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June 2, 2003

Dear Rabbi Azriel:

In response to your two recent telephone calls, I have tried twice to reach you through your office but you weren't available.

Since I'm heading for Europe for a couple of weeks, it occurs to me that perhaps we can exchange views through an exchange of letters without my trying to make telephone contact in the limited time available to me before Marian and I leave town.

In one of my columns, you have already seen my response to your first telephone call, which told me what members of the Omaha Jewish community would expect me to write in response to a round of Palestinian terrorist bombings. Since then, you may have noticed a later column with my revised view of Ariel Sharon as Israel's prime minister at this particular critical time.

In response to your second telephone call:

You said you didn't see any comment from me in regard to President Reagan falling asleep or to the amount of golf played by the two Presidents Bush. I wasn't writing a column during the Reagan years, so it's not surprising that you don't recall having seen me comment on what you imply was a very common performance by Reagan. Are you suggesting that I should now bring up the matter 15 years after Reagan left office?

In regard to the Bushes and golf: Do you have a reliable calculation or estimate of the number of presidential hours devoted to golf each week by each of the Bushes?

Your remarks about Reagan and Bush, father and son, followed my raising the question of whether Senator Lieberman's Orthodox Sabbath observance, 24 hours a week, could adversely affect his service as President.

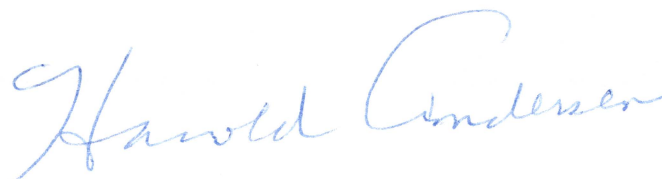
Were you suggesting that Reagan's napping and Bushes' golf is somehow parallel to Senator Lieberman's devoting 24 hours every week to Orthodox Sabbath observance except when, in Dick Fellman's words, "the duty to save life" is involved?

Incidentally, I noted with interest that President Bush on his Sabbath last Sunday spent considerable time on state diplomatic business in Russia and in France.

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I'm always glad to hear from you, even though I continue to wait for you to comment on some subject that does not involve Israel or the American Jewish community. I do write on other subjects, including support for Planned Parenthood, approval of school bond issues, approval of fetal cell tissue research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and approval of extension of higher state sales income tax rates to prevent further reductions in state spending for education.

With my best wishes.



Rabbi Aryeh Azriel
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