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## *The Writings of Rabbi Norman Lamm: A Bibliographic Essay*

During his nearly sixty years in Jewish communal leadership, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm has been a prolific scholar in both Jewish thought (*maḥashavah*) and Jewish law (Halakhah). He has also authored numerous essays on Jewish communal life, many originating in major addresses. The bibliographic essay that follows aims to provide a systematic overview and synopsis of this rich and diversified body of writing. Given the sheer volume of published material, it was not feasible to make the essay comprehensive. But it presents a substantial number of representative works that provide valuable resources in three major categories: *Maḥashavah* (Jewish Thought); Communal Issues; and Halakhic Writings.

References in parentheses designate the works that are listed in the bibliography found at the end of the essay. When I cite R. Lamm's collections of essays and discourses titled *Seventy Faces* (2002) and *Faith and Doubt* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2006), the essay or chapter number is given within the parentheses. In addition, the original year of publication or oral delivery is given in brackets next to the chapter number(s).

With rare exception, this essay does not reference R. Lamm's approximately eight hundred sermons. These sermons—dating back to his first rabbinic pulpit in 1951—plus some speeches and eulogies delivered after he left the pulpit rabbinate in 1976 to become President of Yeshiva

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University, are found on the website of the Lamm Heritage ([www.yu.edu/lammheritage](http://www.yu.edu/lammheritage)). Over forty are published in *The Royal Reach* (New York: Feldheim, 1970) and another fourteen in *Ve-Nishmah be-Divrei Toratekha (We Rejoice in Your Words of Torah): A Tribute to Rabbi Norman Lamm*, presented to him in 2004 by The Jewish Center in New York City, where he served for many years. The online sermons are the primary basis for a commentary on the Haggadah, *The Royal Table*, recently published by OU Press and Ktav.

### I. *Maḥashavah* (Jewish Thought)

#### *Torah u-Madda*

During his presidency, R. Lamm became virtually synonymous—and remains so—with “Torah u-Madda,” the view that one must combine Torah knowledge and general wisdom. (Torah u-Madda formerly was called “Synthesis.”) His book *Torah Umadda* (1990) opens with a historical survey of both advocates and opponents of Torah u-Madda and with responses to common criticisms of the approach, such as *bittul Torah* (loss of time from Torah study) and the risk of heresy. Rejecting the notion that one may study secular subjects only in order to earn a living, he argues that knowing general culture enhances one’s spiritual life. At the same time, he is emphatic that Torah u-Madda requires the centrality and primacy of Torah.

The heart of the book presents and appraises six models for grounding Torah u-Madda. These include the rationalist model of Maimonides; the cultural model of R. Samson Raphael Hirsch; the mystical model of R. Abraham Isaac Kook; the instrumentalist model of the Vilna Gaon; the “textless Torah model,” which is built out of concepts in the thought of R. Ḥayyim of Volozhin and Maimonides; and the Ḥasidic model of *madda* study as a form of worship, which involves an extension of Ḥasidic concepts of worship. (Ḥasidic thinkers themselves generally opposed *madda* study.) After careful comparison of the models, R. Lamm favors the Ḥasidic one and draws out its implications for education. The book concludes, however, with a pluralistic perspective that sees the Torah u-Madda ideology and the “Torah only” position as complementary. Both have validity; both contribute to “the totality of Jewish life.” It should be noted that R. Lamm’s advocacy of Torah u-Madda does not entail a full embrace of modernity but rather criticism as well, a point that emerges clearly in other works (e.g., “The Arrogance of Modernism,” 1970, chap. 5), and in *Torah Umadda* itself (12-16).

The Torah u-Madda orientation is part of a position that R. Lamm has variously called Modern Orthodoxy and Centrist Orthodoxy. This larger approach will be discussed below under the heading of Communal Issues.

### ***Kabbalistic and Ḥasidic Thought***

R. Lamm's paternal grandfather was a follower of the Belzer Rebbe, and his maternal grandfather identified with the Sanzer dynasty, admiring its founder, R. Ḥayyim of Sanz. R. Lamm's reader on Ḥasidut (1999b), which received a National Jewish Book Award in 2000, is dedicated in memory of the Skolier and Kozhnutzer rebbes, in whose *shtieblakh* he davened as a youth. R. Lamm's adult fascination with Kabbalah and Ḥasidut is richly evident in his writing; also, in his sermons, he frequently adduces *vertlakh* (homiletic *bon mots*) of Ḥasidic masters.

Indeed, R. Lamm sees the themes found in Kabbalah and Ḥasidut as vital and relevant to Jewry and to humanity. In a relatively early essay, "The Unity Theme: Monism for Moderns" (2006, chap. 3 [1961]), he argues that the Kabbalistic theme of unity, articulated most forcefully in our time by R. Abraham Isaac Kook, provides an antidote to the disintegration and fragmentation characteristic of modern society. The essay stimulated a rejoinder by R. Walter Wurzburger, who championed the cause of a pluralistic metaphysics by appealing to the need to make distinctions in Halakhah between holy and profane, pure and impure. In the revised versions of the article published in the various editions of *Faith and Doubt*, R. Lamm responds to R. Wurzburger's critique.

The relevance of Kabbalah is again manifest in an interview conducted for a book titled *The God I Believe In* (2002, #10 [1994]). There R. Lamm describes God as "beyond personality," which is to say that, in accord with Kabbalah, He has both an impersonal aspect, the *Ein Sof* (Infinite), and a revelational aspect, the ten *Sefirot*. Human beings can relate only to the personal aspect, though they can assert the existence of the impersonal one.

The aforementioned reader on Ḥasidut, *The Religious Thought of Ḥasidism*, is over seven hundred pages long. It consists of introductions, texts and commentaries on eighteen topics, such as God, faith, *devekut*, Torah study, peace, the *zaddik*, and women. Several other writings by R. Lamm deal with kabbalistic thinkers: for example, a small book on Rav Kook (1965) and an essay on Rav Kook's view of monism, truth, harmonism and the sacred (1994). Kabbalistic motifs and ideas influence a number of areas of R. Lamm's thought—both philosophic and halakhic

—as we shall soon see. R. Lamm also is editor of the series *Sources and Studies in Kabbalah, Ḥasidism, and Jewish Thought*.

### **The Study of Torah**

R. Lamm's doctoral thesis at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University, the only dissertation ever sponsored by the Rav, R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל, was later revised and published in both Hebrew (1972) and English (1989a). The work is devoted to the concept of Torah study in the works of R. Ḥayyim of Volozhin (1749-1821), who was the most eminent critic of Ḥasidut (albeit more moderate and restrained than others) but at the same time a Kabbalist. In particular, Kabbalah was the basis for R. Ḥayyim's concept of Torah and his thesis that Torah study is the highest of Jewish values.

