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To: "ask_noah@yahoo.com" <ask_noah@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 4, 2005, 9:45:09 PM GMT+2
Subject: Re: Requesting your statement about the New Sanhedrin, etc.

Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet
Toronto ON, Canada

To whom it may concern:

I have been informed about the formation of a so-called "Sanhedrin" in Israel by a number of rabbis. It is my considered rabbinic opinion, shared by all colleagues with whom I discussed this issue, that this new body has no Halachic validity whatsoever. The facts are that (a) this body does not have any known backing of a recognized Halachic authority anywhere, and (b) all recognized rabbinic authorities of the past two generations have categorically rejected the idea of re-establishing a Sanhedrin. I find it more than indicative that this new body has never published a complete list of its members. By their own admission this is to spare its members the abuse of ridicule to which that body has already been subjected by the Torah-world. The partial list of members that has been published more than justifies this ridicule, and demonstrates that they clearly have no idea of the nature and stature of a Sanhedrin and the required qualifications for membership therein. In its present state it has the value and validity of any group of individuals, even if they may contain licensed lawyers etc., arbitrarily setting itself up as the Supreme Court of the country.

It follows then that any statements, actions and/or decisions of the alleged Sanhedrin are null and void. Under normal circumstances a group of rabbis joining together and in unison issuing statements might be considered a local bet din (court of Jewish law), which may deserve attention, though lacking authority to impose its views on any other rabbis or courts of Jewish law beyond its local jurisdiction, in this case, however, the absurd presumptuousness of claiming Sanhedrin-authority, renders them worthless and meaningless and should be ignored altogether. They speak only for themselves and unto themselves.

Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet