

September 25, 1967

Prof. Jerome Eckstein
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Dear Jerry:

Thanks for your undelayed response and the reprints.

On the premise that a philosopher cherishes honesty over courtesy, I do hope you will forgive my remarks. After reading your letter, I was going to reaffirm my respect for psychiatry - though by no means my unreserved adulation of Freud and his followers. However, I then read one of your articles, "The Fall and Rise of Man," and decided to react only briefly -- you are quite right about my being quite busy, especially in this season.

I find, Jerry, that, as I have always suspected, you are brilliant, but that you suffer from the same defects as do Reik and others of this school. You have weaved an elaborate web of theory based on Freud, Reik, Fromm, and an eclectic study of *Genesis* (its "myths"), and you conclude with a lecture to unrepentant theologians who still seek to protect "religion" against "science" and remain closed to your triumphant version of naturalism which will, no doubt, conquer all. If I've put it somewhat crudely, it's only to emphasize my feeling that this is a case of hubris (not personal, of course) if I've ever seen one.

Does your Reikian reconstruction of the "rise" of man really qualify as "science?" Do you really believe that only the benighted theologians -- especially those of us who still cling to old Biblical "myths" -- are disdained by "scientists?" Certainly you are aware that, without at all deprecating psychiatry, a good case can be made out for psychoanalysis being "unscientific."

Frankly, your analysis -- and I had the same feeling when reading Reik's essays (in German) on tefillin and shofar -- is a superb

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derashah, with no more authentic claim on "science" than any good sermon or fanciful pilpul can claim to be peshat. The major difference is that when I preach a "gut vort", or elaborate a pilpul -- No. 1: I know it isn't academically accurate; No.2: I have no pretenses as to its scientific validity; No.3: I don't attempt to give it the appearance of scientific validity by burdening it with the literary apparatus of scholarship.

I do hope that you will not take this at all in a personal vein - I suspect that it is really unnecessary to state this - but as a genuine exchange of points of view (I'm apprehensive about the word "dialogue" nowadays).

Incidentally, since you quote only those "theologians" who fear space exploration, I enclose reprints of an article or two by someone who, despite hesitations, is not so inclined.

Best regards and a good year.

Cordially yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

RNL/fz
encs.