Through the prism of R. Ḥayyim, R. Lamm explores a variety of issues concerning Talmud Torah and explains his protagonist's stance and contribution. These issues include study and (or vs.) practice (*limmud* and *ma'aseh*); study and piety; and most prominently the concept expressed in the book's title—*Torah lishmah*, along with its opposite, *Torah she-lo lishmah*. Prior to R. Ḥayyim, *Torah lishmah* was explicated as either functional (for the sake of *mizvot*) or devotional (for the sake of the commandment to study and as a response to the Commander). R. Ḥayyim's definition is cognitive: for the sake of Torah itself—that is, for the cognitive act per se, not an external *telos*. To be sure, R. Ḥayyim saw the functional—study for the sake of practice—and the devotional as elements in Torah study. But they are subordinate to the intellectual, and indeed the devotional must be “dissociated” from the cognitive. Study itself is for R. Ḥayyim an act of *devekut*, or communion with the Creator.

A 1968 article (1968a) deals with “Pukhovitzer's Concept of Torah Lishmah.” Elsewhere R. Lamm addresses the question of which takes precedence in Talmud Torah—knowing or learning. He argues for the precedence in Judaism of the process—learning, often through struggle—as opposed to Greek thought which stressed the end product (2003). He also urges the importance of creativity, an element that he laments has often been devalued in our times (2002, #25 [1992]).

### **Faith**

In the title essay of *Faith and Doubt* (2006, chap. 1 [1967]), R. Lamm asks: how can we retain faith in an age of doubt? He distinguishes three types of faith—cognitive, affective, and functional (behavioral)—along with three types of doubt. R. Lamm maintains that cognitive doubt can actually broaden and deepen cognitive faith, and even proposes a

halakhic legitimation for cognitive doubt (albeit not for affective and functional doubt). Affective faith can be restored through prayer and study, and in turn affective faith restores cognitive faith. (See also 2002, #10 [1994].) Doubt may be momentarily transcended by the recognition that, although God has faith in man, He may at times doubt him. Among the article's observations is that the construction of rational proofs for the existence of God on the part of medieval philosophers was an expression and deepening of affective faith, not a necessary condition for cognitive faith.

In the interview mentioned earlier (2002 #10 [1994]), R. Lamm maintains that although one must prepare oneself for religious belief intellectually, "the last spark is an intuitive one." The ultimate commitment requires faith or intuition. R. Lamm's theology also stresses man's encounter with God, as we shall next see.

### ***The Holocaust and the Problem of Evil***

In "The Face of God" (1986), R. Lamm suggests an approach to the Holocaust that focuses on *hester panim*, "the hiding of God's face," and *nesi'at panim*, "the lifting up of the face." Noting that the tradition contains many approaches to evil and that our Sages criticize those who lightly condemn other Jews, he denounces assertions that the Holocaust was punishment for this or that sin, and decries the attitude of "dogmatic infallibility" with which such assertions are made. He quips that those who blame other groups for the Holocaust, for example those who blame Zionists or assimilationists, misread the sentence in the liturgy, "we were exiled because of *our* sins (*mippenei ḥata'einu*)." They read it as "we were exiled for *their* sins (*mippenei ḥata'eihem*)." He also vigorously rejects the view that God brought the Holocaust in order to bring about the State of Israel.

R. Lamm presents his ideas about *hester panim/nesi'at panim* not as a solution to the theological difficulty the Holocaust poses, but as a "framework" for thinking about it. *Hester panim* is the removal of providence, of "divine closeness and friendship." This creates in man a state of doubt and denial; it confounds his understanding. As the Ba'al Shem Tov puts it, even the hiding is hidden, for the human being does not realize what has transpired. Human beings misinterpret the events that befall them as chance, meaningless events (see Deut. 31:17, 18). We are living in a time when, for the collective, meaninglessness pervades. But individuals can find meaning, as they feel challenged to turn to one another, to pray and to feel God's presence, trusting that He is listening and ready to respond.

There are four stages of *hester panim*. *Hester panim* may be followed by a stage of “I shall speak to him in a dream” (Num. 12:6)—a “dream state” in which Israel can detect hints of change, “a rumor of divine reconciliation,” which may or may not result in *nesi’at panim*. The time of Mordechai and Esther was such a period, and R. Lamm proposes that we are presented with historic opportunities to respond to the divine initiative and usher in a new era of Jewish history. (His later thoughts on the topic of the State are presented below under the heading “Zionism.”) He believes that the opportunities have not been seized, but that God is now more accessible than in the previous two thousand years.

R. Lamm also explores the Holocaust via literature. He presents interpretations of Elie Wiesel’s *The Town Beyond the Wall* and of Zvi Kolitz’s story featuring Yosel Rakover, a character who lost his family in the Holocaust but maintained his faith. (See 2006, chap. 12 [1995]).

In addition to his theological reflections on the Holocaust, R. Lamm addresses practical issues growing out of the Shoah. These include Holocaust education, compensation, and British silence. All will be discussed later in this essay.

### **Science and Religion**

R. Lamm’s major treatment of science and religion is the essay “The Religious Implications of Extraterrestrial Life” (2006, chap. 5 [1966]). Although the essay’s announced focus is a particular and highly hypothetical scientific challenge to religion, the work covers a range of other subjects that are relevant to the science-religion encounter, such as evolution and the artificial creation of life.

What would be the religious implications of extraterrestrial life? One concerns the place of human beings in the universe. An earlier, complementary article, “Man’s Position in the Universe,” explores the dispute between Sa’adyah Gaon and Maimonides as to whether man is the center of the universe, that is, the goal of creation (2006, chap. IV [1965]). In “The Religious Implications of Extraterrestrial Life,” R. Lamm cites a range of thinkers who, with Sa’adyah, affirmed man’s centrality. Maimonides rebuffed such anthropocentrism, however, and R. Lamm follows his lead. Yet, while man is not the purpose of creation, he has a purpose and possesses value and significance.

R. Lamm goes on to consider whether scientists’ ability to create life in the laboratory affects belief in God as Creator, to which he answers No. In creating the world, God uses natural developmental processes, namely those described in the theory of evolution. As R. Kook asserted, just as the Bible says that Solomon built the Temple even

though he did so through many intermediate steps involving raising funds and hiring architects and laborers, so too “and God said let there be . . .” may refer to His use of natural processes. “The intermediate stages are of no religious consequence”—rather, the moral and religious implications of creation are what is central. Man is charged with being creative just as God creates, improving the conditions of life through the exercise of *hesed*, and establishing the moral good in civilization. Humanity must develop technology, and does not in that way affront God any more than does someone who creates fire by rubbing sticks and stones, or who invents scissors, automobiles and computers, or who discovers medical cures. God does not “[guard] his industrial secrets from any encroachment by man.”

Finally, R. Lamm considers in this essay the impact of a new cosmography on human conceptions of the God-man relationship. If man is not unique and singular, one might ask, perhaps God is not concerned with man—He would be only transcendent, not, in addition, immanent. Drawing on kabbalistic sources and on an insight of Abarbanel concerning King Uzziah, R. Lamm maintains that these two characteristics must be held in equilibrium. In the end, the existence of extraterrestrial life would not threaten the doctrines of providence and immanence. This discussion of the challenges posed by extraterrestrial life ends with the statement that “A God who can exercise providence over ten billion earthmen can do so for ten billion times that number throughout the universe.”

Before the appearance of his article on extraterrestrial life, R. Lamm was interviewed on the subject, along with other scientists and theologians, for a prologue segment to Stanley Kubrick’s science fiction movie *2001*. (The prologue was dropped for the final movie version released in 1965.) Besides the themes summarized above, the interview included remarks on, *inter alia*, *imitatio Dei*, the nature of Heaven, and the theological implications of computers. The interview concludes with the affirmation that the discovery of extraterrestrial life and other advancements in scientific understanding of the cosmos, would teach us “that God is greater than even our most profound theologians and thinkers ever imagined Him to be.” (See 2005.)

Another aspect of the science-religion connection is the bearing of religion on ecology and technology (2006, chap. 6, [1971]), discussed in part III of this essay. R. Lamm’s interest in science and religion began while he was a student at Yeshiva College. He majored in chemistry and did graduate work in the field, and as a college junior published an essay in the yearbook *Masmid* on science and religion.

**Law and Ethics**

In a law review article coauthored with Tel Aviv University law professor Aaron Kirschenbaum (1979), R. Lamm explores the balance of freedom and constraint in the halakhic process. Invoking a range of sources, he and Kirschenbaum develop and ground a number of theses in the philosophy of Halakhah. (1) There may be more than one valid solution to a halakhic problem, each carrying divine sanction. (2) There are a variety of approaches to whether Judaism has a “natural law” conception of Halakhah or a positivist one. Maimonides’ writings send conflicting messages, though all things considered he seems to favor a natural law conception. (3) Judaism accords a high respect to precedent but leaves a significant degree of freedom to judges. The essay concludes by utilizing an account given by Justice Cardozo (of four methods in the judicial process) to illuminate halakhic decisionmaking. The work is highly relevant to contemporary debates about the role of ethics and social factors in Halakhah.

A halakhic essay (Hebrew, 1990, ch.18; an abridged English version is found in 1989b) deals with the parameters of “love thy neighbor.” Whom must one love? In particular, in modern times, must one love even those who do not accept the basic tenets of Judaism? The first part of the essay focuses on determining Maimonides’ position on these questions in light of ostensibly contradictory statements in his works. His position, R. Lamm says, is that one is not obligated to love one who does not accept the fundamental tenets, and possibly Maimonides holds that such a person loses his status of being a Jew. Despite that, R. Lamm argues, based on halakhic sources, that in our day we must love even such a person. For (1) Such individuals are coerced by the prevailing *Zeitgeist*; (2) Today we do not know how to offer proper rebuke; (3) Many of the people in question are doubters rather than deniers, and according to the argument given in the essay “Faith and Doubt” they do not have the status of heretics; (4) Appropriately, those who deny basic tenets lose their status as Jews only when their heresy signifies that they have removed themselves from the Jewish community. We can read such significance into a denial of tenets only when the majority of Jews are observant and God-fearing. In our time, the great majority of Jews are ignorant of Torah and indifferent to its commandments, but they identify with the Jewish people in other ways and are proud of their Jewishness. Therefore denial of basic tenets does not in our time signify removal of oneself from the Jewish people, and the denier keeps the status of Jew.

*Imitatio Dei*, the emulation or imitation of God, is a much referenced concept in Jewish ethics. R. Lamm (1980) presents “notes” on this

topic. *Inter alia*, he distinguishes between *imitating* God and *impersonating* God, and articulates a distinction between *zelem Elokim*, the image of God, which is a natural, inborn endowment, and *demut Elokim*, likeness to God, which one must achieve through conscious efforts to walk in His ways.

R. Lamm has also addressed a highly disputed question about Maimonides' moral philosophy: who is greater, the wise man (*hakham*) or the saintly person (*hasid*). R. Lamm's conclusion is that although both root their actions in the transcendent, that is, in the principle of *Imitatio Dei*, the *hasid* ranks higher (1981).

R. Lamm's work on Jewish ethics also includes an anthology titled *The Good Society: Jewish Ethics in Action* (1974a). Divided into three sections, "The Individual," "The Family," and "Society," the volume includes, among its nineteen selections, translations of materials from R. Moses Cordovero, R. Ephraim Oshry and others. The book's conceptual foundation is that goodness can be realized only in the context of family and society; worship alone does not suffice. In his introduction R. Lamm explicates the implications for ethics of the first two chapters of Genesis; the relationship between—or, alternatively, independence of—God-man and man-man duties; and family as a mediator between self and society. His introductions to the individual selections provide additional insight into certain issues and thinkers.

A recent article (2006, chap. 13 [2006]) addresses the morally troubling commandment to destroy Amalek. Such destruction would seem to be genocide. R. Lamm responds to the moral problem by positing a "developing morality." To take an example, polygamy was once permitted and is now prohibited. In like fashion, the contemporary idea that one should not harm civilian non-combatants is part of a continuing revelation, and attention to this revelation is supererogatory conduct that is part of Torah itself.

R. Lamm has from its inception been editor of Ktav's series "Library of Jewish Law and Ethics," which includes the many volumes of R. J. David Bleich's *Contemporary Halakhic Problems* along with books by Gerald Blidstein, Aaron Levine, and other prominent figures.

## II. Communal Issues

### *Modern (or Centrist) Orthodoxy*

Besides being the principal advocate of *Torah u-Madda*, R. Lamm has long been the chief spokesperson for the broader objectives and tenets

of Modern Orthodoxy. His program for Modern Orthodoxy traces its early stages to the 1960s. In a 1966 address to the Orthodox Union, "The Voice of Torah in the Battle of Ideas" (2002, #2) R. Lamm stressed that Torah must be made relevant to Jews. This does not mean compromising Halakhah, but it does entail expressing Judaism's teachings in "the problematica and vocabulary of modern man." In a 1969 address (2002, #3), he in a similar vein asserted that "it is our *religious* duty, our *sacred* responsibility to live the whole Torah tradition in the world, instead of retreating. . . . We must engage the world right now and, speaking in a cultural idiom it understands, say that we are dissatisfied with it. . . . We must speak about covenant and halakhic living." In these essays R. Lamm stresses that secular education should be justified not by vocational reasons but on the grounds that: only in that way will Torah be effective; a Jewish state requires the use of secular disciplines; and God is the source of all knowledge. His emphasis is on how a collective Orthodox commitment to making Judaism relevant to modern problems makes knowledge of culture necessary along with a still broader engagement with the world.

