

*for revision
of 4th and article*

September 15, 1967

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Dear Jerry:

I was delighted to hear from you, all the more so because your letter was so unexpected.

No, I certainly do not take any offense whatsoever at your criticism; in fact, I am quite flattered by the detailed attention you gave to my article. Now let me get down to the individual points you made.

1. The vagueness in my sentence on polygraphs: "However, in certain special civil cases the machine may have limited validity, but only where it is requested by the defendant." You are right that there is confusion as to whom the machine is being applied, the witness or the defendant. You are right again when you assume from the context that I refer to the defendant. The confusion arises because that sentence belongs after the one that follows it in the text. Even then it needs clarification, and I hope to do that if and when I ever include this article in a larger work. Trivial, but much appreciated.

2. Your stylistic gloss on my last sentence on page 308 -- right again. More trivial, but still much appreciated.

3. Your defensive reaction to my single comment about psychiatrists on page 309. This time I cannot accept the criticism. I certainly do not deprecate psychiatry, nor do I hold psychiatrists responsible for people's exhibitionism. I do, however, believe that the popularity of this particular profession, symbolized by the couch, has become a fact of our culture which has certainly not impeded contemporary exhibitionism. It is not psychiatry as such, but pop-psychiatry which is responsible for this deterioration of privacy. Armchair Freudiansim, once so popular in the cocktail parties of the opinion-makers, has impressed several generations of Americans with the idea that to tell all your woes and to bare your heart and to talk out your problems is in and of itself a good thing. So I do not hold it against the psychia-

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trists as such, but against the cultural phenomenon that they symbolize. As a matter of fact, in order to document my protestation of innocence I enclose a copy of my article on the 5th Amendment, which you requested, and in which I make use of certain Freudian insights...

4. Your rejection of my point that theologically there is a limit set by God's privacy against man's metaphysical incursions. I agree with all the points you make, and which are good, modern, liberal doctrine, about the right of man to investigate whatever he wishes. But all this having been said, there is a certain good and healthy soundness about the Jewish tradition's hesitation when it comes to certain kinds of metaphysics. Even from a purely pragmatic point of view, a good deal of the philosophical and mystical attempts to know the unknowable were just long and arduous exercises in futility. There is no ~~case~~ in Jewish history of which I am aware where any individual was punished or forcibly restrained from engaging in any kind of theosophical research; but the sense of the tradition discouraged fruitless and foredoomed quest for knowledge. I know that this is saying a mouthful, and that I ought to expand upon it in order to lend credence to my words, but space does not permit it. I trust your superb intelligence and background of sensitivity to Jewish history to fill in the gaps in what I have said.

Having said all this, I once again want to tell you how ~~very~~, very happy I was to receive your letter and to hear from you. I was in Albany last year, and had I known that you are there I most certainly would have looked you up.

Do let me hear more from you, and if you write, please let me see any reprints you may have available. I am, as I said above, enclosing a reprint of my 5th Amendment article, and I hope to send on to you, in the very near future, a copy of another article which appeared recently on a straight theological problem.

My very best wishes to you and yours for a happy and creative New Year.

Cordially yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

RNL/fz
enc.