

NEWS YESHIVA UNIVERSITY



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

DR. NORMAN LAMM

President, Yeshiva University

Dr. Norman Lamm, philosopher, author and teacher, and a chemist who became a rabbi, was elected the third president of Yeshiva University in August 1976. He becomes the first American-born president of the 91-year-old institution -- the nation's oldest and largest university under Jewish auspices.

Dr. Lamm was born in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, December 19, 1927, the son of Samuel and Pearl Baumol Lamm. He received his elementary and high school education at the Yeshiva Torah Vadaath in Brooklyn. In 1949 he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree *summa cum laude* from Yeshiva College of Yeshiva University, where he majored in chemistry and was class valedictorian. During Israel's War of Independence in 1948, as a student at the College, he worked on a secret munitions research project for the struggling state, headed by Dr. Ernst D. Bergmann, who later became head of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission.

He continued his studies in chemistry at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn. In 1951 he was ordained at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University. He received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Jewish philosophy in 1966 from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School.

Dr. Lamm was appointed to the faculty of Yeshiva University in 1953, serving first as philosophy instructor and rising through the ranks. In June 1966 he was appointed Erna and Jakob Michael Professor of Jewish Philosophy at the University. In addition, he served as visiting professor of Judaic studies at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York in 1974-75.

Dr. Lamm has been spiritual leader of The Jewish Center in New York City, affiliated with the Center since 1958. He served as rabbi of Congregation Kodimoh in Springfield, Mass. in 1954-58, and as assistant rabbi of New York City's Kehilath Jeshurun in 1952-53.

WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR

Dr. Lamm is widely recognized for his writings and discourses on interpretations of Jewish law in relation to problems involving science, technology, and philosophy in today's society.

A man of faith who has written sensitively of doubt, he has also written extensively of Talmudic law, especially in comparison with American constitutional law.

His work has been quoted in landmark decisions of the United States Supreme Court, once by the late Chief Justice Earl Warren,

and again by former Justice William O. Douglas. He has testified as an expert on Jewish law before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and his testimony has been published in The Congressional Record.

In 1970, during a half-year sabbatical spent teaching and lecturing in Israel, Dr. Lamm proposed a solution to the recurring religious crises concerning Sabbath observance. "The Rosh Hodesh Plan," as it is known, was submitted to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, and evoked much comment and discussion throughout Israel and abroad.

Dr. Lamm has been offered three school presidencies in the U.S. and Israel and two Chief Rabbinate, but chose to remain in New York with his alma mater, Yeshiva University.

His major academic work, Torah Lishmah, deals with the religious philosophy of the Hasidim and their opponents, the Mitnaggedim, in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe.

Another of his many works, The Royal Reach: Discourses on the Jewish Tradition and the World Today, deals with a variety of themes, offering Jewish viewpoints on such issues as violence, law and order, space exploration, and parent-child relationships in the contemporary world. His Faith and Doubt deals with such subjects as religious doubt, privacy in law and theology, the moral revolution, the religious implications of life on other planets, ecology in law and theology, and a Jewish ethic of leisure.

In another book, A Hedge of Roses: Jewish Insights into Marriage and Married Life, he calls for a return to traditional rules regarding marital sex as the only means for reversing a trend of an increasing number of failed marriages. Since 1966, when this work first appeared, it has been published in seven editions, three in the U.S.A. and one in England, and translations in Hebrew (2 editions) and Portuguese. Dr. Lamm is also co-editor of The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume and A Treasury of Tradition. His most recent book, The Good Society: Jewish Ethics in Action (Viking), spells out the duties of the individual, the family, and society. He has published a number of articles in the Encyclopedia Judaica, and his pieces have appeared in a variety of Hebrew and English journals, both scholarly and popular, throughout the world. "Judaism and the Modern Attitude to Homosexuality," appeared in the 1974 Encyclopedia Judaica Yearbook.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dr. Lamm is listed in Who's Who in the East, Contemporary Authors, Men of Achievement, Dictionary of International Biography, Who's Who in World Jewry, Israel's Who's Who, Who's Who in Religion, and the Encyclopedia Judaica.

He received the Abramowitz-Zeitlin Award for Religious Literature in Jerusalem in 1972. The same year he was designated an "Outstanding Educator of the Year." He was presented the Bernard

Revel Memorial Award for Religion and Religious Education by the Yeshiva College Alumni Association in 1974.

A member of The Jewish Center Lecture Bureau, Dr. Lamm has been on the faculty of the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. Adult Education Program, where he taught Talmud, and on the faculty of the B'nai B'rith Institute.

Dr. Lamm has traveled widely, lecturing in nine countries on five continents. In 1961 he spent a month in India and Pakistan on a special religious mission to the ancient Jewish communities of those countries. In 1964 he toured South Africa for one month, lecturing on behalf of Jewish education. He also made trips to Australia and New Zealand in 1973, where he spent six weeks lecturing. In 1975 he participated in an international colloquium of political, scientific, and religious leaders of all faiths, held in Italy, which sought to find ways that faith could contribute towards solving the problems of poverty and hunger in the 20th century.

Dr. Lamm was founder and first editor of Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought; general editor of The Library of Jewish Law and Ethics (Ktav Publishing Company); and a contributing editor of Sh'ma.

COMMUNITY LEADER

As a community leader Dr. Lamm is active in many educational and religious endeavors. He has been a Trustee of the Rabbi Isaac

Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and is a member of the Board of Overseers of Bar Ilan University in Israel.

He is a director of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America; a member of the Halakah (Jewish Law) Commission of the Rabbinical Council of America; a charter member of the Board of Governors of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists; a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Zionist Youth Foundation; vice president of Camp Morasha; a director of the Brith Milah Board; former chairman of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry; and former chairman of the board of education of the Manhattan Day School. He is former chairman and currently a member of the Advisory Board of Yavneh (National Religious Jewish Students Association), and a member of the Advisory Board of the Jewish Association of College Youth.

Dr. Lamm was married in February 1954 to the former Mindella Mehler, and they have four children -- Chaye, 21, Joshua, 20, Shalom, 17, and Sara, 15. The Lamms live at 27 West 86th Street, Manhattan.

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