

August 20, 1997

Dear Friend:

Enclosed please find a letter dated August 14, 1997 from Rabbi Abraham Y. Bick. Although it is self-explanatory, a brief history is necessary to explain the entire context and situation surrounding the sending of the letter.

Rabbi Bick was called to San Francisco by the Presidium of The Mikveh Society in a very secretive manner. In fact, members of The Mikveh Society were specifically instructed not to mention the meeting to us or to any Bay Area rabbis! Clearly there is something that they felt we could say to Rabbi Bick which would in some way conflict with their agenda. Rabbi Bick was informed that Rabbi Rosenberg had been to San Francisco, but was not informed that there was solid halachic opinion which rendered our Mikveh second rate (or questionable), at best.

We were tipped off about the meeting with Rabbi Bick, and at 10:00 a.m. Thursday July 31, 1997, we arrived uninvited to the meeting at the Mikveh. Needless to say, an unpleasant scene ensued, and the threat was even made that the police would be called to evict us.

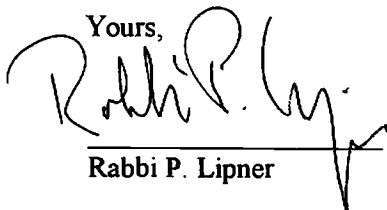
At the meeting we were shocked to hear Rabbi Bick publicly denounce Rabbi Rosenberg, saying that he was a layman unqualified to rule on Mikveh issues. He even went so far as to say that we should refer to Rabbi Rosenberg as "Mister Rosenberg" because he was never ordained as a rabbi. (In fact Rabbi Rosenberg has no less than seven ordinations from seven different Mikveh authorities, including The Helmitzer Rebbe zt"l.) In our dealings with Rabbi Rosenberg he has been straightforward and trustworthy, and we have the deepest appreciation and respect for him. We also were dismayed about the fact that Rabbi Bick repeatedly denied us a private interview where we could tell him our views about the situation.

In short, for some reason, Rabbi Bick decided to render judgment without having all the facts laid out in front of him, something which he evidently regrets (see attached letter, paragraph # 4). He also felt the necessity to destroy the good name of another rabbi for no apparent reason.

Rabbi Bick clearly was duped by the insidious strategy perpetrated by The Mikveh Board, a ploy designed to get a judgment declaring the Mikveh 100% kosher for all. One must understand, however, that it is the rabbi's job to research all opinions in any halachic issue, and ultimately Rabbi Bick himself must bear responsibility for what he now admits was an improper ruling, regardless of the shameless misbehavior of the ones who called him to town. We have lost confidence in the halachic ruling of Rabbi Bick based on the above, and as of now his involvement in the San Francisco Mikveh is without our approval. We urge The Mikveh Society to re-call Rabbi Rosenberg to refill the Mikveh once the rains begin.

Please feel free to speak directly to Rabbi Rosenberg about this issue. His home number is (718) 384-3674.

Yours,

  
Rabbi P. Lipner

  
Rabbi Aaron Rosenbleeth

  
Rabbi Sholom Fine