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April 4, 1988

Rabbi Norman Lamm
Yeshiva University
500 West 185 Street
New York, New York 10033

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

I know that for many years your title has been Dr. Lamm. I trust you will forgive me, but to me you will always be Rabbi Lamm. My fond recollections of you as Rabbi will always take precedence over your presidential title.

I read the New York Times summary of your recent talk at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue. I am sorry I missed it, especially since I know how little similarity there is between what the Times hears and what the Times reports. I would much appreciate receiving a copy of your address.

At the recent YU dinner sponsored by KJ in honor of Jean Lindenbaum, you made reference to "Centrist Judaism, whatever you call it". I know that many have spoken to you about the need for YU to lead the way to greater independence from the opinions of the right. No institution is better suited and no leader better qualified to become the nucleus of the development of a positive philosophy for this battered group. Such a philosophy would be a welcomed change from the constant reflex response to pressure from the right and left. Without such a positive philosophy and feeling of self-confidence that can only come from knowledge of self, we are all doomed to continue to look over our right shoulders and to mouth apologetica.

This lack of self-confidence, in my opinion, is the reason why the younger generation seems to be drifting to the right. The future is not with the right unless we continue to abandon it to them. I have the distinct impression that those who would agree with me are becoming more and more uncomfortable as discouragement replaces hope. While we have been losing many to the right, we risk losing some to the left.

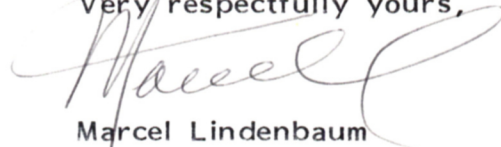
I did not intend for this letter to repeat that which I am sure you have struggled with for a long time. I just wanted to point out to you that a movement or philosophy that has no name obviously has no philosophy and cannot be called a movement. I for one vote for "Halachik Judaism" rather than "Centrist". The definition and philosophy is for you, together with other leaders, to define.

bc R H

I would be pleased to join others in giving major support to a well thought out campaign to establish "Halachik Judaism" as a viable and vibrant alternative. This requires a definitive philosophy, distinct Halachik leadership, and a constituency with the strength and determination to stand up for our philosophy and leaders.

This is an appropriate letter to wish you ahelated nhl shen. Let this be the year that we again go from bondage to freedom.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marcel", with a long, sweeping underline that extends below the printed name.

Marcel Lindenbaum

ML:cjf