In later writings, particularly in the 1980s, R. Lamm put forward greatly expanded views on Torah u-Madda and Modern Orthodoxy and introduced additional emphases. (For a brief period beginning in 1986 he used the term "Centrist" Orthodoxy, while explaining that he intended no substantive difference between the terms; see 2002, #4 [1986].) Among the best foci for presenting R. Lamm's views are a 1986 article in *Tradition* (2002, #4) and a 1999 address in memory of Rabbi Isaac Bernstein z"l, "Modern Orthodoxy at the Brink of a New Century" (1999a). The key elements in these and other writings include:

- *Torah u-Madda*. "Torah remains the unchallenged and pre-eminent center of our lives, our community, our value system. But centrality is not the same as exclusivity. It does not imply the rejection of all other forms or sources of knowledge" (2002, #4 [1986]).
- *Love for all Jews*. "We are summoned to love them as brothers and sisters" (1999b). Faced with a choice between Torah and the people Israel, we must be sure to lose neither. "In the language of the Zohar . . . Israel and Torah are one" (2002, #4 [1986]). Particularly in the post-Holocaust age, "we must seek to hold on to Jews and not repel them." A tolerant attitude to non-Orthodox groups *may* ultimately bring them to greater love of Torah.

- *Responsibility for all Jews and for society.* R. Lamm provides a homiletic framework for this theme: Noah wished to remain in the ark rather than expose himself and his family to the corpses and detritus reminding him of the corrupted society outside. But God commanded him, “zei min ha-teivah”—leave the ark, confront the world around you (1999b).
- *Religious Zionism.* “Our love of Israel clearly embraces the State of Israel, without which the fate of the people of Israel would have been tragically sealed” (2002, #4 [1986]). Religious Zionism is discussed further below.
- *Women’s education.* Shortly after R. Lamm assumed the Presidency of Yeshiva University, Stern College for Women began to offer Talmud classes, with R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik *zatz”l* giving the first *shiur*. (The school now has a degree-granting graduate program for women that includes intensive Talmud study.) Recently R. Lamm has defended women’s Talmud study against objections and has addressed traditional texts that seemingly denigrate women. (See 2009.)
- *Moderation, not extremism:* As a model for Modern Orthodoxy, R. Lamm frequently invokes Maimonides’ “middle way,” which Maimonides identifies as “the way of the Lord” (2002, #4 [1986]). Extremism of any kind is bad. “[E]xtremism is psychologically more satisfying and intellectually easier to handle. It requires fewer fine distinctions, it imposes no burden of selection and evaluation, and substitutes passion for subtlety. Simplicity and extremism go hand in hand.” In an appealing homiletic insight, he cites R. Yosef Engel’s comment on a *midrash* concerning the creation, according to which “tov me’od” refers to *mavet*, death (Gen. Rabbah 9:5). R. Engel remarks that all “me’od,” all extremism, is like death.
- *Balancing opposites: Emet* (truth) and *shalom* (peace), integrity and unity, often conflict (2002, #13 [1998]). R. Lamm (1992) distinguishes a linear approach to values from a circular approach. In the linear approach, one value simply stands higher than the other and is always chosen over it. The circular approach, by contrast, is dialectical: sometimes one value is chosen, sometimes another, depending on circumstances. The teachings of Rav Kook, R. Lamm says, furnish a precedent for the circular approach. The circular approach can be extended to other polarities, such as universalism and particularism.

- *Respect for other opinions*: “We must allow as much *emet* as possible without suppressing the other party and denying the permission to utter his or her truth” (1999). And “neither abusive rhetoric nor blackmail nor financial pressure is the proper way to conduct Jewish fraternal discourse” (2002, #12 [1986]).
- *“Recognition” but not “legitimation” of the non-Orthodox*: As R. Lamm notes in the title essay of *Seventy Faces* (#12), the Torah has “seventy faces,” but “not an infinite number.” “Where the Halakhah has spoken, therefore, we cannot negotiate, trade or barter.” At the same time, non-Orthodox rabbis are functionally speaking “valid” leaders of Jewish communities, and both they and their lay constituency may possess spiritual dignity, that is, a spiritual orientation. Furthermore, unity is an important ideal. But without commitment to the divine origin of Halakhah, the movements cannot be declared “legitimate.” R. Lamm notes that Conservative rabbis do not legitimate Reform remarriages where only a civil divorce has been executed, nor do they accept all Reform conversions. Orthodox rabbis are no less entitled to apply their own standards. However, there needs to be consultation between the groups on certain communal issues. More on the conflict between unity and integrity appears below under the heading “communal unity.”

### **Zionism**

R. Lamm has long been a defender, definer and yet critical observer of Religious Zionism. The core of his position throughout the past four decades was articulated during the euphoric days following the Six-day War. At that time, the editors of *Tradition*, of which he was Founding Editor, convened a fascinating symposium to reflect on the historical drama that had just unfolded. R. Lamm (1968) characterized the victory of the Six Day War as a time of God’s intervention, and called it a time of “*nesi’at panim*,” God lifting His countenance and shining His face upon us. This signaled emergence from the *hester panim*, hiding of the face, that characterized the Holocaust. But, as against two Israeli co-symposiasts, R. Lamm took the position that we do not know whether the post-1967 period is or is not part of an unfolding messianic era, and that such terms as *athalta di-geulah* (beginning of the Redemption) and *ikvata di-meshiḥah* (footsteps of the Messiah) “inspire but do not clarify.” As he later puts it, he “brackets” messianism (2002, #49 [1974]). He has held this view throughout the years, as already mentioned, and indeed laments, in later years, the consequences of messianic fervor in

Israel. Like many others, he sees nationalist messianism as resulting from a distortion of the elder Rav Kook's teachings by his son R. Zvi Yehuda and his disciples (1994). R. Lamm nuances and perhaps modifies his view in a 1974 contribution (2002, #49) that analyzes the import of the Yom Kippur War. There he writes that he accepts the state as an act of redemption—but not all redemption must be messianic.

Forty years after the Six Day War, R. Lamm addressed “the stark contrast” between the euphoria of 1967 and the “national malaise of 2006-2007” (2007). His brief essay addresses spiritual/religious, secular (that is, military and political), and emotional aspects of Israeli history. He notes that not long after the victory in '67, Israeli military officials attributed victory solely to their efforts, not God's intervention. “Not only the poetry and the magic, the miracle and the exaltation, but even the sense of relief . . . were stolen from us retroactively.” The Yom Kippur War proved that both messianic euphoria and military self-assurance were unrealistic. But leaders ignored the lessons of the Yom Kippur War, and repeated their mistakes in 2006 in Lebanon.

R. Lamm explains that he hoped in 1968 that Jews would take advantage of a historic opportunity to realize their destiny as God's people, but that was not to be. The country's failure was both military and spiritual. In addition, corruption plagued the government. R. Lamm describes his own transformation since 1967 as a movement from being an optimist tinged with pessimism to a pessimist tinged with optimism. But in truth, he concludes, we should act like optimists.

