Arab Republic of Egypt

Ahmed Maher El Sayed
Ambassador

February 20, 1997

Mr. Clement Soffer
Honorary President
Alhava Ve Ahva of Ocean Parkway
1801 Ocean Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11223

Dear Mr. Soffer:

It was a pleasure meeting you and your colleagues at the Embassy last week. I enjoyed our conversation and appreciated your warm feelings toward Egypt.

I am writing to reaffirm our discussion on the issue of the Holy Torahs. The Egyptian Government will lend its assistance once you reach a satisfactory agreement with the Egyptian Jewish community.

I look forward to meeting you in New York and visiting your community as soon as my schedule will allow.

Sincerely,

عالمه مكيات


Ahmed Maher El Sayed

مِرَّةُ النَّقَاتِ

القاهرة

CAIRO, OCTOBER 10, 1996.

MR. CLEMENT SOFFER
HONORARY PRESIDENT
AHABA VE AHVA OF OCEAN PARKWAY
1801 OCEAN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11223

DEAR MR. SOFFER:

I SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY MY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES TO YOU AND THE MEMBERS OF THE EGYPTIAN JEWISH CONGREGATION OF NEW YORK, AHABA VE AHVA, HOPING THAT ALL OF US WILL ENJOY CONSTRUCTIVE AND REAL PEACE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.

ON THIS OCCASION, I WOULD LIKE TO REFER TO YOUR LETTER ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT MOUBARAK CONCERNING YOUR REQUEST TO GET SOME HOLY RELIGIOUS ARTICLES SUCH AS TORAHS, PRAYER BOOKS, AND MEMORIAL LANTERNS THAT ARE IN EGYPT.

IN THIS CONCERN, IT IS WORTH MENTIONING THAT ALL JEWISH ARTICLES IN EGYPT ARE CAREFULLY PRESERVED, PROTECTED, AND REGISTERED UNDER THE PROTECTION OF HERITAGE LAW IN THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT. ACCORDINGLY, THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES, MONUMENTS, ARTICLES AND OTHER FORMS OF RELEVANT HERITAGE ARE WELL AND CAREFULLY PROTECTED, BECAUSE THEY ARE CONSIDERED HIGHLY PRECIOUS ON ONE HAND AND IMPORTANT LANDMARKS OF THE EGYPTIAN NATIONAL HISTORY AND PATRIMONY ON THE OTHER.


وزارة الثقافة

القاهرة

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, I WISH TO REASSURE YOU AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE EGYPTIAN JEWISH CONGREGATION OF NEW YORK, AHABA VE AHVA, THAT THE JEWISH HERITAGE IN EGYPT IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO US AS IT IS TO YOU. HENCE, IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO KEEP THE JEWISH ARTICLES IN EGYPT OWING TO THEIR ARCHEOLOGICAL VALUE AND TO BE USED FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.

WITH MY WARMEST WISHES AND BEST REGARDS.

SINCERELY YOURS


"FAROUK HOSNY"
MINISTER OF CULTURE
AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME
COUNCIL OF ANTIQUITIES, EGYPT.

525 SEVENTH AVENUE - 6TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10018

December 3, 1996

Minister Farouk El Hosny
Minister of Culture
% Egyptian Embassy
2310 Decatur Place
Washington, DC 20008
Attn: Honorable Ahmed Maher El Sayed

Dear Minister Hosny:

We of the Jewish Egyptian Congregation of New York, Ahava-Ve-Ahva, wish you a sincere greeting. I was extremely honored to welcome the Honorable Osama El Baz at my office recently. During this meeting, the Honorable Osama El Baz agreed to return to the Jewish Egyptian Community (numbering over 5000) our Sefer Torahs, religious books and memorial lanterns, all of which are no older than 150 years. He also extended an official invitation to my family & myself to come in person to retrieve our property. He also promised to help us obtain landmark status for all synagogues & cemeteries. Your recent letter to me (copy enclosed) seemed to indicate a reversal of that position, is this correct?

