

TO: DR. SAMUEL BELKIN

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FROM: RABBI NORMAN LAMM

re: INSTITUTE OF ETHICS

I suggest the following special problems be included as areas for research in Jewish ethics.

- 1) The problem of Biblical Wars. What is their ethical justification? Does the interpretation of the Oral Law mitigate the ethical problem? Does the problem have any relevance to the contemporary problem of "just wars?"
- 2) "Holocaust Theology" - - Research into Jewish theodicy, and a study of contemporary writings, in an attempt to meet the ethical challenge of justice in a world in which 6 million Jews were killed. The ethical formulation of the classical metaphysical problem: is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the God of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau?
- 3) Illegitimacy - How do we reconcile the limitation on the freedom of an illegitimate child with the ethical principle that every man suffers for his own sins?
- 4) The Treatment of the Non-Jew in Halakhah
- 5) The Treatment of Women in Halakhah -The question of their disqualification as witnesses; inheritance; and the Agunah. The ethical problems in this area should also include that of Halitzah: why is the brother-in-law faulted in the ceremony, when he is forbidden to marry the Yebamah by Rabbinical interdiction?

RNL/hb