In 1999, amidst much talk on the political left about post-Zionism and de-Judaizing the state (even to the point of eliminating “Hatikvah”), R. Lamm authored an article in *Azure*, published by the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, that addresses the question of religion and state in Israel. He begins by positing three covenants: (1) The covenant with Noah, which is a covenant with humanity at large; (2) the covenant with Abraham, in which God promises the land to Abraham's posterity and promises the perpetuity of the people; (3) the Torah itself, the Mosaic covenant. An individual Jew must join in all three covenants. One who lives ethically and morally but is divorced from people and land, and likewise one who observes the covenant of Moses but betrays his obligations under the national and universal covenants, and so forth—they are deficient as Jews. But insisting that the *collective* follow the Mosaic covenant even when a majority opposes doing this, contradicts the principle that the Mosaic covenant must be undertaken freely rather than be coerced (Deut. 30:19), and is also inconsistent with democracy. This dic-

tates curbing religious legislation. At the same time, the state must abide by the Abrahamic covenant, which is national-ethnic and includes “culture, history, traditions, and the whole idiom of public life and discourse.” It must be “culturally Jewish.” R. Lamm observes that the line between national traditions and Halakhah is of course difficult to draw, and he argues that issues of personal status should be subsumed under the Abrahamic covenant. Finally, while observant Jews should refrain from religious legislation, they are obligated nonetheless to bring Jews to Judaism by another means, “education in the broadest sense.”

In 1971, a group of West German promoters scheduled an auto race for a Saturday. After bitter conflict with religious groups, they were forced to postpone the race till Sunday. Reflecting, on that occasion, upon the resentment secular Israelis experience from not being able to use their one day off as they would like—including leisure and entertainment—R. Lamm conceived of “The Rosh Ḥodesh Plan.” Each Rosh Ḥodesh (other than those falling on a Shabbat) would be a day off from work, revitalizing an ancient custom. Zevulun Hammer proposed the plan as an amendment to the Labor Law, and it was debated in the Knesset. For economic reasons, however, the plan was not approved. (See 1971.)

Among the other major events to which R. Lamm responded were the Rabin Assassination. After the assassination, he criticized irresponsible rhetoric on both the left and the right but condemned in particular the cloaking of political views “in the mantle of Halakhah” (2002, #50 [1995]).

To round out this survey of R. Lamm’s writings on Zionism, a word is in order about a 1971 essay in which he critically but respectfully articulates and assesses the philosophy of Neturei Karta—a group that views the state as demonic and advocates its dismantling (see 2002, #47). After examining various elements in the writings of the Satmar Rebbe, including the Rebbe’s demonological reading of history and his understanding of the Holocaust and Israel’s (until then) three wars, R. Lamm concludes that the Neturei Karta ideology is a medicine that should not be swallowed—and yet belongs on the shelf. He rejects Neturei Karta’s reading of sources and refusal to recognize divergent positions—as in other articles, he roundly rejects all extremist views. And yet, while firmly rebuffing the ideology, he sees Neturei Karta as a “much needed corrective” to the possibility that Israel “will incline to an inflated view of its own power and prowess” and adopt militarism as a desirable way of life. As we saw, in later writings on Zionism, R. Lamm faulted the Israeli army on precisely these grounds of excessive self-assurance.

### ***Communal Unity***

In a 1996 contribution to a symposium in *Commentary* on Jewish belief, thirty years after participating in a previous symposium on the topic in the same magazine (1966a), R. Lamm states that “It is best to give up the ghost and speak not of unity, but of civility, respect and cooperation” vis-à-vis non-Orthodox movements. “The best and most advisable policy is for all to seek enough common ground to devise an agenda which will benefit the entire people.” Two years later, in an address to the Orthodox Union titled “Unity or Integrity: Which?” (2002, #13 [1998]), R. Lamm grappled with the controversy over non-Orthodox conversions, framing the issues in terms of the conflicting pulls of Jewish unity and the integrity of Halakhah, or, differently put, the wholeness of the people and the wholeness of Torah. He supported the recommendations of the Neeman Commission that the OU had endorsed. Drawing a parallel to the situation of *agunot*, he recommended treating our times as *sha’at ha-dehak* (emergency situation), which will enable us to accept certain positions *bedi’avad* (post facto) and thus preserve both values. At the same time he urged an uncompromising stance vis-à-vis the non-Orthodox on issues of clerical autonomy and denominational equality.

In the essay “Seventy Faces” (2002, #12 [1986]), R. Lamm sought to revive a 1950s proposal to form a “national *beit din*.” He fields objections to the idea and suggests procedures. The plan was presented to then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who sent an emissary to the United States. While the plan met with much opposition and therefore “came to grief,” it became the basis for the Neeman Commission’s recommendation. R. Lamm points out that whereas conversions that are unacceptable to the Orthodox can be remedied by a second, this time legitimate conversion, *mamzerut* is more resistant to resolution.

Speaking to the Orthodox General Assembly in Jerusalem in 2001 (see 2002, #14), R. Lamm presented three principles that Orthodoxy must affirm: that individual Orthodox decisors are entitled to come to their own conclusion, which allows for the acceptability of differing views concerning cooperation with the non-Orthodox; love of Israel, including groups that are not halakhically Jewish but identify with the Jewish People and the State of Israel; and commitment to the peace and welfare of the Jewish people in the land of Israel. In speaking against Orthodox infighting, he quotes the thought of the Belzer Rebbe that while Mitnaggedim and Ḥasidim differ over the placement of the psalm *Hodu* in the morning liturgy, all agree on the location of *Yehi khevod* (“Let the Glory of the Lord be forever. . .”). An Orthodox Jew must

contribute to the glory and honor of God, and not create a *hillul ha-Shem* (desecration of God's name) when the world witnesses our infighting, which often takes the form of excommunications by Orthodox groups against other Orthodox groups.

### ***The Rabbinate***

R. Lamm served in rabbinic pulpits for a quarter century: Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun in New York, Kodimoh Congregation in Springfield, MA, and then The Jewish Center in New York. At the quadrennial *Hag ha-Semikhah* honoring the recent *musmakhim* of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, he has candidly addressed the new rabbis about the challenges of the rabbinate and seeks to provide them with strength, encouragement and counsel so they can effectively deal with those challenges. Drawing on the traditional rabbinic mode of inspirational *derush* (homiletics), he deals with such subjects as the self-image of the rabbi, the challenge of mustering strength and confidence without becoming patronizing or arrogant, the possible tensions between exercising rabbinic leadership and attaining personal growth in Torah, and the importance of loving all Jews, however difficult some may be for the rabbi. (See 2006, #s 39-44 [1981-98].)

