

Springfield, Massachusetts
June 28, 1968

Rabbi Norman Lamm
The Jewish Center
131 West 86th Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

Thank you so much for your kind letter of June 19. It has always been a great sense of wonder both to me and my parents how a man as busy as you can take time out from your schedule to write to me as often as you have in the past four years. Your concern for me has always been appreciated, and a little more than settling in some of my more chaotic experiences while away at school. Through you--your letters, speeches, and the intimate talks I have had with you--and through my parents, I know that I shall never forget what it means to be a Jew or that I shall ever forget the concepts and beauty of Judaism as I have come to learn and feel them.

When I first became fully aware of the problems I shall encounter when I enter the Peace Corps--my practice of Judaism in a rather un-Judaic atmosphere--I became rather frightened. However, I resolved then what I shall tell you now. In order to accomplish the most out of my Peace Corps experience both for me and the people I shall be serving, I shall have to live the way they do in almost all ways. One criticism of early Peace Corps work was that the American volunteers didn't understand the people well enough to become one of them and in this way be of more service to them. It has become clear to me that I might have to make some sacrifices in order to convey to these people what it is I want to show and teach them. But while these sacrifices will come on the ritualistic aspect of my Judaic belief, I shall never transgress on the philosophical and theistic Judaic practices as I have come to learn them. It has become clear to me while I have been away from home that this latter belief runs much deeper than the first, and I feel that I shall not stop being a Jew if I maintain these religious thoughts.

I know you are able to contest that; I also know that there are countless cases in which someone said almost the same thing and was not able to live up to them. I believe I am aware of the meaning and the beauty of the Jewish rituals, or else I would not have practiced them for all these years, nor would I be so determined to practice them for the rest of my life. As a result, my Peace Corps experience will present to me many challenges, and I am as confident as you that I shall "sanctify the Name".

I look forward to our correspondence while I am away, and I am going to take advantage of this present opportunity to ask you a favor. I would greatly appreciate if you could, from your removed perspective, somehow try to strike up a correspondence with Paul. He is right now going through the long process of "finding himself", a process which has been particularly painful to my parents, though not so much to me. He needs guidance, guidance which I would like to try to lend him, but will be unable to while away. I know that you can convey to him the

deeper sense of meaning of life, as you have conveyed to me throughout my life, for which I think he is searching. He needs to acquire this sense as well as his confidence in himself, for I believe he is capable of much than he himself thinks. Anything you could do I would greatly appreciate, and I would further appreciate if you would not tell my folks what I have so rashly asked you.

Thank you once again for your friendship and your guidance in the past, and I look forward to your letters while I am away. Please convey my regards to your wife and your children.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.