



2833 Smith Ave Ste 225
Baltimore, MD 21209

t 301.727.2700
f 410.602.1351
www.cjvalues.org
office@cjvalues.org

Rabbi Pesach Lerner
President

Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld
Vice-President

Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer
Chairman, Rabbinic Circle

Rabbi Dov Fischer
Western Regional VP

Rabbi Ze'ev Smason
Midwestern Regional VP

Rabbi Moshe B. Parnes
Southern Regional VP

Rabbi Steven Pruzansky
Israel Regional VP

Rabbi Jonathan Guttentag
International Liaison

Rabbi Yaakov Menken
Managing Director

18 Tamuz 5771
June 28, 2021

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
Office of the Chief Rabbi
305 Ballards Lane
London, N12 8GB, UK

Dear Chief Rabbi Mirvis:

Coalition for Jewish Values (CJV), the largest rabbinic public policy organization in America, lauds your decision to uphold the Jewish *Mesorah* (religious tradition) at the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS), and to preserve the school's longstanding requirement that instructors combine academic excellence with fealty to Jewish observance and belief. This standard required that you dismiss an LSJS Research Fellow who acquired non-Torah "ordination" at Yeshivat Maharat, a school for women affiliated with "Open Orthodoxy."

We deplore recent news reports that distorted objective reality and Torah standards. In particular, coverage such as that by the *Jewish Chronicle*, which claimed that Yeshivat Maharat is "Orthodox... but is not recognised by United Synagogue," falsely implied that the school has legitimate Orthodox credentials and that the United Synagogue was at liberty to accept it.

Last December, over 250 of CJV's member rabbis signed a statement specifically decrying this sort of false messaging. We stated at that time, in reference to ordination of women and similar "innovations," that "no seminary, group or institution which teaches, endorses or abides these deviations can be genuinely termed Orthodox. Such individuals and groups do not represent Orthodoxy, and cannot accurately be depicted as such."

Neither is this position maintained uniquely by the United Synagogue and CJV. It remains the unanimous stance of all Torah-observant rabbinic organizations: the Chief Rabbinate and both Chief Rabbis of Israel, the Conference of European Rabbis, and, in the United States, Agudath Israel, the National Council of Young Israel, the Orthodox Union, the Rabbinical Alliance of America, and the Rabbinical Council of America. No accepted Orthodox rabbinic body recognizes Open Orthodoxy or its institutions as genuinely Orthodox and observant.

We warned, in our December letter, “Neither media outlets nor the public should be duped by messaging designed to mislead.” That is what has transpired here. By taking Yeshivat Maharat PR materials at face value, the *Jewish Chronicle* erred grievously. It owes you and the United Synagogue an apology, and must commit itself to educating and directing its staff to more accurately portray the non-Orthodox institutions of Open Orthodoxy in the future.

Again, the more than 1,500 rabbis in America and beyond who make up CJV commend you for standing firmly for Torah standards and the preservation of our *Mesorah*—for your refusal to bow to undue pressure from those with differing ideological agendas.

Yours Sincerely,

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