In "Notes of an Unrepentant *Darshan*," (2002, #38 [1986]) R. Lamm bemoans the waning of *derush* (homiletics) as part of the rabbinic repertoire. Halakhic discourses have taken its place. Despite the centrality of Halakhah in the Jewish value system, *derush* is a legitimate and essential mode of religious expression. He notes that affirmations of the centrality of Halakhah themselves come from non-halakhic works like *Nefesh ha-Ḥayyim* and *Ish ha-Halakhah*. This refutes pan-Halakhism, the thesis that law is all there is to Judaism. Appreciating the difficulty that rabbis encounter in trying to speak effectively week after week, R. Lamm suggests that the weekly *derashah* need not be of the same genre each time; rather, "teaching and preaching should alternate." The essay also traces the impact of the "three Josephs" who influenced his own *derush*—his uncle R. Joseph Baumol, R. Joseph Lookstein, and R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

### ***Jewish Education***

Prior to becoming President of Yeshiva University in 1976, R. Lamm published articles on education in day schools and in the home. After assuming the presidency, he spoke, in addition, about university education. His primary theme in his speech at his investiture (2002, #19 [1976]) was that not only must Torah study be pursued for its own sake,

but likewise worldly wisdom has inherent value. In a private communication, R. Lamm explains that he is merely adopting the schema of R. Ḥayyim of Volozhin, who declared that Torah *lishmah* means studying Torah for its own sake, cognitively, and not for the spiritual purpose proposed by the Ḥasidim—that of *devekut*. But ultimately it is based upon the religious commitment to the Creator; thus, studying *lishmah* in the manner of R. Ḥayyim but with no intent to live by the Torah's teachings is to be considered as obviously unacceptable. Hence, just as Torah *lishmah* is “for its own sake” yet ultimately rests upon another, more fundamental basis, so *hokhmah* or *madda* studies may likewise be engaged in *lishmah* and yet rest firmly on the unstated but clearly asserted religious principle of *yir'at shamayim*.

But learning must be applied to life. The Tree of Knowledge (*eẓ ha-da'at*), says the Zohar, possessed within it a “Tree of Death.” When one combines knowledge and life, one can suppress death; but the pursuit of knowledge alone without application to life leads to death. R. Lamm emphasizes teachings that impart dignity and morality. In a *New York Times* op-ed, he argued that values and moral instruction ought to be part of a college education, and in particular at Yeshiva University (2002, #20 [1986]). In a commencement address he stressed that one must think for oneself, and yet strive for unity in the realm of action. “Group action—yes; group thinking—no.” “[O]nly in an atmosphere of civility and tolerance can vigorous disagreement enhance the welfare of all” (2002, #21 [1999]).

With regard to Jewish education at the elementary and high school levels R. Lamm addresses the psychological challenges facing educators and, as he does when addressing *musmakhim*, offers encouragement and optimism. He asks teachers to overcome the three “cardinal sins” of defeatism, pessimism and cynicism, all of which reflect despair. Teachers must renew their confidence in themselves and their faith in their students. Elucidating Rava's statement that the *takhlit* or purpose of wisdom is *teshuvah* (transformation of personality) and *ma'asim tovim* (good deeds), he affirms that the purpose of Torah education is not only to convey knowledge of Jewish texts and tradition, but to foster ethical and social idealism and create a spiritually vital experience, inspiration for the soul (2002, #22 [1970]; #23 [1977], and #24 [1989]). In the 1950s and 1960s R. Lamm published articles in *The Jewish Parent*, the magazine of Torah Umesorah, which then comprised all Orthodox day schools.

As regards Holocaust education, “A fierce, huge effort to expand Jewish education” is, he says, the appropriate course to memorialize the victims. More than erecting memorials for the victims, we must build

schools “on the unmarked graves of every one of the million Jewish children done to death by the Nazi *Herrenvolk*. . . . A million Jewish children to take the place of those million who perished—that is a celebration of their lives. . . .” (2002, #58 [1985]). In a similar vein, in an address at Adelphi University, R. Lamm cautioned against reducing education in Jewish studies to Holocaust studies. In studying the Shoah, students must learn the culture of the victims—not only how they died, but how they lived (2002, #57 [1981]).

Holocaust education must on the one hand present the Shoah as a continuation of older anti-Semitism, and on the other underscore its horrible uniqueness. Education must highlight hope and creativity, as in the creation of the State of Israel. We must memorialize episodes of piety and acceptance as reflected in, for example, *she’elot* that were posed to halakhic authorities during the War. Holocaust education must stimulate love for *all* Jews, make salient the demonic potential in man, and inculcate a sense of personal responsibility (2002, #56 [1974]).

### ***Judaism and Christianity***

In the 1960s, R. Lamm was a major contributor to Orthodox discussion of Jewish-Christian dialogue after the Second Vatican Council. Among a variety of issues, the Council initiated a rethinking of earlier Catholic positions vis-à-vis Jews, such as the charge of deicide. He urged against Jews hastily jumping into the fray by castigating the Vatican for past sins or inadequate repentance, and also argued against Jews becoming full partners in “dialogue,” especially if the Jewish “spokesman” is secular and not truly knowledgeable in Jewish religious thought and practice (1963).

In a 1972 address delivered to people of other faiths (2002, #15), R. Lamm urged that each religion and ideology consider only the conclusions drawn by other religions and ideologies and not its mode of arriving at them. Thus, even if in certain situations Judaism justifies acting benevolently toward a non-Jew only on the grounds of *Kiddush ha-Shem* (sanctification of God’s name) or *darkei shalom* (ways of peace), only the conclusions of Judaism, not its reasoning, should be considered by other religions in working toward solidarity. In addition, “each group must affirm that our contemporary mutual quest for world community is non-eschatological or, at worst, pre-eschatological,” and this quest “must never become the instrumentality for activist eschatological realization, and the proselytization that it implies.”

### ***Marriage, Sexuality and Family***

R. Lamm's writings on family range from an account of the nature of and rationale for the laws of *taharat ha-mishpahah*, "family purity," to reflections on parenting, homosexuality and *zeni'ut*.

In several articles in the late 1960s, he attacked the new permissive morality and elucidated family values such as intimacy, love, devotion, and commitment to a larger community. He criticized The Report by the Working Party to the British Council of Churches not only for indulging in typical Christian polemics against Judaism's law-centered approach to morality, but also for its "capitulation to secular humanism" (2006, chap. 9 [1968]).

During the age of "the hippies," R. Lamm argued that "love is an insufficient basis for life" and that only law enables authentic love to flourish. This proposition undergirds the technicalities of *gittin* and *kid-dushin* (divorce and marriage), and the laws of *mamzerut* (illegitimacy). He criticizes non-Orthodox movements for violating *halakhot* in these areas, thereby producing terrible and tragic problems involving *mamzerim* (2002, #16 [1969]).

The short book *A Hedge of Roses* (1965) is an introductory guide to marriage that stresses the contribution of the laws of *taharat ha-mishpahah* (Family Purity) to "reinforcing the fiber of marriage." It views these laws as an attempt to reconcile "divine image and divinely created sexual instinct." R. Lamm deals with the purposes of the laws of family purity, the holiness of time, the meaning of ritual purity and impurity, and the symbolism of *mikveh*. The book is now in its eighth edition and has been translated into several languages.

