

YU MOURNS PRESIDENT'S LOSS

by Nechama Goldman

Over 1000 people, including Yeshiva University rabbis, faculty members and students attended the funeral of Samuel Lamm, father of Dr. Norman Lamm, president of Yeshiva University. The funeral service was held in Nathan Lampert Auditorium, on the uptown YU campus on October 21. Mr. Lamm died on Friday, October 19, 1990 at the age of 92.

Mr. Lamm is survived by two sons, two daughters, 13 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren. His wife, Pearl Lamm, passed away on July 3, 1990. Eulogies were delivered by three of Mr. Lamm's grandsons and by his sons, Rabbi Maurice Lamm, President of the National Institute for Jewish Hospice in Los Angeles, California and Dr. Norman Lamm.

The first eulogy was given by David Lamm, the eldest grandchild. He spoke of his grandfather as a person who "in a world where so much of what we learn is by the 'do as I say' methods, he learned from his Zadie, the 'do as I do' method." He concluded by thanking his father, uncle and aunts for passing onto his son the tefillin of his grandfather to be presented at his son's Bar Mitzva.

Dr. Joshua Lamm, son of Dr. Norman Lamm, spoke of his grandfather as "his hero." He mentioned the attention, patience and love Mr. Lamm showed to his wife throughout her last illness despite her deteriorating condition, comparing it to "ahava she'eno tlu'yah b'davar" (love not contingent upon anything). "His biggest

regret was that as he started to lose his sight, he couldn't read chumash and Rashi. He would sit with a magnifying glass and a large print chumash for as long as he could."

Delivering the third eulogy, Jay Auslander, son of Lamm's daughter Miriam, apologized to his mother for his inability to express himself about his grandfather, "I can't define him for to define him is to limit him and his abilities were without bounds." He then read aloud a letter written to him by his grandparents before his marriage. Concluding, Auslander said, "so there you have it, my grandfather, my hero, my Zadie."

Dr. Maurice Lamm began his eulogy by saying that, "our father never made any demands on us in our adult lives, but he did ask my brother that we deliver no eulogy because completely in character, he simply did not want to be portrayed as tzadik or a lamden (learner) and he didn't want the picture of him to be inflated into something that he was not." Dr. M. Lamm began with the qualities his father did not possess. "My father was not a talmid chacham...he didn't go to yeshiva gedola...on the other hand, he truly revered talmedei chachamim...but in him and through him Torah lives and breathes today...he had nobility, my father

Lamm

was a handsome man. He was courtly and he had grace and he looked as though he were manor born." Dr. M. Lamm went on to discuss the qualities that made his father into a fighter. "He was a fighter...he fought anti-semites...and against people who grabbed my grandfather's beard when no one else moved to help him..." Those same qualities depressed him in his old age. "A man who loved life, he raged against the existence of that life," Dr. M. Lamm said about his father's attitude towards his life as his body deteriorated. He shocked a psychiatrist once by calling old people "junk", saying, "Doctor, I'm a practical man. Would you buy a 92 year old car?"

Dr. M. Lamm remembered the occasion upon which he went to give his father advice, "Listen Pop, if there's no future at least you have a great past, so why don't you rewind your tape of life experiences and focus on moments in the past."

I lectured to my father and he looked up to me with his deepset eyes, with the trace of a smile and said, "Professor, are you finished?" and I was finished."

The final eulogy was given by Dr. Norman Lamm. He spoke of the difficulty and pain involved in losing an aged parent. "Don't believe it when people tell you losing an aging parent or grandparent is less painful than otherwise." Running through the 92 years of his father's existence, he outlined the life of a man and his roots. "We saw him constantly practicing 'honor your father and mother'... a man who refused to work on Shabbat during the Depression... who kept his principles... who believed in and sacrificed for Jewish education...he had every right to be proud of his children and grandchildren. It is a tribute to him and my mother that not one of the grandchildren has

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departed from the Jewish tradition for which he lived. They and their spouses study Torah regularly."

He relayed the love story between his parents, as a "love story conducted with modesty and dignity." Dr. Lamm concluded that, "We are disconsolate despite that, or maybe because we had him for so long."

Samuel Lamm was born in Lvov, Poland in January 1898. Mr. Lamm immigrated to the United States in 1906 and received his education at the Etz Chaim Yeshiva, forerunner of Yeshiva University and DeWitt Clinton High School. Employed as an inspector with the New York State Department of Agriculture, Mr. Lamm was also an educational administrator at local yeshivas.

Cantor Mallivani of the Fifth Avenue synagogue concluded the service with "Kel Maleh Rachamim." Shiva and burial were in Israel.



Funeral procession of Samuel Lamm

courtesy The Commentator/David Silverblatt

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