

6 Shevat, 5727  
January 17, 1967

CYPRESS 4-1050-1  
CYPRESS 9-4912

Norman  
Rabbi ~~Norman~~ Lamm  
131 West 86th St.  
New York, N. Y. 10024

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

I was chagrined to read that you are scheduled to be one of the "three spiritual leaders of the three streams (ZERAMIM) of Judaism" as announced by the sponsors. I realize that this letter is in the category of what you chose to designate at the O.U. Convention as a "dull, obsessive litany" and, therefore, a waste of your time and an imposition on your patience. But I am impelled by a sense of duty to point out that this dinner honoring Conservative and Reform ministers, who for years have used their pulpits, the press and the public platform to teach a "Judaism" which repudiates the Torah in whole or in part, is a product of the climate of permissiveness, which has penetrated large segments of the orthodox Rabbinate and community. <sup>TO BE HONORED.</sup>

I do not doubt that you considered all this before you agreed, in effect at least, (certainly not intentionally) to help honor these ministers and their movements in the eyes of many Jews to whom your participation make Conservative and Reform "Judaism" a little more respectable Jewishly speaking, than if, for example, you would have publicly rejected the invitation for ideological reasons. Nor, do I believe, that your message at this dinner, even if it should include a clear rejection of your co-honorees' stand on "Judaism", will correct the record, because many more people (not present at the affair) will know and remember the fact that you were a co-honoree with the other two, than what you said at the occasion.

My letter is only half-finished and already I feel how useless my effort is when I recall that quite unlike your scholarly-self, you chose to hurl such inflammatory terms as "red guards", against some of the rightists, instead of dealing with the issue on the merits. Certainly, when I recall that during the Friday night session, you not only chose to ignore and evade the questions I asked from the floor, but you also lectured me publicly on the waste of my alleged talents, I have no reason to expect a better hearing by mail. Nevertheless, I keep up this "wasted effort" in your case, because your role in this crucial area is a keen disappointment to me, precisely because of your prominence, standing and ability. It is certain that your participation will be used by Conservative and Reform ministers to the disadvantage of Torah. I know how they operate. They are first-class "name droppers" to convey the impression that there is a fine and respectful relationship between them and the intelligent, understanding orthodox rabbis, as distinguished from

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the zealots and fanatics. You are helping, though you do not intend to, in the fixing of the idea that there are "versions" or "branches" in Judaism, and it will be used on college students and others with grave effect for years to come.

This is a grave responsibility that you are assuming. You can, G-D forbid, be a "MACHTI ES HORABIM", without wanting to. I need not tell you the obvious, namely, that the "ZIKNEI HAIR" were held accountable, even though their intent was in no way directed at doing harm. Yet they sought forgiveness for the fact that "our eyes did not see". We must anticipate and "see" the normal, logical consequences of our word, deed or silence.

I must ask you to forgive me for presuming to tell you what is right for you to do, but it is just that with your participation, a good portion of American orthodoxy is inevitably involved and in that I have a rightful interest.

With best wishes, I am

Respectfully yours,

DBH:gm

P.S. As I finished this letter, it came to me that even those who believe that in areas of agreement we can unite with Conservative and Reform, how do they justify giving or helping to give honor to those who teach Jews to live in violation of the Torah? Surely this is not a case where Jewish rights have to be defended.