R. Lamm authored an essay on *zeni'ut*, an ideal that the prophet Micah identified as one of the action patterns God desires from human beings. *Zeni'ut* involves far more than proper dress. Based on the teachings of the Rav, R. Lamm explains that holiness has both a hidden and an open aspect. The Halakhah's preference is for hiddenness. *Zeni'ut*, therefore, "is an indication that the human being possesses a soul, and the soul is an aspect of *kedushah*" (2002, #18 [1997]). But *zeni'ut* also relates to dignity; and dignity, too, thrives in hiddenness. For example, the highest level of charity requires that donor and recipient do not know each other's identity, and both attain dignity as a result. *Zeni'ut* further expresses itself in privacy (described above). Through *zeni'ut* we emulate God, who not only reveals Himself but conceals Himself as well.

Another essay discusses the shift from the ideal of "romantic love," which R. Lamm believes is reflected in *Sefer Hasidim*, to the joining of romance and marriage in the sixteenth century (2002, #17 [1981]). In the

same discourse, R. Lamm addresses the role of women by considering the two names of the first woman: “Ḥavva,” connoting the creation of life (*ḥayyim*), and “Ishah,” “a person of individual value” (2006, #17 [1981]).

In what has been described as a “landmark article” on homosexuality (1974b), R. Lamm—writing at a time when most states criminalized homosexuality—took an approach that has governed much later Orthodox discussion of the topic: that we must distinguish between the wrongness of the act and the culpability of the sinner, for the sinner may have acted under duress (*ones*). Although his particular proposal for grounding the claim of *ones* (viz., illness) has been debated, and others have put forth alternative suggestions such as invoking *mumar le-te'avon* and *tin-nok she-nishbah*, the aim of such proposals is, like R. Lamm’s, to balance affirmation of the prohibition with compassion for the violator.

### III. Halakhic Writings

Alongside his many writings on theology and community, R. Lamm has published numerous halakhic essays and discourses, primarily in Hebrew. In his capacity as *Rosh ha-Yeshivah* of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, he has delivered annual *shi’urim* in memory of his predecessor as Yeshiva University president, Dr. Samuel Belkin.

*Halakhot va-Halikhhot* (1990) collects twenty-seven of the Hebrew halakhic articles. All are written in the literary style and dialectical, analytical mode characteristic of traditional rabbinic halakhic discourses. They are, in short, works of *lomdus*. In his introduction, R. Lamm fondly describes the “two great luminaries” who shaped his talmudic and halakhic thought, his grandfather, R. Yehoshua Baumol and R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik. (His eulogy for the Rav at the *sheloshim* appears in 2002, #1 [1993].)

In his introduction to the book, R. Lamm stakes out, with great passion, one aspect of his philosophy of Halakhah. Nearly half the essays, he notes, reflect the integration of Halakhah and “Aggadah,” in the sense of *maḥashavah*, Jewish thought, including both philosophical and kabbalistic ideas. Hence the book’s title: *Halakhot*—legal analyses—are “gateways” to *halikhhot*, the world of religious thought which he argues must be attached to the Halakhah. (The source of the *halakhot-halikhhot* word-association is talmudic.) Many significant Jewish thinkers, he points out, endorse and display this integration.

An example of *halakhot* fusing with *halikhhot* is the essay “Barukh Shem Kevod Malkhuto Le-Olam Va-ed” (“Blessed Be the Name of His

Glorious Kingdom Forever and Ever,” as he translates elsewhere). These words are recited in daily prayers immediately after the verse “Shema Yisrael.” The essay pinpoints three elements of *Barukh Shem*: praise of God; God’s eternity; and sanctification of the Divine Name. The halakhic focus of the essay, however, is what sort of *kavvanah* (intention) is required in the recitation of “Barukh Shem”: a *kavvanah* to fulfill the recitation of certain words (*ve-dibbarta bam*), or *kavvanat ha-inyan*, concentration on the subject matter, that is, on the unification of God. Is the same *kavvanah* required as in the *Shema* verse?

R. Lamm notes various *nafka minas* (practical differences) having to do with cases of *safek berakhah* (doubt whether a *berakhah* is required in a particular context; one recites the *berakhah* but then says “Barukh Shem. . .”), *berakhah le-battalah* (a *berakhah* recited needlessly and pointlessly, after which one says “Barukh Shem. . .”), and the recitation of “Barukh Shem. . .” in the Temple on a public fast day in response to the *hazzan’s* blessings. Proofs are brought on both sides of the issue about *kavvanah*. R. Lamm suggests that the question at hand is illuminated by a theological dispute between R. Shnayer Zalman of Lyadi and R. Ḥayyim of Volozhin on the one hand, and R. Zvi Hirsch of Ziditchov on the other. For R. Shnayer Zalman and R. Ḥayyim, both *Shema* and *Barukh Shem* express the principle of *Yiḥud Hashem*, Divine Unity. There is this difference: that, whereas the *Shema* verse implies that, in Kabbalistic language, nothing else exists “from His side (*mi-ziddo*)” (a view known as acosmism), *Barukh Shem* affirms the world (“His kingdom”) but only “from our side” (*mi-ziddenu*). Still, both imply unification, and the proper *kavvanah* for both verses is the same. R. Zvi Hirsch, however, rejects acosmism and affirms the “lower world.” In his view, the *Shema* verse expresses unity rising from below to above, while *Barukh Shem* is not an affirmation of unity but rather, in addition to praise, a *petitional* prayer. We ask God to bring His influence down, from above to below, and unite with us and our world. *Barukh Shem* therefore is not an integral part of the mental act of unification. Hence, *Shema* and *Barukh Shem* differ with regard to their required *kavvanot*.

Among other illustrations of Halakhah being integrated with *maḥashavah* are the following: R. Lamm solves a difficulty in Rambam concerning the topic in Jewish commercial law known as *bereirah* by reference to Rambam’s philosophical views on free will and divine foreknowledge; and a discussion of the latest time for reciting the *Shema* leads into a discussion of rabbinic authority. Other essays in *Halakhhot va-Halikhhot* deal with such topics as *sefirat ha-omer*, *kiddush bi-mekom*

*se'udah*, the power of *minhag*, the wearing of priestly garments, naming children after people who are still alive, and the requirement of three judges in monetary cases.

On occasion R. Lamm has presented halakhic analyses of contemporary moral issues in English. During the 1950s, in the pages of the periodical *Judaism*, R. Lamm addressed two issues in American constitutional law, self-incrimination (2006, chap. 10 [1956]) and privacy (2006, chap. 11 [1956]). The essay on self-incrimination was composed during the McCarthy era, when “taking the Fifth” was often construed as a presumption of guilt. The work was cited by Chief Justice Earl Warren in the landmark *Miranda* decision in 1966 and by Justice Douglas in *Garrity v. N.J.* in 1967. The essay on privacy originated in testimony at hearings of the U. S. Senate Judiciary Committee before “the right to privacy” became an issue in matters like abortion and homosexuality—the issue in those earlier days was the use of surveillance technology. Both essays reflect the interpenetration of *maḥashavah* and Halakhah of which he spoke in *Halakhot va-Halikhhot*.