Unfortunately, during the reign of Gamal Abdel Nasser, many innocent Jewish Egyptians were placed in jail, their moneys and property confiscated by the Egyptian government, their hospitals were taken over by the government and their schools were closed. This form of persecution caused the significant majority of Egyptian Jews to flee their homeland. Due to the ongoing racially discriminatory policies of the Egyptian government, we were unable to leave the country with our personal religious articles and these were confiscated by the government when such attempts were made.

Currently all of our personal religious articles are either located in government and Islamic museums, stolen and sold on the black market, or laying in storage rooms collecting dust and suffering decay. These articles were not dug up from Archeological sites nor are they rare antiquities. These articles were donated by our fathers and grandfathers in memories of their loved ones and are the exclusive heritage of the Jewish Egyptian Community from whom they were confiscated by the Egyptian government during what I hope was a select and rare time of governmental persecution in Egypt.

PHONE 212-997-0230

FAX 212-302-0308

At present, the Jewish Egyptian Community in Egypt totals between 50 to 60 individuals (significantly diminished as a result of our aforementioned 'Exodus'), most of whom are women who cannot officiate in Jewish prayer services. This small community would require, at the most, two Sefer Torah to continue the proper forms in their prayer services. There are more than 150 additional Sefer Torah which should be put to their proper use in Jewish Egyptian prayer services but which, instead, remain in storage rooms in Egypt. These Sefer Torah as well as the other religious articles mentioned have extreme sentimental and spiritual value to us, the Egyptian Jews who were forced to flee our homeland as a result of past Egyptian discriminatory practices. We have great hopes that Egypt now honors and respects Human Rights and is ready and prepared to return these articles to their rightful owners. Please accept our request as so clearly understood by the Honorable Osama El Baz.

Very truly yours,



Clement Soffer

cc: His Excellency Hosni Mubarak
The Honorable Osama El Baz
Congressman Gary Ackerman
Congressman Ben Gilman

PHONE 212-997-0230

FAX 212-302-0308



Ahaba Ve Ahva of OceanParkway

1801 OCEAN PARKWAY

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11223

August 13, 1996

RABBI

Shimon Hai Alouf

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Joseph Barnathan

Clement Soffer

Joseph Hamaoui

Salomon Harari

Gabriel Shehebar

Joseph Soffer

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Honorable Osama El Baz
Vice President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Cairo, Egypt

Honorable Osama El Baz:

Please accept my warmest greetings and sincere blessings from the entire community for your kind and sincere invitation to me, as representative and advocate for our community, to travel to Egypt in October in order to pick up the majority of our communities Torahs, Prayer and Study books and memorial lanterns which were donated to our community by our forefathers over the last 150 years. I would like to make you aware that these artifacts are located in various cities in Egypt including Alexandria and Cairo and some of these artifacts are located in government storage, having been confiscated when some of the community left with these Sefer Torah. Your generosity, wisdom and kindness in this gesture will never be forgotten and will serve to strengthen the relations between our communities and the government of Egypt. Thank you in advance for this grand gesture.

In your visit, you offered to help me to negotiate with the minister of culture in Egypt to take control of all of the magnificent Synagogues and cemeteries in Egypt, granting them the status of landmark edifices so that they can enjoy the protection which such structures receive for the benefit of posterity and the tourists who will surely flood Egypt once they witness the generosity and compassion which the Egyptian government manifests in these wise and beneficent gestures towards the Jewish communities.

Also, it would be a great service for the entire Jewish community if you could help us in efforts to obtain the Rabbinic records of Birth, Death and Marriage of the people who lived in Egypt, so that Egyptian Jews can have clear records of their ancestry.

With these humanitarian acts of generosity, you will receive the blessings and the prayers of our entire community and we will be forever in your debt for these kindnesses. I know that there are many business people

Ahaba Ve Ahva of OceanParkway

1801 OCEAN PARKWAY

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within our community are willing to invest in and/or produce goods in the home country of Egypt as well as being eager to visit their birth place in Egypt (as you witnessed the love and desire of my father to do so). Certainly, with these gestures of brotherhood which you have offered, the hearts of a peoples will be moved to respond in kind.

I sincerely hope and pray the almighty Allah, our common God, will let the blessed waters of peace and prosperity flow throughout the great Republic of Egypt, refreshing the people of Egypt with the blessings which only the almighty can provide.

Respectfully yours


Clement Soffer
Honorary President