

Rabbis Letter (unofficial translation)

In response to a question posed by many people we hereby respond that it is forbidden by the Torah to sell a house or a field in Eretz Israel to a foreigner ("nochri"). As the Rambam said: "... as it is said 'nor show mercy unto them' (Deuteronomy 7, 2). – Do not give them a foothold in the land since if they will not have land their sojourn will be temporary" (Laws of Mishneh Torah, Idol Worship 10, 4). And the Torah warned against this many times that it causes woes ("ra'ot") and causes people to sin through mixed marriage as it is said "For he will turn away thy son from following Me" (Deuteronomy 7,4). This is desecration of the Lord (Rambam Isur Bia 12, 6) and causes many people to sin in other prohibitions as the Torah warned us: "They shall not dwell in thy land--lest they make thee sin against Me" (Exodus 23, 33). And the sin of selling and the results of it, all hang on the neck of the sellers, may the All Merciful protect us.

And more woes upon woes, that the selling or leasing of an apartment in an area where Jewish people live causes great damage to one's neighbors, and causes the realizing [of the passage] "and they shall harass you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Numbers 33, 55). For their way of life is different from the Jewish one, and among them there are some who are hateful to us and harras us until it is life-threatening, as published many times – and even abroad it was forbidden to sell to them inside a Jewish neighborhood for this reason, all the more so in Eretz Israel as it is clarified in Schulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 151) that is is a prohibition between man and his fellow man and also between man and his maker.

And it is well known that following the selling or leasing of one apartment, the price of all the neighbors' apartments decreases even when the buyers or the renters are nice at first. And the first seller and leaser causes his neighbors great loss and his sin is heavy to bare. And who allowed it? And it causes others to sell their property after him, to run from that place. And also those who sell after him to foreigners, they too expand a grave sin which is hanging on the neck of all of them.

And if this foreigner is violent and irritates his neighbors, it is already clarified in the Schulchan Aruch that everyone who sells to him is to be excommunicated!! Until he removes the danger even at great cost. (Yoreh Deah 43). Nowadays we do not excommunicate, as it is known, for the severity of the excommunication is great. Indeed the neighbors and friends of the seller and renter are obligated to warn and caution him, at first privately and afterwards they have permission to publicize it. Move away from him, prevent commerce with him, do not to call him to the Torah etc. until he desists from harming others like this. And one who abides by us can dwell in peace. Amen.