Regarding self-incrimination: Whereas the U.S. Constitution states that a person may not be *compelled* to testify against himself, Halakhah’s principle of *ein adam mesim azmo rasha* dictates that a person is *not even permitted* to testify against himself in criminal cases (though confessions are accepted in monetary cases), and that he cannot confess to a sin that would disqualify him as a witness. R. Lamm offers a halakhic and psychological analysis. He explores the rationales for the halakhic position that were suggested by Rambam and Radbaz and then suggests that the difference between Rambam and Radbaz may be captured by reference to the difference between Sigmund Freud and his disciple Karl Meninger as regards the “death wish.” An explanation of the laws governing confessions in terms of the death wish extends, he believes, to self-disparagement and hence to cases where the confession would result only in disqualification as a witness; in addition, guilt feelings may play out in producing a confession. The essay concludes with a discussion of self-incrimination in Noahide law and the bearing of Noahide rules (which do accept confessions) on the comparison between Halakhah and secular law.

In the essay on privacy, R. Lamm discusses the sense of shame and privacy that accompanies nakedness. Such feelings are implied in the narratives about Adam and Eve and about Noah, as well as the *midrash* that depicts the non-Jewish prophet Balaam admiring the Israelites’ concern for privacy in the placement of their tent entrances. In addition, he

invokes the biblical law against entering a person's house to collect a debt, which the Talmud extends even to a court officer, and most importantly the notion of "*hezek re'iyah*," visual intrusion into another's domain. The latter, R. Lamm maintains, extends to eavesdropping. The halakhic discussion as to whether *hezek re'iyah* constitutes actionable damage analogous to physical intrusion has parallels in conflicting Supreme Court decisions. The essay goes on to consider other forms of invasion of privacy—disclosure (e. g., *lashon ha-ra*), protection of the mail, polygraphs, and (in an updated version of the article) DNA and a national data center—and to provide a theological rationale for a dialectic or balance between privacy and communication. In this context R. Lamm also discusses *zeni'ut*, a topic on which, we have seen, he writes more fully elsewhere. Affronts to privacy in contemporary society, according to R. Lamm, grow out of a trend of depersonalization. In Judaism there is "an inviolate core of personality" that translates into privacy laws, albeit God observes us with a "seeing eye" and "hearing ear" (*Avot* 2:1).

In an essay on ecology we see, once again, the interpenetration of Halakhah and *maḥashavah*. Rebutting those who blame the ecological crisis on religion's embrace of "subdue it [the earth]" (Gen. 1:28), R. Lamm points to limitations on meat eating (such as *kashrut* laws and the antediluvian vegetarian existence), laws dictating burial of sewage and waste, the Sabbath, Sabbatical and Jubilee years, *sha'atnez* and laws against interbreeding, and *bal tashhit*. Invoking Ḥazon Ish and R. Shneur Zalman of Lyadi, R. Lamm argues that *bal tashhit* laws are "based upon a religio-moral principle" and not on economic considerations alone. These laws do not amount to a "fetishistic attitude" toward nature, since *bal tashhit* does not extend to, for example, non-fruit bearing trees. In the final segment of the essay, R. Lamm strikes a balance between the Ḥasidic concept of nature as the habitat of the Shekhinah and the Mitnaggedic denial of holiness in nature "from our side," a Kabbalistic phrase denoting the human perspective as opposed to God's. Nature is not holy—but it must not be ravaged. Finally, the human being is a creator charged with improving the world, but God is the owner of the universe. In sum, "Judaism—exegetically, halakhically, and theologically—possesses the values on which an ecological morality may be grounded."

The book *The Shema* (1998) further exemplifies the law-*maḥashavah* connection. Subtitled "Spirituality and Law in Judaism," the book's overall aim is to explore the law-spirituality relationship as well as present a commentary on the first six verses of the *Shema* prayer. Nine chapters are devoted to the first verse of the *Shema*, six to the second,

and two to verses 3-6. Subjects covered include eschatology, science, and the significance of names. The chapters on verse 2 study the interpretations of “love of God” advanced by Maimonides, Maharal, R. Shneur Zalman of Lyadi, R. Zadok ha-Kohen, and R. Samuel David Luzzato. R. Lamm discusses the subject of love in an article in *Maimonidean Studies* (1992-93), where he explores the differing accounts of love and fear given in *Sefer ha-Mizvot*, *Mishneh Torah*, and *Guide of the Perplexed*. An appendix to *The Shema* presents a halakhic analysis of the prayer, dealing with such matters as *kavvanah*.

Among other halakhic essays, R. Lamm addresses the issue of compensation for the Holocaust. He maintains that not only must nations that persecuted the Jews make restitution, but so must nations that stood idly by and passively condoned the persecutions—and so too neutral countries that came to possess confiscated property. When it is impossible to identify those whose personal property was plundered, restitution must be made to the Jewish community as a whole, with apportionment determined by population. Compensation for Jewish communal institutions that were destroyed should be channeled toward Jewish education and the perpetuation of Judaism (2002, #59 [1999]).

In an issue of *Cardozo Law Review*, R. Lamm deals with British silence during and after World War II (1998). After cracking the Nazi code at the beginning of World War II, British intelligence did not inform the world of the beginnings of the Holocaust, nor try to avert or reduce the slaughter. In addition, neither during the Nuremberg trials nor thereafter did the British government identify and indict Nazi culprits, even though courts and survivors needed the information. R. Lamm argues that in both cases their inaction was inexcusable. The British were obligated to stop the pursuer (*rodef*). (R. Lamm discusses the possible response that intervention would have put the British at risk or endangered the war effort.) As for the British post-war failure to identify culprits, this, says R. Lamm, falls under the heading of suppressing testimony. Although not punished by human courts according to Jewish law, suppression of testimony is punishable by the heavenly court.

## Summation

While R. Norman Lamm's body of work ranges over a strikingly wide array of topics—and my survey, let me add, has been substantially short of comprehensive—it is also unified by several pervasive themes and deeply held commitments. These include: the correctness of *Torah u-madda* and a Modern Orthodox approach; the centrality of Talmud Torah in Jewish living and its vitality as a subject for philosophical exploration; the relevance of Kabbalah to the modern world; the unity of Halakhah and *maḥashavah*; the value of creativity; and the religious significance of the State of Israel. Whether assessing theology or proposing policy, R. Lamm criticizes extremes, seeks moderation and balance, and embraces the resultant complexity and dialectical tension.

To say the least, it is rare for one individual to develop and publish—on so large a scale—both philosophical writings on the one hand and, on the other, works of classic *lomdus* along with *derush*. It is all the more striking that R. Lamm continued his scholarly productivity unabated while holding the major office in Modern Orthodox life, creating in that capacity innumerable speeches and writings on matters of institutional and communal policy. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of *The Torah u-Madda Journal*, founded during and by the Lamm Presidency, we reflect on his writings with wonder and gratitude, and look forward to the appearance of the several publications now in progress.

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